

The Academic Librarian as the Subaltern:
An Institutional Ethnography of a Feminized Profession

by

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Abstract

I locate this study within the context of my own work and experiences as an academic librarian and the disconnect that I have often felt between what I consider my role and the value of my work to be versus the perception and understanding of that role, the work, and its value by others. Overwhelmingly, librarians working at Canadian universities are considered academic staff, if not faculty. However, the role and fit of the academic librarian within the academic enterprise is overshadowed and frequently misunderstood. As the subaltern, librarians' expertise and contribution to the university's academic mission is often sidelined: the nature of the work too frequently viewed through an organizational rather than an academic lens and characterized as preoccupied with a structured set of regularized responsibilities. The goal of this study is to make visible the processes that shape the work experiences of academic librarians such as they are. Two research questions served as the impetus for this study: How is it that the academic librarian's lesser status is the ideal at Canadian universities? What are the social processes that shape this ideal?

This study is informed by the epistemological, ontological, and methodological assumptions of institutional ethnography: a research approach developed by the Canadian social theorist and sociologist, Dorothy Smith. Institutional ethnography considers the everyday, lived experiences of people as the research *problematic*—a term used by Smith to focus the inquiry on the actual, social, and active world as it is lived and experienced by people. An institutional ethnography progresses through layers, in this case the progression is from the academic librarian, to the library, to the institution, and beyond, to reveal how power structures external to the local setting influence daily life. To

understand how the everyday world is put together so that things happen as they do, the focus of the investigation is on individual experiences and what people are doing relationally. However, in institutional ethnography the actions and experiences of people within a particular setting are not regarded as representative. Rather, the local experience is regarded as a window into the role of power. It is a politically charged and activist type of scholarship. Because institutional ethnography is concerned with explicating the actual rather than formulating or advancing the theoretical, the emphasis is on discovery rather than hypothesis testing.

The findings of this study reveal how the value of librarians' work is socially constructed and based on work that is perceived as women's work; how the work of librarians is organized as library work rather than academic work; how accreditation bodies and the professions privilege the library over the librarian; and how institutional policies and practices position the librarian as academic on the margins of the academy. These social processes reveal *how* things come about so that librarians' experiences as academic staff are such as they are. However, it is ideologies that help us understand *why* things are the way they are. I propose that two ideological codes—*women's work* and *the library*—permeate our social consciousness, including speech, text, and talk, and infuse librarians' work with particularizing characteristics. Ultimately, the findings of this study tie librarians' work experiences to the necessary and gendered exploitation of labour that happens within a capitalist mode of production.

Preface

This thesis is the original work of Eva Justyna Revitt. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, “The Status of Academic Status: Librarians’ Dilemma”, No. Pro00075013, September 29, 2017.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Study

A few years ago, I was serving on the Faculty Association Negotiating Committee at the university where I work. I'm a librarian by profession, but my role on the committee was not as a representative of the librarians. The bargaining team was formed based on one's institutional experience and perspective rather than academic unit representation. Nevertheless, when issues relevant to librarians arose, the team deferred to my experience. At one point in the negotiations the issue of vacation days management came up. Our then collective agreement required administrative oversight of vacation days with the requirement that all academic staff prepare a vacation plan. The university's proposal to download the management of vacation days to individual faculty members was a welcomed revision; librarians, however, were excluded from the proposal. The library, the rational went, was a service point and therefore librarians' vacation days must be managed and administratively approved. As our discussion continued, it dawned on me that people had completely disappeared from the conversation; we were writing a vacation clause for the library.

Within society the library and the librarian are conflated in a way that a doctor and a hospital never is. The above anecdote underscores the invisibility of librarians' work. In the bargaining discussions, it was the library that had agency and assumed the intellectual labour of the librarian. Such reification of the library is standard and typical within professional, academic, and public discourse. For example, in Canada there exists approximately 33 different *library* associations and only one association of *librarians*. We have associations dedicated to the building but not the profession. This observation may seem trivial but, as will be argued in this dissertation, such linguistic processes have ontological implications and real-life consequences

for individuals. The process of library reification deintellectualizes and disempowers the people therein. Once the bargaining discussion was refocused on the work of people—what librarians actually do—progress was made. But the experience left me exasperated by the continuous perceived need to regularize, to manage, and to task-orientate our labour. This effect is not particular to individuals or institutions as almost any academic librarian can relate a similar story. What is it that de-values and de-skills the labour of academic librarians? What is it that shapes the discourse about our work in this particular way?

At another time, and a few years earlier, after a series of events too lengthy to recall even in a dissertation, an investigation into happenings at the library ensued. The university contracted the services of an independent investigator who specialized in “workplace investigation, conflict resolution, performance management, policy development and labour relations issues” (business card, n.d.). The investigator was not someone familiar with academic culture, much less with the disciplinary norms of librarianship. It is doubtful that either were considered in the tabled investigative report that pointed to a “pack mentality” and librarians’ actions that were characterized as subversive. The contents of the report were privileged. A summary overview was communicated to the librarians in a meeting with the university administration (personal communication, July 22, 2014). As I mentally recount these events, the pack mentality remark continues to strike as sexist. Our then complement of 16 librarians was overwhelmingly female; I could not help and wonder at the characterization. Would it be the same had we been a group of male professors? That the concept and relevance of academic freedom may have been missed by an outside investigator not familiar with academic norms and culture is understandable. However, the issue of academic freedom was not raised at all throughout the course of the investigation by any of the actors involved, including the faculty association. How is it that the

applicability of academia's foundational principle was, however unconsciously, deemed irrelevant to us?

I locate this study within the context of my own work and experiences as an academic librarian and the disconnect that I have often felt. The disconnect is between what I consider my role and the value of my work to be versus the perception and understanding of that role, the work, and its value by others. Overwhelmingly, librarians working at Canadian universities are considered academic staff, if not faculty (Canadian Association of University Teachers [CAUT], 2018a; 2018b; Jacobs, 2014). CAUT defines academic work as:

. . .the pursuit of knowledge and its dissemination and application through activities including but not limited to research and scholarly activity, teaching, public lectures, conference communications, publications, professional practice, the building of library and archival collections, the provision of mediated access to information, and artistic production and performance. (CAUT, 2016, para. 1)

CAUT's statement goes on to expand on the centrality of service activities to academic work, and underscores research and critical inquiry as vital to the university's teaching and learning mission, and indeed to a thriving democracy. The statement concludes by stressing the need for balance between academic responsibilities and service as well as scheduled and non-scheduled duties to enable academic staff to actively exercise the full scope of their professional role. The necessity of robust library and archival collections as well as the need for critically mediated access to data and information is self-evident in the processes of knowledge creation, research, teaching, and learning. However, the role and fit of the academic librarian within the academic enterprise is overshadowed and frequently misunderstood. As the subaltern, a term used to describe someone of lower rank or within the context of cultural and postcolonial studies a

reference to the marginalized, colonized, or the economically oppressed (McHugh, 2007), university librarians' expertise and contribution to the academic mission of the institution is often sidelined—the nature of the work too frequently viewed through an organizational rather than an academic lens and characterized as preoccupied with a structured set of regularized responsibilities. The mischaracterization and misunderstandings about librarians' work is not context bound and goes beyond individuals and particular settings. What are the generalizing and standardizing processes that shape the work experiences of academic librarians such as they are? The goal of this study is to make visible the processes that exert this power at the local level. Two research questions served as the impetus for this study:

- 1) How is it that the academic librarian's lesser status is the ideal at Canadian universities?
- 2) What are the social processes that shape this ideal?

Institutional Ethnography

This study is informed by the epistemological, ontological, and methodological assumptions of institutional ethnography: a research approach developed by the Canadian social theorist and sociologist, Dorothy Smith. Institutional ethnography considers the everyday, lived experiences of people as the research *problematic*. The problematic is a term used by Smith to “constitute the everyday world as that in which questions originate” (Smith, 1987, p. 91). The problematic should not be confused with the concept of a problem that needs to be solved, understood, or explained. It is not the research question or the object of study. The problematic is a tool used to focus the inquiry on the actual, social, and active world as it is lived and experienced by people. The problematic of this study is the work experiences of university librarians as academic staff.

An institutional ethnographic inquiry is a politically charged and activist type of scholarship. It is an approach that is built on the premise that knowledge is socially organized and socially constructed. Knowledge is always created by someone and for someone. It is purposeful, and never neutral. Epistemology is concerned with how we develop and acquire knowledge; it is the study of the nature, scope, and source of knowledge. Ontology is concerned with examining underlying assumptions about reality; it is the study of being, of what there is. Ontologically institutional ethnography is rooted in the empirical and the material world, in the everyday, experiential, observable reality that is the “world in common” (Smith, 1999, p. 127). This empirical commitment to research is based in the historical dialectical materialism (discussed below) of Karl Marx and his epistemological and ontological argument that ideas and concepts cannot be separated from the material world (the experiences and actions of people), which in turn cannot be separated from our history and context.

Idealism and materialism are ontologically opposing beliefs about understanding reality. Materialism is dependent on matter and holds that reality exists independent of our thoughts and ideas. Idealism privileges thoughts and ideas as the basis of reality. At the most basic level, materialism assumes a table is a table because it exists as such while idealism assumes a table is a table because we think of it as a table. Within Marxist thought historical materialism is the view that history and society are the result of our material condition (our economic mode of production) rather than our ideas.

Dialectics is a type of philosophical reasoning. It is a variously used term with roots going back to the ancients and rests on the premise that we are closer to the truth when we focus on the contradictions of an argument. The more contemporary Marxist approach to dialectics recognizes that what may appear as a contradiction or an independent aspect of a phenomenon is

actually interrelated and interconnected. For Marx the social world was a complex web of processes and relations. Dialectical reasoning thus rejects absolute boundaries, stasis, and fixed, formal attributes and assumes instead that everything is transitory, in a relation, and in a continuous state of development, evolution, and change. For example, an elephant is not just a four-legged mammal with a big trunk but an interconnected mammal that is part of a continuous process of coming into being and decaying away. Dialectics is not preoccupied with any one aspect of a phenomenon (the elephant) but rather tries to bring into focus the totality of a phenomenon (the elephant as part of a web of interconnected processes and relations).

If historical materialism is a way of interpreting the world, dialectics is method of reasoning about it. Historical dialectical materialism is a way of thinking about and understanding our social world with the presumption that everything in our world is logically connected, interrelated, in a state of flux, and historically predetermined by our material and economic conditions.

An institutional ethnography progresses through layers, in this case the progression is from the academic librarian, to the library, to the institution, and beyond, to reveal how power structures external to the local setting influence daily life. To understand how the everyday world is put together so that things happen as they do, the focus of the investigation is on individual experiences and what people are doing relationally. However, in institutional ethnography the actions and experiences of people within a particular setting are not regarded as representative. Rather, the local experience is regarded as a window into the role of power. Because institutional ethnography is concerned with explicating the actual rather than formulating or advancing the theoretical, the emphasis is on discovery rather than hypothesis testing. Furthermore, the inquiry must begin outside of what is already assumed, theorized, or conceptualized. Novice researchers

are cautioned against importing and applying theories into an institutional ethnography as these theories “activate a prior theoretical framework and distract the researcher from being able to describe and examine what people actually do” (Rankin, 2017, p. 2).

In institutional ethnography texts are recognized as key to the controlling and coordinating of people’s activities within the local setting. Slade (2012) makes the point that texts can have “embedded instructions within them that shape people’s work processes as well as coordinate action between institutions” (p. 3). Institutional ethnographers assume that people’s actions are shaped by texts and texts are a means by which *ruling relations* exercise power.

Relations of ruling are:

. . . that total complex of activities, differentiated into many spheres, by which our kind of society is ruled, managed and administered. It includes what the business world call *management*, it includes the professions. . . . The last includes those who provide and elaborate the procedures by which it is governed and develop methods for accounting for how it is done—namely, the business schools, sociologists, the economists. (Smith, 1990, p.14, emphasis in original)

It is important to note institutional ethnography’s feminist roots as they are relevant to an inquiry focused on a profession with a documented history of gender inequity (Bufton, 2014; Savage, 1982; Sonne de Torrens, 2014) and whose practitioners are overwhelmingly female. In a recent survey of Canadian academic librarians, 74% of 901 respondents identified as female (Revitt, Magnus, Schrader, & Wright, 2019). In a paper presented in 1972 at the Western meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Smith asked how the discipline of sociology might be formed if inquiry began “from the point of view of women’s traditional place” (Smith, 2004b, p. 21). For Smith a core problem is that the entire discipline,

beginning with Emile Durkheim, has been conceived and built within a “male social universe” (p. 21). Smith’s question is not about women being the focus of inquiry. Indeed, Smith cautions that a sociology of women will simply become “an addendum” to established discourse and practices (p. 21). However, Smith is arguing that when inquiry begins from the standpoint of the research participant, a window opens up allowing for a broader investigation of institutional and social processes. The job of the institutional ethnographer is to reveal the ideology and practices that influence, shape, and potentially subjugate.

Standpoint typically refers to the class, race, or gender positioning of the subject within society. For Smith standpoint can apply to anyone and is open to everyone. Within institutional ethnography standpoint is the everyday actuality of the subject as a point of entry into the inquiry. Standpoint within institutional ethnography means that the subject’s experience is prioritized, privileged, and considered authoritative. The subject’s experience is not filtered through established theories, models, or frameworks. It is not reinterpreted. Within such an approach to inquiry, the researcher must be an attentive listener who identifies with the subject and who is situated within the subject’s experience. In my own case, I not only identify with academic librarians, the participants and subjects of this study, but as a twenty-year veteran of the profession, I am an intimate knower and one of them.

Smith’s focus on women’s experiences is perhaps reflective of the social attitudes of the day and her own experiences as a single mother; however, institutional ethnographers have applied the methodology to a diverse range of research contexts including the study of cost accounting and public sector restructuring (McCoy, 1998); municipal planning, land development, and environmental intervention processes (Turner, 2003); and job seeking experiences of Chinese engineers (Shan, 2009) to name a few. The women’s standpoint is

understood to mean a *people's* standpoint (Smith, 2005). Institutional ethnography is an empowering and emancipatory approach which helps to explain why things are the way they are. By providing insight into academic librarians' work experiences and revealing how those experiences are shaped, it is hoped the findings of this study can help build an understanding of how to engage with institutional processes and power structures.

Definitions

Institutional ethnography is not just an approach to inquiry: It is a way of thinking about and doing sociology. As such, Smith introduces many unique concepts and phrases to explain and express her reasoning. The following is a brief explanation of terminology as used by Smith within the context of institutional ethnography. My research questions explore the impact of the institution and by extension the social organization of academic librarians' work experiences as academic staff. Institutional ethnographers believe that our lives are social and purposefully organized. Within institutional ethnography social organization is a process that extends beyond the immediate institution and is the result of *social relations* (Smith, 1987). Social relations are the forms of consciousness and the linking and coordinating of activities that organize our daily lives. Smith points out that every activity and experience within our daily lives, such as walking a dog, grocery shopping, even our interactions with objects, are socially determined. For Smith the social is not communal or public but rather refers to how our actions and experiences are shaped and systematized. As individuals, we cannot escape our historical context and the daily activity that forms our consciousness which in turn informs our actions. This daily social organization of our lives is often imperceptible to us. It is our everyday way of doing. Social relations are the taken for granted acts that are "coordinated and concerted by something beyond their own motivations and intentions" (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 30).

Within institutional ethnography the relations of ruling, sometimes referred to by Smith as the “ruling relations” or the “relations that rule” is the “socially-organized exercise of power” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p.32). The relations of ruling is not a system or a “mode of domination” (Smith, 2005, p. 13) but an objectifying form of consciousness associated with the work of governments, corporations, the media and academic discourses that divorce the individuals from particularized settings and people. In contemporary society practices of ruling are mediated by texts and text-based discourses. It is important to realize that we all participate in the relations of ruling through our daily work as when we fill out a form or respect the dictate of a policy. For Smith, *work* is not limited to what one does to earn a wage, rather it is any activity in people’s everyday lives and includes paid work, unpaid work, the monotonous, the pleasurable, and the habitual. It is the efforts of living. The social relations of ruling are the processes by which institutionalized power is exerted.

For the purposes of this study an *academic librarian* is someone possessing a Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) degree or equivalent and working as a librarian at a university in Canada. *Academic status* is defined as having most but not all of the rights and responsibilities associated with faculty status (Beckman, 1968; Jacobs, 2014; Leckie & Brett, 1997).

Overview of the Study

To familiarize the reader with librarianship, in Chapter 2, I provide a historical account of the development and growth of the profession in Canada. Awareness of the profession’s historical context and development is crucial to understanding the complexities and intricacies of academic status as it exists today. Chapter 3 is the literature review where I provide an overview of how the question of academic status has been explored to date and distinguish how this study

is an unprecedented and different exploration of the topic. I also review how the institution has been typically theorized and explored within standard sociology and present its unique conceptualization within institutional ethnography. In Chapter 4, I explain the conceptual framework: institutional ethnography's epistemological and ontological premise as well as its roots in the historical dialectical materialism of Karl Marx. Chapter 5 is devoted to an in-depth explanation of institutional ethnography as a research approach, and the data collection and analysis practices that guided this study and formed the basis of its findings. Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 are devoted to presenting and discussing the findings: the institutional texts and processes that shape librarians' experiences as academics. In Chapter 10, I discuss how ideological processes infuse librarians' work with particularizing characteristics. The findings of this study ultimately link the devaluation of librarians' work to the gendered exploitation of labour that happens within a capitalism mode of production. Chapter 11 is the conclusion where I provide a brief summary of the study, acknowledge the study's limitations, and address scholarly concerns with institutional ethnography as an approach to inquiry. I conclude with implications of the findings and their relevance to the academy and beyond.

Chapter 2

Historical Development of Academic Librarianship and Academic Status

When tracing the development of academic librarianship throughout the 20th century in Canada one is struck by the irony still evident today—the value society places on libraries versus the librarian. In a paper delivered at the 1945 Alberta Library Association conference Hazel Bletcher lamented, ““We all know we suffer under the general idea that anyone can be a librarian if she can hand out a few books”” (as cited in Jacobs, 2014, p. 10). Housed in some of the world’s most spectacular buildings, libraries for millennia have been valued as places of learning, discovery, and contemplation. Libraries are in many instances powerful symbols of intellectual freedom and inquiry and are recognized as vital to the collection, preservation and the sharing of humanity’s knowledge. Not so the librarian. The dismissive attitude towards the profession is exemplified in a statement made by Dr. David Bernard, University of Manitoba president, in the *Winnipeg Free Press*,

Bernard said that there have been significant changes to university libraries. When he was a student, everything was stacked on shelves, and if he needed a book not available, he’d have to wait for an inter-library transfer. Now, ‘It’s possible for a student sitting with a laptop to access almost instantly information which no longer requires the assistance and expertise of a librarian.’ (Martin, 2016)

It appears that for Bernard the Internet has replaced our reliance on books and therefore librarians. The devaluation of expertise is inherent and symptomatic of the narrow scope with which Bernard conceived librarians’ work and typifies the stereotypical understanding of the profession. Within social consciousness, the librarian’s “utility,” that is the scope of her work and know-how, is the physical library. As more and more information is available online, the

librarian's *use-value*, to use Marx's term, is diminished, if not questioned altogether. As information is commodified, it is fetishized, and assumed to exist independently of the social relations that constitute it. The process of information seeking and sensemaking is artificially separated from the information itself. Marx argued that dichotomized thinking such as this leads to erroneous assumptions about reality. I discuss Marx's ontology and the dialectical and relational thinking that is its essence in Chapter 4. In Chapter 10, I discuss some of the ideologies that shape opinions such as expressed by Bernard as well as the capitalist relations within which such ideologies are formed. For now, I want to underscore the ubiquity of these opinions.

This chapter is an exploration of some of the profession's incongruities and a historical to the present evolution of academic status for university librarians. The story of the Canadian academic librarian is that of a struggle for recognition, acceptance, and understanding. It is also a story of a coming-of-age profession fraught with contradictions and efforts to understand its place within the academy. The story begins with the formation of the Canadian Library Association (CLA) and its achievements to elevate the role of the librarian and define what it means to be a professional. The story then moves to the efforts exerted by the Canadian Association of College and University Libraries (CACUL) and its focus on the salaries and working conditions of academic librarians. In recent decades the role of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has been instrumental to advancing and safeguarding the rights and responsibilities of academic librarians. Weaved throughout are anecdotes of individual librarians whose dedication, political will, and willingness to take professional risk have highlighted professional values, revealed managerial overreach, and otherwise defined why academic librarianship matters. Singled out are also particular events that

have contributed to shaping the profession and the role of the academic librarian to what it is today.

The Beginnings

In the young Dominion of Canada library services were regarded as “an extension of formal education services,” (Peel, 1982-83). In 1882 Ontario became the first province to pass a public library act that mandated free public access to library services, followed by British Columbia (1891), Manitoba (1899), Saskatchewan (1906) and Alberta in 1907 (Peel, 1982-83). Although the need for libraries was recognized by the Dominion from the earliest decades, the country’s vast expanses, sparse population, and limited tax base posed formidable financial and geographical challenges to their building and development; the philanthropic contribution of Andrew Carnegie to the growth of Canada’s libraries cannot be overstated. Between 1903 and 1919, a total of two and a half million was expended by the Carnegie Corporation in 125 cities and towns across Canada for the establishment and maintenance of libraries (Peel, 1982-83). However, the most significant event in Canadian librarianship occurred in 1930 when a study was conducted to examine the condition and state of library services across Canada and “to obtain the opinion of interested and competent people as to what might be done for their improvement” (The Commission of Enquiry, 1933, p. 5). The study was financed by the Carnegie Corporation, and the “surveyors” were John Ridington, University of British Columbia; Mary J.L. Black, Fort William Public Library; and Dr. George H. Locke, Chief Librarian, Toronto Public Library. The Commission of Enquiry, as it was known, released its report, *Libraries in Canada: A Study of Library Conditions and Needs* in 1933. The report noted that, “four-fifth of Canada’s population of ten and a half million people is utterly without library service of any kind” (The Commission of Enquiry, 1933, p. 139). The report recommended a

number of policy initiatives including that “Standards of library service, in cities, towns and rural districts, should be set forth and minimum professional standards prescribed (as in the case of teachers) for librarians doing specified types of work” (The Commission of Enquiry, 1933, p. 141). The report is perhaps the earliest Canadian instance of a formal recognition that a level of expertise is required to effectively manage library services and collections.

The Role of the CLA and Elizabeth Morton

Prior to the formation of the Canadian Library Association (CLA) in 1946, Canadian librarians often joined the American Library Association (ALA), formed in 1876, where by all accounts they made for an active and engaged group. So much so that between 1926-1927 George H. Locke from the Toronto Public Library served as the president of ALA (Hulse, 1995). However, by 1940 it became evident that a Canada-wide library association that preoccupied itself with issues national in scope and of interest to libraries and librarians was needed. The creation of such an association became the dominant preoccupation of the Canadian Library Council (hereafter, Council) struck for the purpose in 1941. Perhaps the Council’s greatest success was “in recruiting Miss Elizabeth H. Morton” as executive secretary (as cited in Hulse, 1995, p. 5).

Morton’s exceptional administrative skills, endless drive and vision propelled the Council and then the Canadian Library Association (CLA) to many firsts. Under her stewardship the *Bulletin*, which became the *Canadian Library*, and later the *Canadian Library Journal*, and finally the *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science*, published its first issue in October, 1944 and served as a vital professional communication link for Canadian librarians isolated by vast distances. The *Canadian Index: A Guide to Periodicals and Documentary Films* was published in 1948, followed by *Feliciter* in 1956, CLA’s newsletter established for the

purpose of being “a vehicle for free and frank discussion within the Association” (Morton, 1956, p. 4). Morton served as editor of both the *Bulletin* and *Feliciter*. Morton was also the driving force behind CLA’s successful campaign to establish a national library and archives. In decades to come CLA would grow to include a staff of 30 and serve as Canada’s voice for the library community. However, on January 27, 2016 the membership voted to dissolve CLA to enable the creation of new organization, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations. The dissolution followed an extensive consultation process and was the result of declining revenue and dropping membership rates. What Morton would have thought of the proposed federation is difficult to say. However, it is important to realize that Morton was not only dedicated to libraries, the institution, but also a relentless advocate of the profession and the role of the librarian; and it is to Morton’s, and consequently CLA’s, efforts to elevate the librarian that we now turn.

Salaries, Scales and Standards: Elevating the Librarian

During the early decades of the 20th century librarianship in Canada was a fledgling profession and efforts to improve the salaries, benefits, and working conditions for librarians was an immediate focus of the newly formed CLA. A salaries committee was established in the fall of 1946 and began the work of establishing salary standards for librarians across Canada. The committee began its work by requesting public, university, and special sector libraries to share their salary information, cost-of-living, bonuses, benefits, hours of work, sick leave, holidays and anything else that was related to the welfare of librarians (Jacob, 2014). The Committee presented its 17-page report at CLA’s annual general meeting in 1956. The report recommended salary scales and, in an effort to elevate and clarify professional responsibilities, outlined a position classification scheme that carefully delimited the duties of librarians and library clerks. However, perhaps the most interesting reading deals with the status of academic librarians,

Because of their close association with and responsibilities for carrying out the educational programme of the university, professional librarians should be recognized as members of the academic community by receiving faculty status. Their rank should be commensurate with their academic and professional qualifications, the responsibilities of the position, and their length of service.... All professional librarians, after one year's service in a permanent position, should have the same tenure as permanent member of the teaching staff.... Sabbatical leave should be granted to all professional librarians, on the same basis as to members of the teaching staff of equivalent rank in the same institution. (Cannom, Foley, Scollard, & Meikleham, 1956, pp. 32-33)

The above recommendations would be considered progressive today. In 1956 they were ambitious indeed. The Committee envisioned full faculty parity for librarians. However, what was not clear was what constituted parity in the context of librarians' work nor what achievements were required for its attainment. The imprecise nature of these and ensuing standards and principles as drafted by various associations with committees struck for the purpose allowed for wide local interpretation. Such experimentation allowed for respect of local context but also contributed to the overall confusion inside and outside the profession as to role and place of librarians within the academy.

Growth, CACUL, and the Principle Shift to Academic Status

The Committee's perspective may have been reflective of the heady optimism of the day. The 1950s and 60s were a period of exceeding growth within the post-secondary sector. Between 1930 and 1955 university enrollment in Canada doubled and doubled again between 1955 and 1965 (Cameron, 2002). Returning war vets, baby boomers coming of age, a prospering economy,

and the idea that higher education was the road to prosperity and a good job all contributed to what is considered the golden age of higher education. Funding to universities increased dramatically. In 1956 the per capita grant to universities was 50 cents, by 1965 it reached five dollars (Cameron, 2002). Faculty, including librarians, could not be hired fast enough. However, despite a significant influx of funds and expansion of university campuses and libraries, almost a decade later there was little evidence of on the ground progress towards the realization of the said recommendations.

The challenges of defining and reconciling the rights and responsibilities of faculty status with librarians' work obligations proved to be great indeed, and in 1969 the Canadian Association of College and University Libraries (CACUL) released a set of *Principles* which endorsed librarians' *academic*, as opposed to faculty, status. The *Principles* defined academic status as the possession of some, but not all, of the usual faculty privileges and responsibilities and singled out librarians' eleven-month employment year as an "unsurmountable obstacle" (Association of College and University Libraries [CACUL], 1969/70, p. 305) to the fulfillment of research and scholarship obligation required of faculty rank. In matters of promotion, appointment and tenure the *Principles* also shifted the burden of proof to librarians' own standards and disciplinary norms, versus those of teaching faculty, further aligning librarians' role as academic staff but not faculty.

Challenges, Detractors, and the Library Administrator's Ghetto

However, the academic status advanced by the *Principles* proved equally challenging to operationalize. In a 1969 article Don White, Assistant Reference Librarian at Memorial University, was blunt in his assessment of librarians' working reality: "most professionals are involved in clerical and administrative duties totally removed from the arena of scholarship,

associated with the pursuit of knowledge only through physical proximity” (White, 1969, p. 288), and insightfully observed that as long as career advancement and salaries are based on an administrative hierarchy “there is little incentive to produce in areas that do not lead to advancement up the ladder” (White, 1969, p. 289). The *Position Classification* statement, drafted by the *Committee on Position Classification* and approved alongside the *Principles*, zeroed in on the incompatibility of a hierarchical system of promotion where advancement is based on position with a collegial system of academia rank where advancement is based on merit, “The rank of an academic librarian shall be based upon his qualifications, experience, professional development and ability, and not confined or delimited by the administrative structure of a library” (CACUL, 1969/70, p. 282).

Libraries then and now are hierarchical organizations and one’s career advancement was typically then, and at times now,¹ dependent on one’s ability and willingness to take on administrative responsibilities. Aligning librarians’ work along with that of faculty required a reconceptualization of librarians’ advancement, a leap difficult for many to make. Ruth Hafter, University Librarian at St. Mary’s University and vocal critic of academic status, thought the academic status effort self-serving and accused librarians of wanting status “because it gives them a better place in the pecking order not because they need it to carry out their work” (Hafter, 1975, p. 9). Hafter argued that academic status did not make sense for librarians because the majority of their time was not devoted to teaching or research. Furthermore, librarians’ promotion was based on expanded responsibilities rather than increased competence in teaching and research. For Hafter, and many others, the incompatibility of academic status with the librarian’s role centered on the teaching versus administrative work argument. The idea of

¹ At the University of Alberta rank is tied to a position within the library. For example, if a librarians wants to advance from rank II to a rank III, they must apply for another position within the library system.

recognizing administrative responsibilities as a specialization within the gamut professional practice and *alongside* that of bibliographic or other expertise, and where individual librarians are evaluated and advance based on professional competence, depth of expertise, and impact on the profession versus breadth of responsibilities, seemed inconceivable at the time. Needless to say, the feminized nature of the profession, the hierarchical structure of libraries, and social attitudes of the day frustrated librarians' career advancement and impeded the development of academic status (Savage, 1982; Harris, 1992; Bufton, 2014; Sonne de Torrens, 2014). It is perhaps not surprising that the primary proponents of academic status were rank and file librarians while many of its detractors were library administrators.

William Watson, Chief Librarian at the University of Waterloo, was candid and forthright in his advice to the profession, "Academic librarians would be well to pay less attention to status and its prerequisites and more to professional responsibilities" (Watson, 1970, p. 417). Watson went on to list the profession's favourable working conditions and benefits, criticized the *CACUL Principles* and those recently released by Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)² for being "fuzzy, vague, imprecise, when they should be sharp, focused and exact" (p. 419), and lambasted the ACRL principles in particular for their insolence in recommending faculty rank for the academic librarian and making *him* "masquerade as something he is not" (p. 420). While some would be sympathetic to Watson's remarks, if not his tone, Watson's subsequent points regarding status are disconcerting: librarians do not need tenure because they have job security and dismissals are rare, librarians already have leave and time off for study they just have to get permission, if librarians go on sabbaticals they will return and ask for more

² ACRL formally endorsed *faculty* status for academic librarians as a policy in 1959. Since that time the Association has issued numerous statements and guidelines in support of its position, most notably the *Joint Statement on Faculty Status* drafted with the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) in 1972.

money because they have specialized, and if librarians want to participate in university governance they should just try. As a white male in a high-ranking administrative position, Watson appeared to be oblivious to the inherent institutional and organizational power imbalance and the working reality of a primarily homogeneous female staff whose expertise was often considered to be on par with that of clerks (Savage, 1982; Harris, 1992).

In an article reviewing the history of academic status of Canadian librarians, Don Savage, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) 1972-1997, was blunt,

Ten years ago many chief librarians considered themselves to be the only members of the library staff who had or should have academic status. Many were men who treated their staff as female office help, a form of secretarial assistance, and hoped to maintain this situation by creating a library ghetto apart from the rest of the academic enterprise. (Savage, 1982, p. 287)

Savage was a highly respected educator and public administrator whose diplomatic manner and approach was regarded as “dialogic and respectful of differences and complexities” (Waters, 1996, para. 6). His academic colleagues reappointed him continually over a period of 25 years demonstrating their confidence in his leadership and conduct. In 1996 Savage was awarded an honorary Doctor of Law from Concordia University for his tireless efforts to advance academic values, shape public policy, and resolve conflict in a “civilized and responsible manner” within the university sector (Waters, 1996, para. 2). Savage’s candid assessment of librarians’ working reality is perhaps reflective of his frustration with the blatant inequity. Since the 1970s, Don Savage, and CAUT more broadly, have been stalwart supporters of librarians’ academic rights

and a closer examination of CAUT's role is conditional to any discussion regarding the development and evolution of librarians' academic status.

The Role of CAUT, the Stalwart Defender of Librarians' Academic Rights

The Canadian Library Association (CLA) and the Canadian Association of College and University Libraries (CACUL) did much to advance and define academic status within the profession, especially during the formative decades of the 1960s and 70s; however, it is CAUT that was instrumental in bringing librarians into the academic fold of Canadian universities. The catalyst that prompted CAUT to embrace academic librarians may have been the *Downs Report* (1967)—a “reference treasure” and “a work of enormous magnitude and undisputed excellence” (Pannu, 1968, p. 640) produced by Robert B. Downs. The report was proposed by CACUL and the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada (AUCC) with the goal to assess the resources and needs of Canadian academic libraries. Robert Downs was the Dean of Libraries, University of Illinois, and a staunch advocate of professional and academic status for librarians (Pannu, 1968; Dekker, 2014.). Downs was also a one-time president of the American Library Association (ALA), a prolific author, and a fierce defender of intellectual freedom. Downs, perhaps more than most, understood librarianship's values and the librarian's role and responsibility in defending those values. He also realized the critical importance of academic status and tenure if librarians were to fulfill their professional obligations. The *Downs Report* addressed many of the day's thorny issues including the criticism that librarians lack academic qualifications for academic status. Downs (1967) pointed out that a doctorate is not emphasized in many professions including the male dominated disciplines of engineering and law.

The report summarized 40 university policies regarding librarians and concluded that university administrators were often “puzzled about where librarians belong in the academic

hierarchy” (Downs, 1967, p. 116). However, Downs observed that the trend was clearly toward the recognition of librarians as integral members of the academic staff and cautioned that universities which do not support academic status for professional librarians would be disadvantaged, “Those institutions which grant academic status to professional librarians will be in the strongest position to hold able staff member and to recruit others of like caliber (p. 107). Downs suggested the co-operation of CAUT be sought “toward improving the status of professional librarians in universities” (p. 116). The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) did much to advance the rights and responsibilities of academic librarians in the United States when it championed faculty status for librarians a decade earlier. Downs was pragmatic and, as Dekker (2014) observed, accepted that CAUT as opposed to CACUL was, “the organization most likely to further librarians’ goals” (p. 47).

In 1975 CAUT and CACUL joined forces and drafted what would become the defining document for Canadian academic librarians, *The Guidelines on Academic Status for University Librarians*. The *Guidelines* reaffirmed librarians’ role as partners with faculty in contributing to the teaching and scholarly mission of the university (Canadian Association of College and University Librarians / Canadian Association of University Teachers [CACUL/CAUT], 1979). They set out procedures and criteria for probationary, permanent, and limited term appointments; articulated procedures for dismissals and grievances; supported librarians’ eligibility for sabbatical or study leave; participation in university and library governance; and stressed that promotion in rank “should be independent of any scheme for the classification of positions” (CACUL/CAUT, 1979, p. 1-2). The importance of the *Guidelines* as an affirmation of CAUT’s full recognition of librarians’ rights and responsibilities as academic staff cannot be overstated at

a time when the academy was overwhelmingly male. To this day the *Guidelines* are important in defining and defending librarians' academic status.

More recently CAUT actively supported librarians at McMaster and McGill Universities. At McMaster University the actions of a newly hired university librarian were already of concern when in April of 2009 two senior and respected librarians were suddenly terminated (Turk, 2010). The dismissals were regarded with suspicion and caused much consternation among the university's librarians as both of the concerned individuals were moved the previous year to positions that were "deemed as 'strategically important' but now have been declared redundant" (Stubbs, 2009, para. 3). Furthermore, the position of Barbara McDonald, one of the dismissed librarians, was declared redundant one week prior to her commencement of an already approved research leave. In a letter to McMaster University President, the Provost, and the Chair of the Board, the McMaster University Faculty Association pointed out that "under the Research Leave Policy for Librarians the operational and budgetary feasibility of granting leaves are factors considered as part of the approval process, which was completed only a few months ago" (Stubbs, Berlinsky, & Southerland, 2009, para. 4).

CAUT weighed in on the matter and was able to advocate for a reasonable settlement for one of the librarians; the other librarian signed a confidential termination agreement and CAUT was powerless to intervene (Turk, 2010). In another instance, CAUT vocally supported the academic freedom rights of McMaster University librarian Dale Askey and criticized the university for its lack of support of Askey when he was faced with a defamation lawsuit filed by Edwin Mellon Press³. Edwin Mellon Press eventually dropped the charges against both Askey and McMaster University (Edwin Mellon Press, 2013).

³ For a detailed review of Askey's case and its relevance to academic freedom for librarians see Kandiuk & Sonne de Torrens (2015).

In 2008 CAUT appointed an *Ad Hoc Investigatory Committee* to examine the situation at McGill University Libraries where administrative overreach and infringement of librarians' academic freedom were particularly troubling. Allegations included:

- The DL [Dean of Libraries] had to see any final paper before it is submitted for presentation to a conference *even when no funding from the University is being requested*
- The DL altered the content of presentations prepared by librarians for invited guest lectures
- For 2 years, the graduate school was notified that no librarians could accept invitations to speak unless the invitation sent to the DL first
- When the DL was questioned about these initiatives, librarians report they were bullied, intimidated, threatened and suffered reprisals
- “Academic freedom,” “teaching” and “mentoring” were *hot* words that were not tolerated by the DL in workplace speech
- At least at one library service desk, the library inquiries statistics form was revised so that it no longer included the “teaching” category
- Librarians were told that they could not bring “advisors” to meetings with DL
- Librarians were not able to post messages of any substance on professional non-confidential matters to librarians' email list without administrative criticism. (Turk, 2010, p. 10)

The seriousness with which CAUT treated the allegations is perhaps best reflected by the care it took to appoint the *Investigative Committee* expert members: Kent Weaver, a University of Toronto librarian and 40-year career veteran of the profession; and Dr. Toni Samek, Professor at the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta. In 2010, Ken

Weaver was the recipient of the CLA Award for the Advancement of Intellectual Freedom in Canada, and in 2012 he was awarded the Academic Librarians' Distinguished Service Award by CAUT Council (Schrader, 2010). Both awards honour Weaver's tireless service to the university and the profession and his support of the academic librarians' community. Dr. Toni Samek's scholarship is recognized internationally. Her expertise in social responsibility, intellectual freedom, and human rights issues as related to librarianship is unique in North America. In her book *Librarianship and Human Rights: A Twenty-first Century Guide* (2007), Dr. Samek articulates core professional values and challenges librarians' neutrality. She has twice delivered the keynote address at the CAUT Librarians' Conference, and twice chaired *CLA's Advisory Committee on Intellectual Freedom*. She is the recipient of numerous awards including the 3M National Teaching Fellowship, Canada's most prestigious teaching award at the post-secondary level. After an 18-month period of exhaustive investigative work, in May, 2010 the *Investigative Committee* tabled its report and identified 28 issues regarding collegiality and academic freedom faced by McGill librarians (Rankin, 2012). When McGill University administration, "refused to discuss resolution of the problems" CAUT threatened to censure the university (Turk, 2010, p. 11).

It is important to realize that the pressure exerted by CAUT on institutions is considerable and can be publicly damaging, but it is not binding. Institutions are not legally required to follow CAUT's recommendations. Statements and principles drafted by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), or more recently by the Canadian Association of Academic Librarians (CAPAL),⁴ are equally unencumbered on individual members or their respective

⁴ See Granfield, Kandiuk, and Sonne de Torrens (2011) for a review of CAPAL's mandate and formation. In May, 2015 at the CAPAL AGM in Ottawa, the membership approved the *CAPAL Statement on Collegial Governance*. The *CAPAL Statement on Academic Freedom* was approved by the membership in May, 2016 at the Association's AGM in Calgary.

institutions. The various statements, principles, and recommendations reflect values and objectives. They provide support, promote consensus, and are invaluable in guiding policy development but they are not obligatory or enforceable. It is collective bargaining that turns aspiring rhetoric into reality. And, it is to this issue that I now turn.

To Unionize or Not Unionize, Librarians and Bargaining for Rights

The 1960s and 70s were formative and transformative years for the profession. Librarians, like many others, were swept up in the labour movement. These were times of spirited debates, factions and courageous action as librarians challenged the status quo, weighed their options and explored various avenues to enhanced employment status and gender inequity. In the early years, librarians were equally circumspect in their commitment to CAUT and often formed their own associations alongside those of teaching faculty.

Librarians at Carleton University formed the Association of Professional Librarians at Carleton University (APLCU), which serves as a forerunner to Carleton librarians' unionization efforts (Bufton, 2014). Members of the association met regularly to explore the implications of unionization and potential membership in the Carleton University Academic Staff Association (CUASA). In 1975 the CUASA council amended its membership to include all academic staff and the majority of Carleton librarians voted to join. However, when CUASA applied for certification to the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) five librarian positions were excluded from the CUASA bargaining unit. Bufton (2014) does not elaborate why the positions were excluded, however a possible explanation might be that due to the nature of the positions the OLRB did not regard the concerned librarians to have a shared "community of interest" with the other members of the bargaining unit. In examining whether a community of interest exists between members of a bargaining unit, Schroeder (1975) illuminated that Labour Relations

Boards (LRBs) have taken the following into consideration: the nature of the work, the conditions of employment, and the mutuality of interest with respect to the organization or institution. In most provinces it is the jurisdiction of the LRB to decide “whether or not a group of employees is a unit appropriate for collective bargaining” (Schroeder, 1975, p. 464). In other words, librarians may join an association but a LRB can overrule librarians’ membership if it determines the fit is not appropriate as in the case of St. Mary’s University.⁵ Schroder cautioned that LRBs were having difficulty in deciding where librarians belonged and pointed to the contradictory rulings regarding librarians at St. Mary’s University and the University of Manitoba⁶ to underscore LRBs’ unpredictability.

In 1969 librarians at the University of Toronto formed the Librarians Association of the University of Toronto (LAUT) to provide a collective voice to address their many concerns including internal library issues. In 1971 LAUT was recognized by the University of Toronto Board of Governors as representing librarians’ interests and undertook a number of initiatives including the formulation of a grievance policy, a survey on the status of librarians at the University of Toronto, and a report exploring unionization and faculty status for librarians to name a few. Sonne de Torrens (2014) noted that “at this stage, there was no clear consensus among the librarians on which way the majority should vote, nor was there shared consensus on how ‘academic status’ should be defined” (Sonne de Torrens, 2014, p. 89s). Eventually the University of Toronto Faculty Association (UTFA) would form a standing committee on

⁵ At St. Mary’s University the president opposed the inclusion of librarians in the same unit as teaching faculty due to a lack of a community of interest. The LRB agreed. However, when St. Mary’s University Faculty Association (SMUFA) was certified as the bargaining agent for the faculty association, SMUFA applied to the LRB to represent librarians as a separate unit and this request was approved. For a detailed analysis of the St. Mary’s situation see Schroder (1975) and Ward (1974b).

⁶ In 1974 the University of Manitoba was certified as the bargaining agent for “all full-time academic staff and professional librarians employed by the University of Manitoba” and the issue of a “community of interest was not discussed” (as cited in Schroeder, 1975, p. 467). Two years later University of Manitoba librarians and faculty bargained for a contract that among other things included study leave for librarians and a redundancy clause that provided job security (Moore, 1976).

librarians. In 1976 librarians became eligible to become part of the University of Toronto Faculty Association (UTFA) and 130 out of 194 librarians voted to join (Sonne de Torrens, 2014).

Librarians at McGill University were initially members of the McGill University Library Staff Association that included both librarians and paraprofessional staff. The Associations' efforts to differentiate between professional and paraprofessional duties achieved mixed results and in 1971 McGill librarians struck out on their own forming the Association of McGill University Librarians (AMUL). In 1996 AMUL merged with the McGill Association of University Teachers and became a Librarians' section of the McGill Association (McGill Association of University Teachers [MAUT], 2013, Association background).

Ruth Hafter, University Librarian at St. Mary's University, proposed another option for asserting collective action. Hafter (1975) argued that academic librarians' numerical weakness within faculty associations would always place them in a position of "the tail being wagged by the dog" (p. 10). Hafter considered academic librarians' community of interest to be public and school librarians rather than teaching faculty and argued that a provincial association or union to which all librarians could belong to was better suited to represent librarians' interests. A *librarians'* union or association focused on librarians would concern itself with conditions of work and promotion as they exist within the profession and could work toward advancing *librarians'* status as opposed to the status of another group. It is surprising that in her article Hafter does not mention the Institute of Professional Librarians of Ontario (IPLO), formed by librarians to address issues "internal to librarianship" (Linnell, 2008, p. 3). Many academic librarians were members of the IPLO including a number of Carleton and University of Toronto librarians (Buffton, 2014; Sonne de Torrens, 2014).

In an article reviewing collective bargaining for librarians, Moore (1976) maintained that collective bargaining is the reasonable approach to advance rights in institutions where “the administration is less forward looking” (p. 14). Moore reviewed the three types of bargaining units that have developed in the 1970s. There was the case of St. Mary’s University where the Labour Relations Board (LRB) ruled that librarians have “no community of interest with faculty” (as cited in Moore, p. 14). Then there was the University of Ottawa example where librarians applied for membership in the faculty association but were initially denied. The University of Ottawa librarians opted for a separate bargaining unit affiliated with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). However, the CUPE experience must have been short lived as the Association of Professors of the University of Ottawa (APUO) obtained union certification in 1975 and became the bargaining agent for all academic staff including librarians. Lastly, there are the Universities of Toronto, University of Manitoba, McGill, Carleton, and Laurentian experiences where librarians were in the same bargaining unit as faculty. Today the vast majority of librarians have academic status and are members of their university’s faculty association. However, there are some anomalies. To date the librarians at University of Waterloo are without academic status. The librarians at University of Alberta are considered academic staff but have a separate contract; although, a *Memorandum of Understanding* between the University and the Association of Academic Staff was signed in June, 2016 with both parties agreeing to the adoption of a single, comprehensive collective agreement (University of Alberta, 2017). The McMaster University librarians formed their own bargaining unit, the McMaster University Academic Librarians Association (MUALA) in response to yet another set of initiative by their now infamous University Librarian, Jeff Trzeciak.⁷ The administration of Western University

⁷ In January of 2010, McMaster University librarians received another announcement: A consultant has been hired as part of the library’s organizational review and cost cutting process. This was the third time the library was undergoing an organizational

refused permission for librarians to join the University of Western Ontario Faculty Association and as a result academic librarians at Western unionized and in 2011 went on strike to achieve an acceptable collective agreement.⁸

The Laurentian Experience and Academic Status Today

The experience of Laurentian University librarians, the only university then and now, where librarians have *faculty* status deserves a closer examination (Jacobs, 2014). Following the release of the CAUT/CACUL *Guidelines* the Laurentian University committed itself to their full implementation and more,

In an agreement reached with the Faculty Association in November, 1976 the University agreed that librarians and teaching faculty should have the same rank structure and salary scale; have the same fringe benefits, including a contractual travel allowance; follow the same procedures for appointments, leave and dismissals and have the same access to university governance. (as cited in Mount, 1978, p. 427)

Perhaps not surprisingly some teaching faculty were ambivalent of librarians' faculty status and argued that librarians should be promoted by virtue of their work as librarians and not "by becoming some freakish version of professors" (as cited in Mount, 1978, p. 427). In articles reflecting on the Laurentian experience both Mount (1978) and Thomson (1981) recalled that the first "jolt" of the implications of faculty status for librarians came when the *Senate Committee on Faculty Appointments and Promotions* ruled that librarians would have to publish and research like teaching faculty if they expected to be promoted, as they were, after all, being paid like

review since 2006 (Turk, 2010). The librarians had had enough. Within six weeks MUALA was formed and certified by the Ontario Labour Board. MUALA gave the librarians a strong collective voice and bargaining power to assert their professional rights and obligations.

⁸ For a detailed summary of the events leading up to the strike, and its impact on the concerned librarians, the library, and the broader institution see Doves, Dunn, and Varpalotai (2014), as well as McKillop (2014).

teaching faculty. Librarians argued that the 34-hour work-week and year-round responsibilities severely limited their ability to devote a reasonable amount of time to scholarship. However, the argument appears not to have been readily accepted. In a letter to the editor following Mout's article, teaching faculty pushed back,

When she speaks, for example, of 'nine teaching hours a week (for faculty), plus preparation, marking and office hours' she is already accounting for more working hours (36) than the '34 hours a week' . . . allotted to librarians. . . . Thus the 'built-in expectation that a considerable portion of the remaining time will be devoted to research and writing refers, during the term, to time *over and above a 36 hours week*. . . .

Librarians should not be expected to fill their one month's holiday with 'research and writing' (few faculty would); but they should themselves be prepared to spend many an evening and weekend in productive study over and above their 'professional performance'. That is the faculty way! (Wilkinson, 1979, p. 52)

In December of 1977 a committee made up of one librarian and two teaching faculty was struck to examine the status of librarians at Laurentian. The committee made numerous recommendations some of which were eventually negotiated into the first collective agreement in 1979. There was no separate section for librarians in the agreement and to this day librarians at Laurentian are completely integrated. Despite the opinions of Wilkinson (1979) and others, the 1979 agreement acknowledged that librarians do not have the same amount of release time for research as teaching faculty and provided for a more expansive definition of research, not only out of consideration for librarians but also for other professionally based faculties. The School of Nursing faculty argued that

. . . we should be valuing scholarly activity of which research is one. Along that line, the School of Nursing believes that other contributions to the profession should be judged by one's peers within the profession, not only by one's peers within the university. (as cited in Thomson, p. 222)

Thus, the strict research requirement was expanded to a more broad-based concept of scholarly activity:

The development of teaching/library materials or methods of an innovative sort which have been used by peers and which thus have a wider application than the member's own teaching/library activities is a form of scholarly activity which should be evaluate as such. (as cited in Thomson, p. 222)

In 1958 the CLA's *Salaries and Personnel Committee (University Librarians)* recommended faculty status for librarians and recognized that advancement will require higher academic qualifications or superior professional and scholarly achievement. The Committee likewise acknowledged that most librarians would remain at the lowest rank if faculty status was embraced and implemented (Miekleham, Scollard, & Foley, 1958). Two decades later Laurentian librarians took pride that standards for upper faculty ranks were not watered down and accepted the same premise,

As the agreement states, a PhD is the norm for promotion to the upper ranks, and since no librarian at Laurentian currently holds a PhD, it should in practice take all of them a good deal longer in time to qualify themselves for upper ranks. That is as it should be . . . For some time, most librarians at Laurentian may well find themselves in the assistant rank. (Thomson, 1981, p. 223)

Today librarians at Laurentian university maintain a workload component of 40% professional librarianship, 40% scholarly activity, and 20% University governance, administrative duties, and other contributions to the University (Collective Agreement, 2014-2017).

Leckie and Brett (1995), and more recently Harrington and Gerolami (2014), reviewed the conditions of employment for Canadian academic librarians by examining selected samples of collective agreements. Leckie and Brett reviewed 32 agreements and found that the majority represented librarians and faculty in the single document. Harrington and Gerolami in their examination of 24 agreements concurred: “The predominant collective agreement model in Canada is one that incorporates both teaching faculty and librarians” (p. 156). Leckie and Brett found that over half of the agreements outlined librarians ranks as Librarian I thru Librarian IV, while a smaller number used the Assistant, Associate, and Full Librarian terminology; and that the majority of agreements allowed for three appointment types: term, probationary, and permanent. The authors also observed that the widest variety existed in the performance evaluation criteria and procedures with majority falling into one of two polar perspectives: the authoritarian where “performance evaluation was primarily a means of checking on how well individual librarians carried out their responsibilities in a specific position, presumably with an eye to exert more supervisory control if need be,” and the mentoring approach where the performance evaluation was a means of developing potential (Leckie & Brett, 1995, p. 10). Harrington and Gerolami (2014) are silent on evaluation procedures perhaps because in the ensuing decade the terminology may have changed and/or the process has become more integrated with promotion procedures. Harrington and Gerolami did compare salary ranges (salary information is notably missing from the Leckie and Brett study) and noted that 1/3 of the agreements have the same salary floor for entry-level librarians as the faculty lecturer position.

In both studies the typical work week proved to be 35 hours. Leckie and Brett (1995) found that 50% of the agreements specified work hours. Almost a decade later Harrington and Gerolami (2014) discovered a very similar pattern with 42% of agreements defining the number of work hours for librarians. Harrington and Gerolami (2014) stressed the misalignment between a set work week and academic status and noted the potential encroachment on professional autonomy: “The use of a predefined work week however, does not fit with the faculty model, which give faculty the autonomy, freedom and responsibility to make professional decisions to manage their own work” (p. 159).

The typical requirements for work in both studies were professional practice, research/scholarly/academic activity, and service to the university or community. Harrington and Gerolami (2014) observed a wide variation in balance between these three categories. For example, Laurentian librarians had a split of 40/40/20, McMaster librarians’ work consisted of “75% ‘job responsibilities’ and 25% ‘professional service and professional activity’” (p. 160), while Western University librarians have an 80/10/10 workload balance. Many agreements did not articulate a balance at all and simply stated an “appropriate combination” thereof. It is evident from both studies that professional practice was and remains the primary focus for academic librarians; however, Leckie and Brett (1995) cautioned against relying predominantly on a librarian’s professional practice in decisions of permanence,

After all, since a librarian who is accepted as a permanent member of the library system will undoubtedly have several different positions over his or her career, it would seem that other factors beyond the ability to fulfill the current job responsibility would be critically important for the library system in the long run. (p.19)

Leckie and Brett reasoned the heavy emphasis on job performance in the agreements is reflective of the fact that librarians want to be evaluated (and one would presume promoted) on what they do. However academic librarianship must reconcile the inherent tension between what librarians profess as important, academic status, and what it is that they do, professional practice. As pointed out by the authors, what is at stake is credibility. If academic librarians want to be taken seriously as academic staff, librarians must embrace and commit to the full gamut of academic responsibilities and expectations (Leckie & Brett, 1995). For their part Harrington and Gerolami (2014) offered some practical advice and cautioned against the use of “may” as “This language does not guaranteed that the librarian will be allowed to participate in research and scholarly work” (p. 161), and suggested instead this model clause form Lakehead University, “Although not required to do so, a librarian member has the right to be involved in research” (p. 161).

As confirmed by both studies and CAUT’s (2014) biennial *Librarian Salary & Academic Status Survey* today the vast majority of librarians are within the bargaining unit of their university’s respective faculty association; however, the troubling inconsistency in approaching and defining key provisions of the academic librarian’s work points to a disconcerting lack of professional understanding on what it means to be a university librarian in Canada: “Workload duties, responsibilities and job descriptions are themes that vary widely and are not well documented” (Harrington & Gerolami, 2014, p.165). Institutional context accounts for some of the variation, however Leckie and Brett (1995) also stress the inherent tension between the academy’s collegial, autonomous, and self-directed culture versus librarianship’s hierarchical, structured, and managed approach, perhaps best exemplified by text that was preoccupied with “finicky details about the smallest components of performance (such as timeliness, accuracy,

ability to relate to others, etc.)” (p. 25). Almost 20 years later Harrington and Gerolami (2014) found that

most Canadian academic librarians in this analysis work a prescribed number of hours per week and must make formal requests for their research and scholarly pursuits. It is also notable that clauses that specify the nature of librarian’s research tend to lessen autonomy rather than increase it. (p.165)

While both studies acknowledge that text is not indicative of reality and more research is needed to determine how the agreements are used and the degree of autonomy that librarians actually have, the prescribed managerialism evident in both studies and librarians’ general acquiescence to seeking permission underscores the profession’s continued struggle with identity and ongoing challenge between commitment to professional practice versus academic expectations. Historically the issue of professionalism and the profession figured prominently as a basis of many arguments for or against academic status. Indeed the related debate of professional status was playing out on the pages of *Library Journal*, *Feliciter* and the *CAUT Newsletter* often alongside and at times intermingling with that of faculty/academic status, and it is to this issue that we now turn.

Yes, But Is It a Profession?

Thumbing through the 1956-1958 print issues of *Feliciter* articles by Ower (1957), Turner (1957; 1958), Marshall (1958), Watson (1970), and Hafter (1975) as well as commentaries of individual librarians regarding the American Library Association’s Code of Ethics, there is evidence that the issue of professional status preoccupied many librarians throughout the 1950s, 60s and 70s. The articles generally attempt to identify a set of attributes that define a profession and then assess librarianship against the said characteristics. Ower

(1957) asserted that professions are distinguished by “(1) a long period of study as a prerequisite for qualification for entrance and (2) a degree or license is required after tests of fitness before one can practice in the profession,” but adds that professions are also concerned with the “art” of advising, guiding, or serving others (p.17). Ower argued that librarians must shed their image as custodians of books and instead be recognized as “possessor[s] of the art or skill of organizing and making available the contents [emphasis in the original] of books: that is of knowledge (p. 17). Turner (1957; 1958) concurred and likewise stressed the intellectual nature of the training as the differentiating factor between the lawyer and the plumber. Ower’s emphasis on librarians being the organizers of knowledge underscored the need for a philosophy of librarianship, the absence of which is frequently noted throughout *Feliciter*’s pages. Turner (1958) in particular considered a theoretical foundation critical to librarianship being accepted as a profession stating there must be “a common purpose, a unity behind the endeavours of librarians which relate the parts to the whole and indicate the boundaries of professional knowledge” (Turner, 1958, p. 22).

Within library and information studies literature there appears to be general consensus that professional ethics are integral to an occupation’s claim to being a profession. An intrinsic component of any profession is the client-practitioner relationship. The relationship is characterized by an inherent imbalance as the client relies on the judgement of the practitioner who has specialized knowledge (Turner, 1957). The client must thus be able to trust the judgement of the practitioner while the practitioner must entrust the confidential nature of the relationship. Professional ethics is about ensuring the client’s best interest is the pre-eminent guiding factor for the practitioner. However, as Turner (1957) explained, the extent to which professional ethics guide the client-practitioner relationship is the extent to which they have been developed within a particular vocation. For a profession to be recognized as such by society at

large the concerned vocational group as a whole must “show a concern for both the honour and the competence of the individual practitioners, and to take steps to ensure that only honourable and competent people are allowed to engage in the vocation, so that only the best service shall be rendered” (Turner, 1957, p. 15).

The role of associations or other professional and educational bodies in defining qualifications or censuring members when standards of professional practice or ethics have been breached is raised frequently and with various level of clarity. Ower (1957) was of the opinion that once the general public understands that librarianship is about providing guidance and advice in an individual’s search for knowledge, librarianship will be recognized as a profession and will have a claim to be, “regulated and controlled by its members” (p. 19). For Ower the establishment of a licensing regime was a jurisdictional technicality and a matter of “whether we will have 58 licensing systems, one for each state and province, or a uniform national system” (p. 19). Hubble (1968) likewise was of the opinion that it would be desirable for librarians to have a requisite license granted by an association such as the ALA in order to practice. The point was also echoed by Watson (1970) who concluded “librarianship is not quite a profession” (p. 425) because anyone can call themselves a librarian the proof being in “the number of senior positions in libraries of all types occupied by people without formal training” (p. 425).

The issue of hiring non-librarians to do librarians’ work is a long standing one and underscores the lack of understanding of what the profession is about and what expertise librarians bring to the academic enterprise. It is also brazen de-professionalization. In recent years librarians have mobilized⁹ against the practice of hiring individuals without MLS/MLIS

⁹ The Canadian Association of Professional Librarians (CAPAL) is a grass roots organization that formed in-part in response to the issue of de-professionalization. See Granfield, Kandiuk & Sonne de Torrens (2011).

degrees while appropriating the title of librarian and have been vocal opponents of recent developments at McMaster University¹⁰ and University of California Berkeley,¹¹ which is known for hiring individuals without the requisite MLS/MLIS degree while conferring the librarian title). But librarianship has been leery of a licensing regime. The concept of a licensing system for librarians had traction in the 1950s and 60s but on the whole seems to have been abandoned. Most would agree with the more nuanced perspectives of Turner (1958) and Marshall (1958) who advocated for a strong role of professional associations and regarded librarianships' theoretical limitations (rather than the absence of a licensing regime) as a central professional shortcoming. For Turner (1958) the question was not whether librarianship is a profession or not but rather "how professional is it?" (p. 12). Turner pointed to library school accreditation bodies and degree certification as demonstrable evidence that librarianship is concerned with the competence of its membership.

Marshall (1958) argued for the need of CLA to have a "professional arm" (p. 18) to deal with the profession's body of knowledge and daily practice. At the very least Marshall urged the creation of a Committee on Librarianship and feared that without such a focus CLA would become increasingly inadequate to handle the rising number of professional issues. So is librarianship a profession? The opinion of the day seemed to be—not quite. The potential is there

¹⁰ In a 2011 presentation at Penn State, Jeff Trzeciak then University Librarian at McMaster University, announced that new hires in libraries of tomorrow will unlikely be librarians. Trzeciak was of the opinion that the modern library needs PhD level subject specialists and folks with IT backgrounds. The reaction from academic librarians was swift and loud, not because many disagree with the benefits of subject or IT expertise but because of Trzeciak's blatant disregards for professional expertise required to effectively manage, curate, develop and preserve collections; locate, situate, and contextualize data and information; and develop user-centered services guided by professional values and ethics. Two of the more popular posts regarding Trzeciak's statements can be found here <http://www.attemptingelegance.com/?p=1031> and here, <https://laikaspoetnik.wordpress.com/2011/04/20/a-library-without-librarians-the-opinion-of-a-phd-librarian-on-the-jeffrey-trzeciak-controversy/>

¹¹ An example of a recent University of California Berkeley position advertisement where a MLIS is a preferred rather than required credential can be found here, <https://aprecruit.berkeley.edu/apply/JPF00968>

but lacking as librarianship was in theoretical foundation, the practice was devoid of a higher purpose. Perhaps the following commentary best exemplifies the predicament of many librarians,

I suggest the Association and its members discuss the “why” of library work more than the “hows”. At the moment most of us are intellectually defenceless and would be unable to deal with criticism or censorship if it raised its ugly head to any extent. Most of us know don’t know why we are running libraries. This is a great weakness since we are tampering with community life. (Bowron, 1956, p. 12)

Librarianship has evolved considerably since the decades of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. The “professional arm” so recommended by Marshall was filled by CACUL in Canada and the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) in the United States—associations that arose as the arbiters of professional standards for academic librarians in North America. The growth and development of library schools and improvements in library and information science education, the rapid expansion of universities and academic libraries, the establishment of prestigious academic journals such as *The Library Quarterly*, and the welcoming of academic librarians into the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in 1956 and to the CAUT in 1973 significantly contributed to the professionalization of librarianship (McAnally, 1975).

The issue of professionalization is intimately linked with any discussion of status not only concerning librarians but also for other academic staff, the professoriate in particular. The connection is unambiguous in a plethora of recent scholarship concerned with the de-professionalization or decline of faculty influence within the university. Turk’s (2000), *The Corporate Campus: Commercialization and the Dangers to Canada’s Colleges and Universities*, Bok’s (2003) *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education*,

Washburn's (2006) *University Inc. The Corporate Corruption of Higher Education*, Donoghue's (2008) *The Last Professor: The Corporate University and the Fate of the Humanities*, Gerber's (2014) *The Rise and Decline of Faculty Governance: Professionalization and the Modern American University*, and Cox's (2010) *The Demise of the Library School: Personal Reflections in the Modern Corporate University* to name a few are a handful of titles examining the casualization and outsourcing of academic labour, merit pay and other external incentivization schemes, increased managerialism and bureaucratization, and the inevitably diminished authority and autonomy of faculty.

Drawing on scholarship within sociology, Roberts and Donahue (2000) provide an overview of the characteristics of professions and identify six factors that are common to nearly all: (1) Mastery of specialized theory, (2) Autonomy and control of one's work and how one's work is performed, (3) Motivation focusing on intrinsic rewards and on interests of clients—which take precedence over the professional's self-interests, (4) Commitment to the profession as a career and to the service objective of the organization for which one works, (5) Sense of community and feeling of collegiality with others in the profession, and accountability to those colleagues, and (6) Self-monitoring and regulation by the profession (pp. 367-368). Although the article is focused on the professoriate the exact analysis can be applied to academic librarians: (1) there is an expectation that academic librarians are developing professionally and keeping up with developments in the field; (2) they have reasonable autonomy and control over their work, the vast majority being covered by collective agreements; (3) they are motivated primarily by intrinsic rewards and focused on the student; (4) they are committed to librarianship as a career and to the academic mission of their institution; (5) they are committed to their professional community relying on professional associations to define standards and codes of ethics; and (6)

they have a practice of self-monitoring by submitting one's scholarly and professional achievement for peer review (at the individual level), and their graduate schools to an accreditation process and review (at the profession's level). Librarianship's standing as a profession is widely acknowledged but the library's hierarchical structure, historically rooted sexism, and managerialism are in conflict with the autonomous and independent characteristic traits of professions. Almost six decades later Turner's (1958) statement still resonates, "the real question with regards to any vocational group is not whether it is profession, but how professional is it?" (p. 12).

Summary

This chapter traced the evolution of academic librarianship and librarians' academic status in Canada. Librarianship established a foothold as a profession in 1933 when the Commission of Enquiry, reviewing the condition and needs of Canadian libraries, acknowledged that a level of expertise was required to manage library services and collection. The ensuing decades saw the formation of the CLA in 1946 and the CACUL in 1963, a division of CLA, that arose to address the unique issue of academic librarians. The 1960s and 70s were formative and spirited years as academic librarians wrestled with issues of professional identity and affinity, and struggled against prevailing social attitudes, established organizational hierarchies, and the exclusionary norms of the academy. By the late 1970s academic librarians' affinity with teaching faculty became established when CAUT/CACUL released the *Guidelines on Academic Status for University Librarians*. The *Guidelines* were critical in defining and defending librarians' rights and responsibilities as academic staff. CAUT's recognition of librarians as academic staff was particularly critical to situating librarians alongside faculty colleagues, however the gesture can also be regarded as symbolic as the *Guidelines* were non-binding. The applicability and

interpretation of the *Guidelines* was subject to local context, hierarchy, and the power imbalance between the library's most senior administrator and rank and file librarians. The present-day result is an inconsistent plethora of academic ranks, workloads, flexibilities to manage one's own time, supports to engage in scholarship and research, as well as rights and responsibilities to participate in university, and especially, library governance (Revitt & Luyk, 2019).

In the following chapter I review how two concepts integral to this study: librarians' academic status and the notion of the institution, have been explored in the literature. Within the disciplinary context of library and information studies, scholarship examining librarians' academic status is almost exclusively centered on the librarian and negligent in its examination of the broader institutional and social relations within which the librarian is enmeshed. Within the field of sociology, the institution, however theorized, is constructed as an objectified abstract entity equally divorced from the activities of people and the inherent social relations. To contrast, an institutional ethnographic inquiry rejects both the individuation of the subject and any theorized approaches to the examination of institutional processes. In this study, the individual experiences of librarians are an essential component of inquiry, but they are not its focus. Rather, librarians' individual accounts are a mechanism into the examination of institutionalized power. Based on literature findings, it is argued that this inquiry is unprecedented in its topical focus and research approach.

Chapter 3

Librarians' Academic Status and the Institution as Examined in the Literature

Bernstein (2009) estimates that over 100 peer reviewed articles examining librarians' academic status have been written between the early 1970s and 2009, however the overwhelming majority are within the context of the United States. It is worth highlighting why this may be so.

There are a number of important differences between Canadian and American academic librarians and the postsecondary system:

Table 1

Comparison of Canadian and US Postsecondary System and Library Statistics

	Canada	United States
Population	37 million	327 million
Post-secondary institutions	300 approx.	4627 ²
Universities	96 ¹	1518 ²
University per capita	385,000	215,000
University students (full and part-time)	1,700,000 ¹	20,688,000 ²
Academic librarians	1827 ³	26,606 ⁴
Faculty (full and part time)	70,000 ¹	1,700,000 ²
Students per faculty member	24	20
Students per librarian	930	778

Note. The table is adapted from Taylor, 2005. ¹Universities Canada; ²US Department of Education; ³Revitt, Magnus, Schrader, & Wright (2019); ⁴American Library Association.

Canada has a significantly lower number of universities than the United States, and the per capita difference is considerable: approximately 385,000 students per university in Canada versus 215,000 students per university in the United States. Canada's vast geography, sparsely populated northern regions, and the public funding of universities "where it is considered more efficient to spend money to grow existing universities and thus bring down the average cost per student" (Taylor, 2005, p. 142) may provide a reasonable explanation why this may be the case. The difference between the number of students per librarian in Canada (930) and the United States (778) is also notable with an approximate 152 more students per academic librarian in Canada. The higher student ratio is potentially one reason why Canadian academic librarians' promotion criteria emphasize professional practice and job responsibilities to a greater extent than scholarship and research.

In a survey of 124 research universities in the United States, Walters (2016) found that 52% grant nominal faculty status to academic librarians. These findings are similar to Bolin (2008a; 2008b) who found that 57% of institutions grant nominal faculty status to librarians working at Association of Research Libraries' (ARL) universities; of the ARL institutions, 21% grant full faculty status to librarians with traditional faculty ranks, titles of associate professor, assistant professor, and professor, and rigorous scholarly expectations to achieve rank. Taylor (2005) observed that "the Canadian university community sees academic librarians as valuable support to professors in their research and teaching needs but not as active or competitive researchers," (p. 144) and that rank and tenure is "certainly less stressful, and promotion between levels easier to attain" (p. 147). The sparse scholarship exploring librarians' academic status within the Canadian context may in part be explained by the far fewer number of Canadian

academic librarians, less pressure to publish, and workloads that are predominantly oriented towards professional practice.

Academic Status: A New Approach to an Old Question

A search in the fall of 2018 of the University of Alberta Libraries' catalogue, Canada's second largest after the University of Toronto Libraries, on the terms faculty status librarian* OR academic status librarian* AND Canad* resulted in 218 articles, books, and reports. The initial result of 302 was reduced to 218 once duplicate records were removed. A closer examination of the results further reduced the number to approximately 50 as "false hits," titles deemed irrelevant to the subject matter or titles that were only incidentally related, were eliminated. The remaining 50 titles can be grouped into five general categories:

- Articles and opinion pieces from the 1960s thru the 1980s discussing the pros and cons of faculty or academic status, and reflecting the predominant debates of the day: academic librarians' professional identity and labour affinity (Crowley, 1997; Downs, 1967; Eli, 1977; Hafter, 1975; Negherbon, 1964; Watson, 1971; White, 1996; Wilkinson, 1985);
- Case studies, surveys, and commentary about librarians' labour organizing and status (Academic parity, 1975; Archibald, 1977; Divay, Ducas, & Michaud-Oystryk, 1987; Kandiuk, 2014; Leckie & Brett, 1995; Mount, 1978; Ottawa librarians, 1975; Savage, 1982; Sonne de Torrent, 2014; Taylor, 2005; Thomson, 1981; Ward, 1974a; 1974b; 1974c; 1975; Wilkinson, 1979);
- Studies examining the impact of academic status on job satisfaction, career goals, or salaries (Leckie & Brett, 1997; Gilman & Lindquist, 2010; Qureshi, 1971; Ridley, 2014; 2018; Sierpe, 1999; Stangl & Hoke, 1977);

- Articles reporting and examining the rights and responsibilities associated with academic status such as collegial governance, academic freedom, promotion and tenure (Academic freedom, 1976; Belliston, 2016; Harrington & Gerolami, 2014; Kandiuk & Sonne de Torrens, 2015; Revitt & Luyk, 2016a; 2016b; 2019).

A seminal Canadian work that deserves special mention and is included in the categories above as well as referenced extensively in Chapter 2, is *In Solidarity: Academic Librarians Labour Activism and Union Participation in Canada* (2014) edited by Dekker and Kandiuk. This book examines the role of provincial and national associations in the shaping and evolution of librarians' academic status and provides case studies of librarians' labour organizing at selected Canadian institutions. Thoroughly researched, the book is a detailed historical and descriptive account of developments and events. There are also a number of studies that explore librarians' engagement with scholarship and research usually with the implication and understanding that both are an expectation of academic status (Divay & Steer, 1983; Berg, Jacobs, & Cornwall, 2013; Fox, 2007; Jacobs, Berg, & Cornwall, 2010; Koufogiannakis & Crumley, 2006; Meadows, Berg, Hoffmann, Torabi, & Gardiner, 2013; Schrader, Shiri, & Williamson, 2012; Whitmell, 2017).

The above is literature about academic librarians, where the focus is the academic librarian, and where the research question is constructed around issues relevant to librarians' academic status such as professional identity and belonging; struggle and inequality; or the examination of the pros and cons, outcomes and responsibilities including salaries, scholarship expectations, research competencies, collegial governance, peer review and tenure processes, and academic freedom. To contrast, in an institutional ethnography, the inquiry begins with the academic librarian and is conducted from her standpoint, but unlike previous studies, the focus is

not on the librarian but on the institution. I'm interested in exploring questions that contemplate the broader institutional apparatus: How is it that the academic librarian's lesser status is the ideal at Canadian universities? What are the social processes that shape this ideal? Institutional ethnographies make visible practices, policies, and processes that contour and shape people's daily experience. A key distinction regarding the type of knowledge that is generated from an institutional ethnographic approach to inquiry is the attention that the researcher pays to how the subject's experience is socially organized. Institutional ethnography is concerned with revealing *how* things work; how they are shaped, textually mediated, and institutionally ruled by the activities of people located far away.

The Academic Librarian and the Ruling Relations

Related to how the question of academic status for Canadian librarians is treated in the literature is the examination of how the work of the academic librarian is conceived. It is here that we see the disjuncture between how librarians experience and understand what they do versus how that work is constructed within professional and public discourse. I will focus my discussion on three seminal reports and two initiatives.

The Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report (2010), commissioned by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) and written by the prominent scholar Megan Oakleaf, is a 225 page report with the aim of providing academic libraries "with a clearer understanding of what research about the performance of academic libraries already exists, where gaps in this research occur, and to identify the most promising best practices and measures correlated to performance" (ACRL, 2014, para. 1). The report has been cited 488 times (Google Scholar) demonstrating its relative impact on the profession. It is interesting to note that the citation count for this report stood at 319 in the summer of 2017. By

July of 2019 the citation count increased to 488 demonstrating the report's continued influence. Oakleaf (2010) challenges librarians to proclaim the library's value by emphasizing the impact the library has on student and faculty performance. Such impact can be demonstrated by measuring outcomes like student retention, student success, research and productivity, and analyzing the library's contribution to each. In order to tie the nebulous concept of student success to the value of the library, Oakleaf recommends the following:

institutions place emphasis on students' job placements immediately after college and most invite employers to campus to interview students. Librarians can help students prepare for these interviews by sharing resources, such as company profiles, market analyses, etc., with career resources units on campus and with students directly. When librarians help students secure jobs, their value to their overarching institutions is clear. (p. 109)

The above is exemplary of the often task-oriented and narrowly conceived role of the librarian which emphasizes practical, technical, resource-based skills versus professional education that engages critical, reflective, and generative thinking and is concerned with values and the meaning of discourse (Day, 2007). Such narratives are reductionist presenting librarians as enablers devoid of intellectual agency. In this scenario, the library is the protagonist while the librarian is implored to do her utmost to bolster organizational value. *The Value of Academic Libraries* report is an apotheosis to an assessment and accountability driven culture emblematic of neoliberal ideologies and economic capitalist relations.

Feminist scholarship has highlighted the necessary de-valuation and de-skilling of women's work, or work that is associate with and traditionally done by women, that happens within a capitalist mode of production—a discussion that is critically relevant to a study

concerned with a feminized sector of academia, and one that is taken up in Chapter 10 of this dissertation. For now I want to underscore the work of seminal scholars such as Federici (2004), Fortunati (1995), and Mies (2014) who provide rigorous accounts of capitalism's gendered exploitation. Fortunati's seminal work, *The Arcane of Reproduction: Housework, Prostitution, Labour and Capital*, in particular reveals how theories of value conceal and mask women's reproductive, non-waged labour so its disappearance into the value of commodities and their production is complete. Mies' book, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour*, has effectively de-bunked the idea that certain work is innately suited to a particular sex. Mies critically interrogates the historical "evolution" of the sexual division of labour and "housewifization" to expose the often violent, conflict-ridden, and exploitative relationships between men and women, the colonizers and the colonized, the privileged and the poor. Mies argues that these relationships were purposefully formed and strategically directed by the State, the Church, and the powerful, in the name of progress and (always) for the sake of profit. Mies points out that the family, for example, is not a timeless relation. The concept of "the family," that is the cohabitation of blood relations, was not fully adopted in Europe till the middle of the nineteenth century. Mies argues that the family, along with the housewifization of women, are patriarchal and capitalist relations created so capital can be maximized.

Similarly, in a graduate thesis, Holmes (2006) examined how myths around motherhood have been socially and historically constructed to suit those very same relations. Prior to industrialization society did not consider that there was anything appealing about child rearing—"an onerous task" best left to others. Children were considered as "potentially deviant, sickly, harmful, demonic and animalistic" (Hays as cited in Holmes, 2006, p. 37). They were sent to wet

nurses, boarding schools, put to work young and were wrapped, swaddled, administered opium, and whipped when necessary. And while women were still the primary caregivers of either their own or other people's children,

it is important to note that this had nothing to do with ostensibly innate qualities which better suited them for raising children. After children, women were simply the most subordinate members of society, and as such, were relegated the denigrated position of child minder. (Holmes, 2006, p. 38)

Perhaps most interestingly, the children of aristocrats were raised primarily by men. Heirs needed to be well educated and morally intact—a job rightly delegated to the morally superior man. Although the seeds of capitalism were sown long before industrialization, it is during the industrial revolution that the capitalist's ability to increase output was raised to new and unprecedented levels. Profit and growth are dependent on a steady supply of human labour. Children became a valued labour force commodity as well as military potential. It became important that children survive infancy, women thus became praised for their “innate” mothering abilities. Feminist scholarship has not only challenged our assumptions around sex roles, but also revealed how the gendered division of labour, indeed its exploitation, is a socially constructed relation necessary to a capitalist mode of production.

The *Core Competencies for 21st Century CARL Librarians* (2010) produced on behalf of the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) is a competency profile intended to set standards for “a series of knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviours that define and contribute to performance” (Belzile et al., 2010, p. 3). The document stresses that such competencies can be used to draft job postings, position descriptions, and facilitate the development of training, education and performance evaluation programs. The said recommendations undermine some of

academia's foundational principles. Performance evaluation programs run counter to academia's culture of collegiality and the primacy of peer review processes. Position descriptions are incompatible with notions of professional autonomy and sit uncomfortably with academic freedom rights and responsibilities, while training and education programs infer to professional development activities that support skill development rather than steeped engagement with disciplinary knowledge. It is worth noting that the Library Education Working Group and the Building Capacity Subcommittee that authored the report is comprised of two CARL member executives and 10 senior library administrators. The *Core Competencies* documents is an example of texts that reflect the ideology of a library as a hierarchical organization that needs to be administratively managed as opposed to collegially governed. Issues that are reflected: issues of training, performance evaluation, job descriptions and so on are formulated, studied, examined, practiced, and taken up because "they are administratively relevant, not because they are significant first in the experience of those who live them" (Smith, 1990, p. 15). Smith argued that what is studied, the type of questions social research seeks to answer are "shaped and given their character and substance by the methods and practice of governing" (p. 15)—that is the professions, the academy, or otherwise known as the relations of ruling. In developing institutional ethnography Smith sought to create a method of knowing that would be focused on the site of experience and steered away from objectified knowledge that is created by those outside of the local experience. It is argued that a method of knowing, rooted in the local, the experiential, and the material is closer to the truth: to revealing the actualities of what is happening and how it happens as it does.

In her study examining whether the CARL competencies were being used by academic librarians, Soutter (2016) found that 35% of respondents used the competencies while 65% did

not. Librarians' reasons for not using the competencies stemmed from concerns for academic freedom, the presence of collective agreements, the preference for more critical sources, as well as comments indicating librarians found the competencies "nebulous" and "unrealistic" (Soutter, 2016, p. 38). Soutter's findings illuminate the disjuncture between academic librarians locating themselves within the culture of the academy and the discourse of professional associations preoccupied with the library as an administrative entity.

The Future Now: Canada's Libraries, Archives and Public Memory (2014) report by Beaudry et al. was sponsored by The Royal Society of Canada to explore issues of inequitable access to library resources and services, organizational restructuring, and leadership roles and professional development. The report's numerous recommendations focus primarily on the institution that is Library and Archives Canada tasking it to develop a five-year strategic plan, and to assume a leadership and coordinating role between the various regional associations and councils. While the report frequently references librarians and archivists, their role is largely mythologized through quaint vignettes, typically of a patron recalling a distant memory (usually from childhood) about a sympathetic and friendly librarian that introduced them to the magical world of books:

My childhood in Trois-Rivières was marked by the book and publishing. The children's library on Hart Street was on the way to my school. I used to stop every day. I filled up for myself and for some boarders who were great readers. The two librarians whom I recall particularly, Misses Godbout and Johnson, at times consoled me by suggesting reading. . . The librarians introduced me to the world, intellectually speaking. (as cited in Beaudry et al., 2014, p. 32)

The cumulative effect is a patronizing presentation of the profession. The point of this critique is not to discredit the integrity of the individual's memory or undermine the authenticity of the report. Indeed, Smith is careful to point out that in developing institutional ethnography as a research approach she is not discounting established knowledge claims; however, she is asking us to be mindful of the ruling standpoint from which they are produced.

Initiatives such as the *8Rs Canadian Library Human Resource Study* (Ingles, De Long, Humphrey, & Sivak, 2005), the *8Rs Redux: CARL Libraries Human Resources Study* (De Long, Sorensen, & Williamson, 2015) and most recently Canada's 2016 and 2018 census of academic librarians (Revitt, Schrader, & Kaufman, 2016; 2017; Revitt et al., 2019) arguably do shine a light on the actual people who work in the library, however these efforts likewise abstract the very individuals they attempt to redeem from institutional objectification. The *8Rs*, *8Rs Redux* and the *Censuses* are overwhelmingly data driven initiatives employing a survey methodology. The findings are presented in the aggregate further aggravating numerical data's concretizing and reductionist properties.

Dominant Approaches in LIS and the Rise of Critlib

Equally notable with respect to the literature about Canadian librarians' academic status is the overwhelming reliance on document analysis and survey methodologies. Indeed, the field of library and information science (LIS) has been traditionally dominated by survey and historical research approaches (Chu, 2015; Hider & Pymm, 2008), paying particularly little attention to theory (Beilin, 2018; Hudson, 2016; 2017; Schroeder & Hollister, 2014). The profession's longstanding preoccupation with the practical rather than the theoretical is rooted in librarianship's service orientation where the focus has been on practice rather than praxis. The profession's "practicality imperative" (Hudson, 2016) has been challenged by critical

librarianship or critlib, a movement dedicated to bringing social justice and human rights principles into librarianship and library work. In the last decade the movement has gained momentum with the establishment of Library Juice Press, an imprint “specializing in theoretical and practical issues in librarianship from a critical perspective” (Litwin Books & Library Juice Press, 2019), and the proliferation of critlib journals including: *In the Library with the Lead Pipe* (2012), *Journal of Critical Librarianship* (2008), *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* (2017), and the *Journal of Radical Librarianship* (2015). These titles have joined the decades established *Progressive Librarian: A Journal of Critical Studies and Progressive Politics in Librarianship* (1990) in advancing a professional discourse that challenges librarians’ long-standing commitment to neutrality, practicality, and objectivity.

However, despite the activist and social justice-oriented agenda of critical librarianship and its signature come-and-join-the-conversation Twitter discussions under the #critlib hashtag, the movement has been criticized for being elitist, overly intellectual, dominated by academic librarians, and institutionalized as professional associations such as the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) begin to solicit critlib publications (Beilin, 2018). What is not considered by critical librarianship, or the levelled criticism against it, is the issue of researcher standpoint. Standpoint determines what can be seen. Conventional social research that is conducted within the naturalist, positivist, or subjectivist frameworks assumes that the researcher is either detached and objective or predisposed and influenced. The knowledge that is generated aims to be matter of fact and abstract or presenting insight from the knower’s perspective. In both instances the knowledge that is generated is institutionalized. As Smith (1990) argues, theories are products of the professions and the academy; and as such, they ultimately produce an ideological and dominant account of the subject’s every day and every night experience. In the

case of critical librarianship this is particularly true: “It is hard to envision critical librarianship that doesn’t rely to some degree on a theoretical basis,” in fact “librarians who identify with critical librarianship are explicit about the connection between their academic backgrounds in theory and their commitments in librarianship” (Beilin, 2018, p. 197). It is the necessarily theoretical filtering (Hudson, 2016) within critical librarianship that unhinges the subject’s experience from their lived reality. Like with other methodological approaches, the standpoint of the institutional ethnographer situates the researcher within the experience of the subject; but unlike other approaches, within an institutional ethnography the subject is not the focus of the inquiry. The aim of an institutional ethnographic inquiry is not an explication of the subject’s perspective and experience, but rather of the social relations and ideological processes that shape the subject’s perspective and experience.

Professional practice is what defines librarians as librarians. Research, scholarship and service to the university and community is what defines librarians as academics. Peer review, codes of ethics, and professional standards is what defines librarianship as a profession. And although the profession is articulated and delineated in guidelines, codes of ethics, various reports and standards, what librarians actually do and how we contribute to the academic mission of the university remains poorly understood (Blake, 1966; Bletcher, 1945; McKillop, 2014; Prange, 2013). It is thus logical to rationalize that attitudinal barriers of those outside the profession are at the root of how librarians experience academic status. Smith (1990) explains that attitudinal barriers are expressed in the social relations and these social relations are presupposed but never examined. Institutional ethnography problematizes the social and assumes that the environment is not neutral. The job of the institutional ethnographer is to reveal, to make visible, that what is there but may be overlooked, underestimated, or undetected. Social relations

are the something that connects the local to the relations of ruling. By employing institutional ethnography and focusing the inquiry on the institution and associated structures of power, and away from the individual librarian, it is hoped that my study will reveal another dimension to understanding librarians' experience as academic staff.

What is an Institution?

In order to explore how the academic librarian's everyday world is actually put together it is imperative that the inquiry starts with the daily experience but then it must move beyond it; that is because our everyday world, the one in which we go grocery shopping, walk the dog, or go about our paid work, is not self-contained. It is coordinated and organized by the doings of others located elsewhere. These others—what Smith has termed and defined as the ruling relations—have been variously theorized as the bureaucracy, ideology, formal organizations, the professions, the academy, or institutions in general (Smith, 2001). Within institutional ethnography, the ruling relations, and the institution by extension, are not objectified and assumed to exist *out there*, but rather can be reduced to the activities of people. However, within sociology and the social sciences more broadly, this is not how institutions have been typically conceived and defined.

The Institution as per Standard Sociology

Emile Durkheim defined sociology as “the science of institutions, of their genesis and functioning” (as cited in Ahmed, p. 19, 2012). For Durkheim, an institution was “an object of the social sciences” (p. 19). This broad and vague definition has been reworked and shaped endlessly by sociologists and social theorists to the point where it is perhaps easier to arrive at an

agreement at what institutions are not rather than what they are (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). The prominent sociologist and theorist Jonathan Turner offers the following definition of institutions:

a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organizing relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect of fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment. (Turner, 1997, p. 6)

The *Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences* takes a more succinct approach stating that institutions are “defined as constraints or rules that induce stability in human interaction” (Voss, 2001, p. 7561), and further adds that institutions “deal with recurrent basic problems in social life” (p. 7561). Anthony Giddens stated that “institutions by definition are the more enduring features of social life” (Giddens, 1984, p. 24). Jepperson (1991) defined an institution as a “social order or pattern that has attained a certain state or property” (p. 145) and provided the following examples to emphasize the challenge of conceptualizing institutions: “marriage, sexism, the contract, wage labor, the handshake, insurance, formal organization, the army, academic tenure, presidency, the vacation, attending college, the corporation, the motel, the academic discipline, voting” are all objects commonly considered to represent institutions (p. 144). Young (1986) claimed that institutions are “recognized practices consisting of easily identifiable roles, coupled with collections of rules or conventions governing relations among the occupants of these roles” (p.107). Within the scope of at least these definitions and examples, it appears that the concept of an institution is applied to both formal and informal processes (e.g. voting and the vacation respectively), to conventional structures or entities (e.g. the motel or the

army), is rule-bound, and associated with stability and repeated, patterned activity. In the broadest and perhaps simplest sense, institutions are rules that influence human behaviour.

However, before proceeding to a fuller analysis of what constitutes an institution, it is imperative that the concept be distinguished from that of an organization as the two are often used interchangeably. Indeed, some of the examples provided by Jepperson are commonly regarded as an organization, for example, the army. The conflation of the two concepts within popular discourse is further evident through such popular sites as Wikipedia (2019a) which defines an organization as “an entity comprising multiple people, such as an *institution* [emphasis added] or an association, that has a particular purpose” (para. 1). For the purposes of this discussion, an organization and an institution are understood to be distinct if interdependent.

Barton (2000) provides a more focused and differentiated conception of an organization that is anchored in the activities of people around a common purpose: “An organization comes into existence when explicit procedures are established to coordinate activities of a group in the interest of achieving specific interests” (p. 297). Barton’s definition hints at the presence and role of institutions within organizations “when explicit procedures are established” without fusing the two concepts into one. If institutions are broadly considered to be established formal and informal processes, conventions, practices, or rules we can reasonably assume that institutions are elements that are part of organizations. In this sense, it can be argued that institutions shape organizations.

William Richard Scott, the prominent American sociologist and institutional theorist, agrees. In a review of the various types of arguments within the institutional theory framework, Scott (1991) highlighted a seminal article by Meyer and Rowan (1977) which called attention to the environmental factors—institutionalized beliefs, rules, symbols, and roles—that shape

organizations. Scott explained that prior to the 1960s, organizations were thought of as closed systems. Closed system models assume that organizations are self-sufficient and minimally impacted by the external environment. These models were primarily concerned with organizational inputs and outputs. However, the closed system model was at odds with the actualities of how organizations function (Smith, 2001). Thus, in the 1960s social theorists turned to open systems models which stressed the importance of institutional factors in shaping and supporting organizations. The increased attention to institutional factors was the result of a renewed interest in the sociology of culture (Scott, 1991). Culture was recognized as constituting its own socially constructed, objective reality, and cultural systems could influence the social world independently. In *Institutions and Organizations*, now in its 4th edition and considered one of the most comprehensive analysis of the relationship between institutional theory and the study of organizations, Scott (1995) defines institutions as “complexes of cultural rules that were being increasingly rationalized through the actions of the professions, nation-states, and the mass media and that hence supported the development of more and more types of organizations” (p. 30). For Scott, institutions are, in essence, cultural rules that prop up organizations.

How Institutions are Analyzed and Discussed

Institutions can be analyzed in many different ways including by the degree of formality: formal and informal; type of applicable rules: operational, collective, and constitutional; or spheres of belonging in society: economic and political. Voss (2015) maintained that institutions are dependent on the “interaction of actors” (p. 191) because the rules or constraints of behaviour that constitute an institution always happen among people. These social rules affect social interdependency by regulating social dilemmas. Social rules as institutions can be formal or informal. An example of a formal institution is the law. Formal institutions are “created and

arranged by agents who are able to rely on third parties for monitoring and enforcement” (Voss, 2001, p. 7563). To contrast, informal institutions “do not rely on an external authority’s monitoring and policing of the participants’ behaviour” (p. 7563). An example of informal institutions are social norms and conventions. Conventions are defined as rules that are self-enforcing but (typically) codified such as traffic regulations.

Institutions can also be analyzed in terms of levels and according to where they operate. Elinor Ostrom, who in 2009 was awarded the Nobel Prize in economics, advanced that social institutions are formed by three levels of nested rules: operational rules, collective choice rules, and constitutional rules (Ostrom, 1990). Institutions operating at the operational level make rules that influence everyday decisions. These rules, among others, guide who should monitor the actions of others and how, determine what information can be shared, and how sanctions and rewards should be applied. Operational level rules are centered on the actions of people and the range of operational choices. Operational rules determine how rules are applied. Collective choice level rules affect operational rules and define who is eligible to undertake and change operational-level activities, as well as identify the required procedures to make such changes. Collective choice rules are concerned with policy-making, management, and adjudication. Collective choice rules determine how rules are changed. Constitutional rules are the third level of rules that specify in turn who is allowed to change collective-choice rules and the procedures for making such changes. Constitutional rules deal with governance, adjudication, and modification. Constitutional rules determine how rules are made. Lastly, institutions can be classified by the sphere of society to which they belong and contribute such as economic or political institutions (Voss, 2001). Economic institutions regulate the production, consumption, and exchange of goods such as property rights. Political institutions mediate conflict and regulate

how collective decisions are made. Political institutions are concerned with creating, applying, and enforcing laws.

How Institutions Emerge, Change, Evolve, and Persist

Scholars have observed that “to explain institutions is to give an account of how they emerge or take form” (Ahmed, p. 20). The eminent social anthropologist Mary Douglas maintained that “minimally, an institution is only a convention” (Douglas, 1986, p. 46). For Douglas, institutions and institutionalized processes arise out of conventions. Conventions, as previously mentioned, are self-enforcing, codified rules. Conventions result when “all parties have a common interest in there being a rule to ensure coordination, none [of the parties] has a conflicting interest, and none will deviate lest the desired coordination is lost” (as cited in Douglas, 1986, p. 46). For example, traffic rules coordinate how we move about a busy city. As individuals we do not have the incentive to deviate from the rule of stopping at a red light because by doing so we risk harming ourselves. However, Douglas makes the point that individuals will violate conventions if it can be done with impunity. For examples, we will run a red light if we are in a hurry, judge the physical risk to be low, and if we think we won’t get caught. Douglas (1986) argues that in order for a convention to become an entrenched social institution, it “needs a parallel cognitive convention to sustain it” and should rest its legitimacy on its fit “with the nature of the universe” (p. 46).

At the core of Douglas’ argument is that established institutions are founded in nature and therefore reason. In order to persist over time, institutions must be stable. Douglas theorized that the stabilizing principle is “the naturalization of social classifications” (p. 48) meaning that a classification (Douglas believes that people have a need to classify) must be grounded in nature in order not to be continuously challenged. Douglas employed an analogy of complementarity to

emphasize the inherent equilibrium in the organizing of society. She reasoned that from the innate symmetry such as that of male and female, left and right, a political hierarchy can be developed:

Further metaphorical elaborations of left and right [can be made to] distinguish the northern and southern divisions of a kingdom; they can organize the seating arrangements of the council to the right and left of the king. . .[where] the chief territorial divisions and political functions have been justified upon existing extensions of the same analogy. (p. 49)

Douglas maintained that using the principle of symmetry over and over again is mutually reinforcing to the point where the whole system becomes grounded in nature. For example, in the industrial age of Great Britain the analogy of the head and the hand was used to justify and maintain social hierarchy by distinguishing between the superior and advanced intellect of the upper class from that of the laboring masses: “In society, as in the body, the head was reflective, manipulative and controlling; the hand, unreflective, mechanical, determined by instructions” (Shapin & Barnes, 1976, p. 235). According to Douglas (1986) institutions are entities that “lock into the structure of an analogy” and deploy it between contexts effectively developing a shared analogy (p. 49). Institutional legitimization is dependent on shared analogies. In this sense institutions can be seen as naturally arising from human nature.

Although legitimacy is important to the persistency of institutions, Voss (2015) posits that legitimacy is a matter of degree that is best verified empirically. As such, legitimacy on its own is not an appropriate criterion for defining or conceptualizing institutions. In order to understand why some institutions persist and others do not, we should focus less on legitimacy and more in trying to understand what drives institutional change. Voss (2001; 2015) maintains

that there are many social processes that either inhibit or promote institutional change. Some institutions change as a result of conscious design and effort; others change as a result of our individual activity and effort to adapt to local circumstances, and still others may change as a result of a changing social structure.

It seems reasonable to assume that institutions persist because they are collectively beneficial, responsive, and efficient. However, there is ample evidence that market processes of competition do not weed out the emergence and persistence of inferior institution (North, 1990; North, Wallis, & Weingast). In fact, inefficient institutions have proven to be highly persistent and stable. There are many arguments why inefficient institutions endure. One is that inequality of power promotes, indeed subsidizes, the existence of institutions that serve the interests of a powerful few. These institutions do not need to be concerned with the benefit of the collective or structural efficiencies (Voss, 2015). Another argument is that inefficient institutions persist because they are interconnected with other institutions or because no alternative system exists, or because they are rooted in a way of life and meet local needs. Dai (2015) argues that the persistence of the bazaar in Islamic cities has more to do with Islamic culture and religion, connection to modern formal commercial institutions, and the demands of the local economic and tourist sectors than institutional effectiveness and efficiencies.

The Institution in Institutional Ethnography

What distinguished the conceptualization of the institution within the framework of institutional ethnography is that institutions are central to the concept of ruling relations, which however theorized, are ultimately the activities of people located away from the subject's immediate environment. Although ruling relations have an objectifying effect on the subject, within institutional ethnography the ruling relations themselves are not objectified. To contrast,

in the conceptualization of institutions by prominent social theorists such as Douglas (1986), Ostrom (2008), Jepperson (1991), Scott (1995), and Voss (2001; 2015) institutional elements such as norms, rules, conventions, procedures, or patterns are not only objectified but also fetishized. However, neither institutional objectification or fetishism, although problematic, are the focal point of Smith's criticism. Indeed, Smith (2001) noted that effective communication of social phenomena would be difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish without relying on such lexical devices. What Smith is critical of is the "floating sociology" (p. 165) that results as a consequence of using such lexical devices and the fact that institutional elements, such as norms, patterned activity, rules, and culture, are assumed to exist with no one being concerned with how they came to be. For Smith, the problem is ontological.

Ontology of the Institution

Referencing back to the examples of the definitions of an institution provided earlier by institutional scholars such as Voss (2001; 2005), Turner (1997), Giddens (1984), and Jepperson (1991), we can see that the activity of people is implied if not directly stated, e.g. "stable patterns of human activity" (Turner), "rules that induce stability in human interaction" (Voss, 2001), "enduring features of social life" (Giddens), or "recognized practices consisting of easily identifiable roles" (Jepperson). Smith (2001) observes that it is thus understood, and probably agreed, that institutions and organizations can only exist in people's activities, but yet they are not reduced to them. Smith notes the challenge and struggle in conceptualizing the institution without reducing it to the activities of people. How the "patterns," "rules," "sequences of action" actually come about is not addressed. Through objectification their existence is taken for granted. Smith identifies two rhetorical devices that are employed by sociologists and social theorists to achieve objectification: nominalization and metaphors. A nominal is something that exists in

name only such as communication, information, or organization. Smith (2001) observed that nominals conveniently preserve the accomplishments of people while eliminating their presence and activities. It is the infinitive verb form of the nominal—to communicate, to inform, to organize—that actually maintains the social activity of people. However, when nominals are used, such as communication or information, agency is transferred from people to the concept. A metaphor is another lexical tool that accomplishes objectification. A metaphor is when one image stands in for another. Sociology is replete with the use of metaphors (Nelson, 1969): Phrases such as “developmental stages,” “glass ceiling,” “iron cage,” “social capital” are used to conceptualize social issues without bothering with the activities of people.

Institutions and organizations are also ephemeral and the use of lexical devices such as metaphors and nominalizations effectively bypasses the problem of dealing with the “ephemerality of the social and non-observability of the forms of the social that have been called institutions and large-scale organizations” (Smith, 2001, p. 166). To illustrate the point, Smith directs our attention to a dinner party. As a social event, it is

produced in time and locality, and decays into the past over the course of its accomplishment. There is no moment when it is decisively there and no place in which it can be found again as the same as it was before. (p. 163)

The ephemerality of the social is especially challenging when we try to articulate and define forms of organization of larger scope such as governments or multinational corporations. They exist, but their substance is produced of the same “essentially ephemeral stuff as short-lived and locally achieved events” (p. 163). Smith is not so much concerned that these entities are typically conceived as if they are objects, indeed objectification makes it possible for us to talk about them, but the fact that we don’t find this approach problematic. Smith argued that an even bigger

issue is when the observable transcends the local setting; we must then discard research approaches and settle for theory.

And yet, how is it that despite the fleeting character of people's activities and interactivities, an organization can be identified as the same entity today, as yesterday, and as it will be tomorrow? Smith maintained that it is texts that provide for organizational capacity to exist beyond particular times, places, and people's doings. It is texts that standardize and coordinate practices that are taken up by people. And it is thru texts that ruling relations are mediated. Traditionally textual materials within the social sciences have been treated as a source of information. When the text itself is treated as a phenomenon worthy of investigation, as in the case of document analysis, this approach and many others operate on the assumption that text is "inert, dead, and out of context" (Smith, 1993, p. 90). To contrast, within an institutional ethnographic inquiry, the text is active and recognized for its organizing and coordinating properties. The text is taken up and activated by people but "its structuring effect is its own" (p. 91). Ruling relations are accomplished through texts. However institutional and organization scholars, and the social sciences more broadly, have not recognized texts as active constituents of social organization.

Summary

This chapter reviewed how the question of academic status and how the institution have been addressed and conceived within the field of library and information science and sociology respectively. Scholarship exploring librarians' academic or faculty status, within the Canadian context is minimal and clustered around the examination of pros and cons, challenges, rights and responsibilities, and dominated by survey, document analysis, and case study methodologies. The literature, described by Hudson (2017) as "reflective case studies, standards, best practices,

how-to guides and ‘cookbooks,’ and the like,” is indicative of an intellectual output that is focused on the practical (p. 207). Arguably, the critlib movement has infused the field with theory and raised attention to social justice and human rights issue, but the researcher standpoint remains institutionalized. An institutional ethnography is an involved and reasonably complex undertaking making it an unlikely choice of scholarship within a field preoccupied with the practical. Within the discipline of library and information studies, I was able to locate seven studies employing institutional ethnography: six focused on school librarianship (Crispin, 2008; Crispin, 2009a; Crispin, 2009b; Johnston, 2013; Johnston & Santos Green, 2016; Santos Green & Johnston, 2015), and one on public librarianship (Lundberg, 1991). As such, it is argued this study is unprecedented in its research approach, standpoint, and topical focus.

Within the field of sociology, scholars such as Douglas (1986), Durkheim (1994), Giddens (1984), Jepperson (1991), Scott (1995), Turner (1997), and Voss (2001; 2005), have variably conceptualized institutions as: possessing both formal and informal processes (e.g. voting and the vacation respectively); conventional structures or entities (e.g. the motel or the army); rule-bound; and associated with stability and repeated, patterned activity. Barton (2000) provided a commonly accepted definition of an organization as the activities of a group of people organized around a shared or common purpose. If institutions are broadly considered to be established formal and informal processes, conventions, practices, rules and so on, we can reasonably assume that institutions are elements that are part of organizations. In this sense, it is maintained that institutions shape organizations.

For Smith (2001), the rules, norms, processes, and practices typically used to characterize institutions and organizations are a necessary objectification which creates a floating sociology that implies the activity of people but is not reduced to them. The issue is not the objectification,

as Smith saw it, but that this objectification is not problematized. For Smith, the floating sociology becomes particularly troublesome when what is observable to us transcends the local setting as in the case of multinational organizations. The ephemeral nature of institutions and organizations means that we must then discard the empirical and rely on the theoretical. Institutional ethnography rejects a theorized approach to the studying of institutions and organizational processes. Like many research approaches, an institutional ethnography locates the inquiry within the daily experience of the subject; however, unlike other research approaches, an institutional ethnography necessarily moves beyond the subject to focus on the institutional to reveal how taken for granted processes, practices, and discourses shape the subject's daily experience. The aim of the inquiry is not "to produce knowledge on a given subject, but rather to reorient our ways of thinking about social reality and how it can be known" (Carpenter & Mojab, 2017, p. 56).

In the following chapter I explore the ontological and epistemological foundations on which the findings of this study are based. Institutional ethnography's empirical commitment is based on the social ontology of Karl Marx. For Marx, social reality is "constituted through the cooperative social activity of individuals" (Carpenter & Mojab, 2008, p. 4). Marx's ontological premise is a historical dialectical materialism and his argument that the totality of our thoughts, feelings, and ideas (our consciousness) are internally related and "actively produced within our experience of our social, material, and natural existence" (Allman, 1999, p. 37).

Epistemologically, institutional ethnography eschews the importation of priori frameworks, and is rooted in the actualities of everyday experiences. Institutional ethnography recognizes people to be experts in their own life and problematizes the social organization of those lives. The goal of the inquiry is to understand the social organization and the inherent ideological distortions that

rise up out of that organization. Institutional ethnography's ultimate purpose is "to generate potentially useful knowledge for *people whose everyday activities are being organized against their own interests* [emphasis in the original]" (Rankin, 2017, p. 1).

Chapter 4

Ontology, Epistemology, and Making Sense of the Institution

To practice institutional ethnography is to focus social inquiry, it's problematic, on the actual, social, and active world as it is lived and experienced by people. Such a focus requires an “ontological shift” (Smith, 2005) from linear, cause and effect thinking, from ideological and conceptual thinking, to relational thinking, to social, material, interrelated, and connected thinking. In short, to the dialectical. As our standpoint shifts from the theorized and outsider expert knowledge to that of people, of their actualities and daily practices and activity, a window is opened up into the ongoing social processes and relations that reveal the coordinating effect of others—the relations of ruling. In institutional ethnography, the actions and experiences of people at the local are not regarded as representative. Rather, the local experience is regarded as a window into the role of power (Deveau, 2008).

Ontological Assumptions

Ontologically institutional ethnography is rooted in Marx and Engels who present their ideas on consciousness and the material world in *The German Ideology* (1846). A prominent ontological debate at the time was that of idealism versus materialism. Idealism privileges ideas and human thought as the basis of reality. For idealists, activity of the human mind is the precursor to the material world. In other words, we think reality into existence. Materialism argues the exact opposite: Our ideas and our thoughts are the result of our interactions with the material world. In short, the material precedes thought. Marx and Engels found both of these propositions problematic. They faulted the idealists for having no relationship to the real world and human activity. And criticized the materialists, and Ludwig Feuerbach in particular, for ignoring history and the importance of social connections,

he only conceives him [man] as an ‘object of the senses,’ not as ‘sensuous activity,’ because he still remains in the realm of theory and conceives of men not in their given social connection. Not under their existing conditions of life, which have made them what they are, he never arrives at the actually existing, active men, but stops at the abstraction ‘man’, and gets no further than recognizing ‘the actual, individual, corporeal man’ emotionally . . . Thus he never manages to conceive the sensuous world as the total living sensuous activity of the individuals composing it. (Marx & Engels, 1998, pp. 46-47)

Marx rejected the dichotomy of the two theories and further claimed the polarity encouraged “reification” and “fetishism” of thought. Marx observed that reification, when people and social relations are converted into things, and fetishism, when we give power and agency to things, contribute to a dichotomized, first-impressions thinking that leads to erroneous assumptions and distortions of reality. Marx argued that what determined the nature of our being—reality—is a continuous reciprocity: “an internally related unity of opposites” (Allman, 2007, p. 32) between our consciousness and reality; “the production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men” (Marx & Engels, 1998, p. 42). Because we cannot live in an unconscious way, for Marx and Engels, thinking and action are intertwined and indivisible. One does not precede the other. Moreover, reality is conceptualized as dynamic and in a constant state of flux: the result of our continuous, sensory, active experience in and interaction with the physical world.

Our consciousness is not only comprised of thoughts and ideas that arise out of active engagement with the material world, but also out of our “given social connections” (Marx & Engels, 1998, p. 46). Our social connections are historically bound and situated. In other words,

we cannot escape the time and context into which we are born. For example, the consciousness of people living in today's society will differ in characteristics from that of individuals living in classical Greece. Thus, Marx reasoned, a great thinker like Socrates could not conceive of the value of labour because Greece was a slave owning society. Socrates' thoughts, ideas, and conceived reality was bounded by the context in which he lived. Marx and Engels espoused an internally relational, complex, and historically necessitated conceptualization of reality.

Internal relations. The concept of internal relations is foundational to Marx's ontological argument (Ollman, 1993). Relational thinking is different from categorical thinking. Categorical thinking allows us to make sense of complexity by grouping or organizing like items or concepts based on certain attributes. Categorical thinking allows us to focus on the end result. To contrast, relational thinking is more complex and allows for a more comprehensive understanding of relations between phenomena (Allman, 2007). Relational thinking allows us to focus on the process and "how the attributes of the phenomena that are internally related are continually shaped and determined within the relation" (Allman, 2007, p. 8).

Marx was critical of any thinking that ignored the relational complexity of ontological claims and used the myth of Cacus to illustrate his point. Cacus was half-man, half-beast who lived in a cave and stole oxen at night. To conceal his act, he walked the oxen backwards to his cave. The village people examining the evidence of the footprints concluded the oxen walked out of the cave and vanished (Ollman, 1993). Marx was making the point that when we focus on appearances we are often misguided in our conceptions of what is really happening: That is because reality, as Ollman reminds us, "is more than appearances" (p. 10). Presented visually the concept of internal relations may look something like Figure 1.

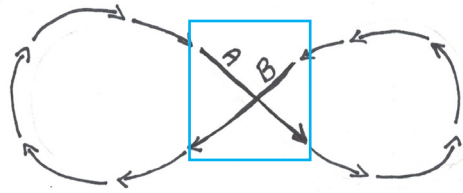


Figure 1. A potential illustration of Marx's concept of internal relations.

The concept of internal relations is characterized by contradictory and what may appear as independent relationships between aspects of a phenomena under investigation. In Figure 1, if we are focused only on “Feature A” and “Feature B” we may observe and conclude them to be independent, unidirectional, and even contradictory, when in fact a broader perspective would reveal they are internally related.

In his analysis of capitalism, Marx started with the entire capitalist system, and then methodically proceeded to investigate the interacting social processes and necessary conditions for its existence. With his revolutionary thinking and approach, he replaced the notion of a *thing* such as the economy, capital, or the markets, with the notion of *process* and *relation*. As Ollman (1993) explains a thing is “something that *has* a history and *has* external connections with other things,” a process encompasses history and possible futures, while the notion of a relation encompasses ties to other relations (p. 11). Marx understood the social relations and processes to be in a constant state of flux and progress. For Marx, the perplexity was not why something starts to change or how a relation gets established but “why it may *appear* [emphasis in the original] to have stopped . . . and why aspects of an already existing relation may *appear* to be independent” (Ollman, 1993, p. 12). However, Marx argued that for most people, our understanding of the world is in fact based on mere appearances, on the “footprints” leading out of Cacus’ cave, rather than the actualities of what is really happening. Allman (2007) allows that

such surface (if not superficial) conceptualization of reality is commonplace because the components of dialectical internal relations are rarely experienced or thought of as related.

A more thorough conceptualization of reality is further stifled by the limited capacity of language to express relational thinking. Allman (2007) makes the point that prior to the acquisition of language young children “think through their actions” (p. 33). Children tend to think externally and thus naturally encounter a world of relations. It is therefore possible to observe a young child’s thoughts. However, as we acquire language our thoughts become internalized and can only be expressed in language. But language is limiting. The common phrase “words fail me” typifies our struggle to articulate the shocking and incomprehensible, not to mention that which we may have not experienced. Allman notes that “language expresses concepts that tend to obscure, even extinguish, the relational origin of these concepts” (p. 33). However, for Marx language was not the main culprit in the distortion of our reality. Marx argued that we are misled in our thinking by the “material world of commodity production” (p. 33) where components of our social connections, such as features A and B in Figure 1, appear as independent and objectified when in fact they are not.

In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels outline the historical production and reproduction of material life: from the division of labour within the family unit in tribal societies, to the separation of commercial and industrial labour from agricultural labour, and finally to the evolution of markets and capitalist states. With each stage of development and division of labour, or professional expertise if we are considering a more contemporary perspective, we are removed from the material and social relations that constitute our experience. The very complexity of our modern society obscures the origin of commodities and the inherent social relations bound up in their production. As labour is divided, specialized, and organized, through space and time we

become estranged from the product of our labour. Because we are able to perceive and experience only the segments in which we are locally and temporally situated, we focus on appearances. It is within this physical and temporal dislocation of material and social relations that ideology emerges. For Marx ideology was not a system of beliefs or theories but a process, a way of sensemaking of a fragmented and abstracted reality. Because we are never able to fully grasp the totality of the social relations that constitute our being, ideological forms of thought arise out of our definite settings, experiences, and contexts. These ideological forms ultimately mask social reality.

Colley (2002) draws on Marx to articulate the complex relationship between appearance and essence. Social phenomena have both an essence and an appearance. Appearance and essence are not absolute and under given conditions one or the other or both can change and transform. Appearances can be deceiving and contradicting “as the relative essence of a thing shifts and develops. In doing so they may coincide, interplay or overlap with essence” (p. 262). Colley explains the interconnected and iterative process between appearance and essence as follows:

The movement is from an initial point of unity, where the appearance subordinates the essence, through a phase of divergence, to the apogee of development, there essence and appearance are reunited, and the essential nature of the phenomenon becomes transparent and dominates all of its particular appearances. (p. 263)

To illustrate further let us consider when an indigenous language becomes extinct and we no longer have the means to express a particular way of life. Our focus becomes the loss of language rather than the social reality and activity that is ultimately the cause of its demise. A dialectical analysis would posit that language is the social concretization of a way of life but

when we separate language from the social, from people and people's activities, we reify it. When an indigenous language becomes extinct our focus becomes the appearance—loss of the language—rather than the essence: the loss of a way of life and the root of its eradication in colonialism, dispossession, and so on.

Dialectical historical materialism. Marx and Engels' ontological argument of internal relations is based on a dialectical historical material analysis of social processes. Dialectics is a method of analysis. The following discussion of dialectics draws heavily on the work of the Marxist scholar, Bertell Ollman. Ollman (1993) explains dialectic as follows: "The dialectic, as such, explains nothing, proves nothing, predicts nothing, and causes nothing to happen. Rather, dialectics is a way of thinking that brings into focus the full range of changes and interactions that occur in the world" (p. 10). Dialectical research begins with the whole, the system, and moves to the examination of the parts which are assumed to be internally relational, evolving and in a constant state of flux. Referring back to Figure 1, we can see how foregrounding of the whole may lead to a more accurate conceptualization of reality. To contrast, non-dialectical research begins with the part or parts, moves to making connections between the parts, and then attempts to reconstruct the whole. Ollman (1993) points out the faulty implications for truth with a non-dialectical research approach: "a system whose functioning parts have been treated as independent of one another at the start can never be reestablished in its integrity" (pp.12-13).

Historical materialism or what Marx articulated as the "material conception of history" is a method of studying history. History presented through a historical materialist lens is not a series of unconnected happenings or facts. Marx and Engels argued that all human activity—political, economic, social, cultural, intellectual—is historically necessitated, interrelated, and dependent on the production and reproduction of life. Ideas, family life, culture, and the material

world are produced and reproduced through people's daily activities and interactions. For Marx and Engels history could not be conceived apart from the actions of people,

History does nothing, it 'possesses no immense wealth', it wages no battles'. It is man, real, living man who does all that, who possesses and fights; 'history' is not, as it were, a person apart, using man as a means to achieve its own aims; history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims. (Marx & Engels, 1956, para. 5)

However, it should be stressed that a deterministic or causal conceptualization of reality is "decidedly undialectical" (Ollman, 1993). For Marx and Engels, history necessitates but does not determine the production and reproduction of life. Within Marx and Engels' historical, material, and dialectical analysis, the individual is not deprived of agency:

The first premise of all human existence and, therefore, of all history, the premise, namely, that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to 'make history.' But life involves before anything else eating and drinking, housing, clothing and various other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself. And indeed this is an historical act, a fundamental condition of all history, which today, as thousands of years ago, must daily and hourly be fulfilled merely in order to sustain life. (Marx & Engels, 1998, p. 47)

For Marx and Engels, an essential component of reality is the social activity of people. In his analysis of the capitalist society, Marx provides a breadcrumb that continually links the activities of people to the abstract notions of production, of capital, and so on from which individuals seem wholly absent. Marx spent much of his adult life in London where he lived in close proximity to the British Museum. There he devoted many hours to the testing of his conceptualizations against collected statistics and economic data (Allman, 2007). The goal of

Marx's investigation was "to concretize what is going on in capitalism, to trace the means and forms through which it works and has developed, and to project where it seems to be tending" (Ollman, 1993, p.13). In Marx's analyses, there is always a referent to the doings of people. Society, and everything about it and within it, arises out of the activity of people. Society is not an objective reality outside of people in the same way a tree is. Institutions such as a school or a library exist only because people create them. Social reality is thus rooted in the everyday activity, decisions, and processes of people. That activity is not random or chaotic. It is historically necessitated, and socially organized, and binds us to a particular empirical experience of the world.

Epistemological Assumption

Ontology is a theory of being but for Marx it is inseparable from knowing. Simply put, we cannot be without knowing. Being and knowing—who we are as individuals and what we know about the world—are material, historical, and fundamentally social processes. In a paper entitled "Ideology, Science and Social Relations" Smith (2004a) draws on Marx's thought to present "an alternative epistemology" rooted in material, historical, and social relations (p. 454). Smith makes the point that the positivist basis for Marx's ontological argument—his insistence that the premises from which we begin must be real and rooted in peoples' activities and practices—is a radical departure from previous methods and enables the sociologist to address knowledge claims as a scientist.

Sociological inquiry is "necessarily a social relation," however Smith (1990) argues that established sociological practices of knowing have disassociated people from their social relations thereby creating knowledge claims that are objectified and self-referential (p. 23). Social scientists observe, analyze, and explain social phenomena but they do so without

questioning how that phenomena becomes observable to them. They probe issues, analyze facts and information, and then fit it all back into a pre-existing framework. They do not ask “by what social processes the actual events —what people do or utter—are constructed as the phenomena known” (Smith, 1990, p. 17). Through education and professional practice sociologists are trained and socialized to work within the vocabularies and conceptual framework of what is already established. The generated knowledge is thus self-referential, produced in an echo chamber of established cognitive schemas. Smith (1990; 2005) critiques accepted ideological practices for producing knowledge that is objectified, androcentric, and reflective of established power structures.

Smith’s concept of social relations is rooted in Marx who maintained that people’s activities constitute social reality. Campbell and Gregor (2002) explain that within institutional ethnography, social relations are the “actual practices and activities through which people’s lives are socially organized” (p. 30). For Smith, social relations organize what is going on. Social relations are not something that happens outside of people. Rather each one of us actively participates and constitutes social relations through our daily doings of work, family, and leisure life: When we stand in line at a grocery store or walk the dog we are participating in social relation. In the simplest sense, social relations are activities between people. For the most part, we perform these mundane, habitual acts of living without much thought. It is only when something goes wrong that we take notice of the “organizing complexity” of our lives (Campbell & Gregor, 2002). Smith maintains that the organizing complexity is not the result of chance occurrence, but the coordinating effect of ruling relations. For example, when I go grocery shopping I do it in a particular way. I take a cart. I start at a particular end, and I proceed in a pre-set manner starting with the produce section. I push my cart up-and-down the aisles, selecting

items as I go. There is a preconceived structure to grocery shopping. There are understood conventions, rules, and ways of grocery shopping. Smith argues that this “organizing” within our daily life is the coordinating effect of ruling relations—the professions, the bureaucracy, the academy—the doings of people located away, often far away, from where I am physically located. This organizing complexity of our daily lives and the social relations that constitute it, for example how the food on grocery shelves is produced, is often ignored, unseen, or taken for granted. Smith saw epistemic value in revealing that what remains unnoticed (at times hidden) and developed a research approach that reveals the coordinating effect of the ruling relations.

Ideological practices. The concept of ideology is central to Marx’s thinking and relevant to Marx’s epistemological argument and thus to institutional ethnography. Marx did not coin the term; however, he is credited with revitalizing the concept and imbuing it with a particular meaning and function (Drucker, 1972). Ideology for Marx is not a belief or a system of ideas but “procedures that mask and suppress the grounding of a social science” (Smith, 1990, p. 34). In the *German Ideology* Marx (1998) explained how ideology is a process that abstracts and obfuscates what we know and how we come to know it. First, the ruling ideas are separated from the people that make them. Then, and over time, the ideas or concepts become linked and form “mystical connections” (p. 70) making them appear as self-determining. The final step is when the ideas and concepts begin to “appear thoroughly materialistic” (p. 70) by being changed into a person: “the ‘thinkers’, the ‘philosophers’, the ideologists” (p. 70). In this manner ideas become fetishized and reified: They are assumed to have agency and power and become viewed as self-determining constructs with a force to direct history and everyday life. To exemplify how ideological processes divorce ideas from actual activity, Marx shares the following:

Fact: The cat eats the mouse.

Reflection: Cat-nature, mouse-nature, consumption of mouse by cat = consumption of nature by nature = self-consumption of nature.

Philosophical Presentation of the Fact: Devouring of the mouse by the cat is based upon the self-consumption of nature. (as cited in Smith, 2004, p. 453)

The idealized presentation of the fact may be rooted in everyday activities but through philosophizing, it ends up a meaningless theoretical construct. Marx's critique is a rejection of idealism and the German philosophers who failed to make "the connection of German philosophy with German reality, the connection of their criticism with their own material surroundings" (Marx & Engels, 1998, p. 36). However, Marx's critique is not only of idealism but "of methods of reasoning that treat concepts, even those of political economy, as determinants" (Smith, 2004, p. 446).

As already stated, we form concepts and categories to help us make sense of the complexity of our social and natural world. Classifying and categorizing entities helps us to clarify, to understand, to communicate, and to think about our world. Categorical thinking directs our focus to the external relationships between entities: We focus on the interaction and results between two entities. However, entities or opposites are also internally related. When we focus on the inner relation it helps us understand

how the nature of that relation shapes and regulates or determines the internal development of the attributes inherent to each of the opposites [such as wage and capital], sometimes creating new attributes that become inherent within one or another of the opposites. (Allman, 2010, p. 38)

The result of an inner relation is cemented to the relation. It is the result that we often perceive rather than the internal relation. Results, and the corresponding categorical thinking, tends to

mask the internal relation or unity of opposites from which they originate. The concept of internal relation is key to Marx's explanation of how capitalism works and leads to a discovery of understanding the hidden essence of capitalism: The laws and tendencies that lead to capitalism's movement, development, and evolution. Because inner relations are often separated by time and space, ideology or ideological forms of thinking become the way forward for us to make sense of the abstracted and fragmented reality in which we live. A capitalist mode of production aggravates the fragmentation as the spatial and temporal dislocation between the worker and the social/material relations that constitute our everyday life are accentuated. The findings of this study ultimately tie academic librarians' work experiences to capitalist relations and ideological ways of thinking that actualize the continued under-evaluation of librarians' labour. Marx's critique of idealism and ideology, ideology for Marx was "a defective way of thinking" (Allman, 2010, p. 42), is also an epistemological exhortation to ground inquiry in the material world. Ideas and concepts must be rooted in the activities of people and remain linked to them if they are to remain faithful to the truth.

Smith extends Marx's thought to mainstream sociology by arguing that sociological theories and concepts which attempt to explain the activities of people also abstract and divorce the subject from their own experience, history, and knowledge. Words and phrases like *cultural capital*, *norms*, or *developmental stages* are examples of linguistic concepts that are given agency and are assumed to exist outside of people. Smith refers to these stylistic devices as "blobology" (Smith, 2005, p. 56). Blobologies are not grounded in the activities of people. They are without an empirical referent. For example, the library is a construct from which people have completely disappeared. Our understanding of the library is based on statistics, institutional practices, and professional discourse that is preoccupied with assessment and service innovation

rather than the actualities and experiences of people who work, study, and visit the library. Such accounts reflect an institutional perspective that is objectifying and reductionist. This master narrative undervalues people's experiences as the basis of knowledge claims and by doing so guides social research into a preconceived mold (Mann & Kelley, 1997). The goal of institutional ethnography is to recognize "the social relations of knowledge of the social" (Smith, 2005, p. 29), to uncover the social relations reflected in our thoughts, ideas and doings. As others have argued, it is a method that "undoes objectification" and assumes that power relations are embedded in the production of knowledge (Carpenter, 2011, p. 92).

Standpoint. Within established sociological practices of inquiry, the subject is the object of investigation. Epistemological claims are *about* rather than *of*. Smith makes the point that knowledge that is about a social phenomenon is produced from an outsider-looking-in perspective. It is a knowledge that begins within what is already known to explain the phenomena under investigation. Smith is proposing a reshuffling of our epistemological approach. Sociological inquiry must begin with the knowing subject and with their activities and experiences: In short, it must begin from their standpoint. The social must be explored from the within. Institutional ethnography recognizes that the subject is the expert in what they do and what they experience. Epistemic claims must therefore be grounded in the subject's activities and experiences.

For Smith the subject's standpoint is rooted in feminist standpoint theory. Feminist standpoint theorists are concerned with the relation between socio-political powers and knowledge. Standpoint theorists such as Hillary Rose, Sandra Harding, and Patricia Hill Collins have insisted that social inquiry should take into consideration women's lived experiences (Harding, 2004). Smith (1990) has argued that an inquiry from a women's standpoint will reveal

hidden, even suppressed, realities. That is because women have historically been marginalized. Smith's argument is also grounded in her own experiences as single mother and academic and her keen awareness of a sociology that is built from a standpoint of men. Smith has extended feminist standpoint theory to include the "bifurcation of consciousness": a disjuncture between our everyday experience of the world and the "theoretical schemes available to think about it in" (Smith, 2004, p. 22). The theoretical schemas are ideologies as a historically and socially conditioned practices of reasoning. Ideological forms of thought arise out of our definite settings, experiences, and contexts (Smith, 2004). As an example, Smith (1990) recounts a seminar she was teaching where two female graduate students could not find a theory on emergent leadership that correlated with their experience. At the individual level we experience a similar disconnect in such ordinary events as when we attempt to answer a survey question but our answer does not fit the options provided. Although Smith's work is rooted in feminist standpoint theory, today it is understood to mean a *people's* standpoint (Smith, 2005, p.1), or the standpoint of anyone outside the relations of ruling.

Established sociological practices alienate the subject from their own experience by forcing an epistemic schema that has been built within established power structures. As not to fall prey to producing the same type of objectified knowledge, Smith proposes a method of inquiry that itself is a critique of the socially organized practices of knowing (Smith, 1990). The goal of institutional ethnography is to make the social relations visible by centering the individual and their actual activity as the basis of knowledge claims; to explore the disjuncture, the frictions, in our daily experience and to reveal the forms of social organization and relations which otherwise cannot be fully grasped from where we are located. Smith is advocating for a sociological inquiry that begins at a different standpoint, a standpoint of those outside of

established power structures; at the place of local experience where daily activity and practices are constituted. The goal of institutional ethnography is to extend this insider knowledge, this everyday, experiential and socially formed knowledge, beyond the local and into the power and coordination of government, the media, the academy, and society itself. Smith is not concerned with explaining events but in understanding how things work. She wants to map out how the social world is actually put together and to explicate “how does it happen to us as it does?” (Smith, 1987, p. 153). This seemingly simple question is the foci for examining the academic status of Canadian university librarians. I hope that my research will provide insight into librarians’ work experiences and how that work is accomplished and shaped by the institution, in particular within the context of feminized professions and academia.

Summary

This chapter presented the ontological and epistemological assumptions of an institutional ethnographic inquiry. Within institutional ethnography the nature of our being and knowing—who we are as individuals and what we know about the world—is rooted in Marx’s thought. Marx espoused an internally relational, material, necessarily historical, and fundamentally social conceptualization of our being and knowing. Our consciousness and thinking and actions occur within a given historical and social context and are the result of our engagement with the physical world. Marx’s concept of internal relations is based on a dialectical analysis of social processes. For Marx dialectics was a way of thinking about and studying all human activity which Marx considered to be interrelated, and in a constant state of flux and transformation. For Marx, society and everything about it must be reduced to the material activity of people. That activity is interrelated and occurs within a given historical and social context.

Smith (2004a) draws on Marx's thought to present "an alternative epistemology" that is focused on what Smith refers to as social relations. Social relations are the "actual practices and activities through which people's lives are socially organized" (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 30). The social organization of our lives is not the result of a chance occurrence but the coordinating effect of ruling relations. Smith defined ruling relations as the total complex of activities: the professions, the government, the academy, and what "the business world calls management," through which we are ruled and in which we actively participate (Smith, 1990, p. 14). We pay little attention to the social organization of our lives; however, Smith saw epistemic value in revealing that what remains unnoticed in order to expose the coordinating effect of the ruling relations, and ultimately provide a window into the role of power.

Smith concluded a new approach to the studying social phenomena was needed because prevailing theories, concepts, and practices which attempt to explain the activities of people also abstract and divorce the subject from their own experience, history, and knowledge. Social researchers work within an established master narrative—an ideology—of vocabularies and frameworks. Within the context of institutional ethnography ideology is not a system of ideas but processes "that mask and suppress the grounding of a social science" (Smith, 1990, p. 34). The ideological practices lead to an objectified understanding of social phenomena because that understanding is developed within established power structures. The generated knowledge is thus self-referential and institutionalized.

In the following chapter I explore institutional ethnography as a method—a procedure—for conducting this study. I begin with a review of institutional ethnography's key objectives and purpose. I then revisit the concept of ideology as conceived by Marx and extended by Smith within institutional ethnography to the objectifying processes of ruling relations. I discuss

institutional ethnography's conceptualization of the problematic, the critical roles of texts, and the researcher standpoint. The bulk of the chapter is devoted to explaining how data was collected at three university sites in Canada. I conclude with an explanation of my approach to data analysis.

Chapter 5

Institutional Ethnography as a Research Approach and Method

Institutional ethnography is a research approach that is concerned with making visible how everyday life is socially organized and ruled by institutions: broadly conceived as the activities of people located far away in time and space from the subject's environment. It is a research approach that stems from both Marxist praxis and feminist methodologies that are attentive to the position of the researcher, emphasize transparency, and raise our awareness of the objectification of the subject and objectified knowledge claims that arises out of inquiry processes and frameworks that have been developed within a social universe that is predominantly heterosexual, white, and historically dominated by men. Smith was critical of a knowledge that is produced by experts who are socialized into disciplines, steeped in particularized vocabularies, and whose findings are then stuffed back into pre-theorized structures. This is a knowledge that is produced in an epistemic echo chamber. Smith developed an approach that rejects ideological reasoning and is centered instead on the experiences of the subject and the social organization of those experiences.

Institutional ethnography is concerned with explicating the actual rather than formulating or advancing the theoretical. This means that an inquiry must begin with the everyday life activities, thoughts, understandings, and experiences of people. Arguably, other methodologies are equally focused on the subject's everyday experiences including grounded theory, symbolic interactionism, and anthropological ethnography (Campbell & Gregor, 2002; Tummons, 2017). However, what distinguishes institutional ethnography from these and other traditions is its focus on the institutional. The goal of an institutional ethnographic inquiry is

not to produce an account *of* or *from* [emphasis in the original] those insiders' perspectives. . . . [but] to explicate how the local settings, including local understandings and explanations, are brought into being—so that informants talk about their experiences as they do. (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 90)

Institutional ethnography is an account of how social relations organize the subject's local setting. Social relations are the ways of how we go about our everyday life. How things happen as they do is not happenstance. Everyday life is organized, and our experiences coordinated by institutions located away from our local setting. This is possible because the local is always linked to the *translocal*: that which is outside the boundary of our everyday experience. The necessary connectedness of the local and the translocal is based on an ontology (the nature of our being) that is fundamentally social, dialectical, material, and historical. Institutions (that is the activities of people that create rules, norms, practices, laws, and make up bureaucracies, the professions, and governments) are located translocally and rule our everyday local experience. These relation of ruling or ruling relations as Smith has collectively termed them, exert their power and influence via texts that shape and construct our work.

The concept of work within institutional ethnography is broadly conceived and is understood as any concerted activity. Work is the efforts of everyday living. Tummons (2017) argued that it is institutional ethnography's foregrounding of the ruling relations and the translocal—the shifting of “the researcher's gaze beyond the locally observable”—and the utilization of texts as the purveyors of power that is “distinct, perhaps indigenous” to institutional ethnography (p. 157). What is also unique to institutional ethnography is that people are not the focus of its inquiry. Rather, “it is the aspects of the institutions relevant to the people's experience, not the people themselves, that constitute the object of inquiry” (Smith, 2005, p. 38).

It is the not obvious, taken for granted, and at times invisible character of the social relations at the local setting that institutional ethnography aims to reveal by hooking people's activities and practices into the relations of ruling.

Social Relations and Ideological Processes

In our type of society, to contrast with agrarian societies or medieval societies, we could not live without the labour of thousands of people that we never see. This specialization and division of labour necessitates a profound level of human interdependence. The house where I am living, the desk at which I am sitting, the food that I am eating was butchered, harvested, picked, packaged, stored, built, manufactured, and transported by the labour of countless of individuals. However, we do not experience the world in this interdependent way. The social relations between the butcher located somewhere at a meat processing plant and I and the chicken that I will be cooking for dinner tonight are obscured and further abstracted by capitalist material processes and ideological practices that separate my being and knowing from the social relations that produce it.

Ideology is typically defined as a system of ideas and beliefs. Within institutional ethnography ideology is conceived differently; it is a process, a way of knowing the world: “There is no other way to know than humanly, from our historical and cultural situation. This is a fundamental human condition. If to be situated as such entails ideology, then we can't escape it” (Smith, 1990, p. 33). It is ideology as epistemology versus ideology as a belief system. The way Smith is using ideology—a way of knowing the world—is rooted in Marx for whom history and society were processes that exist only in people's activities. Ideological practices necessarily rise out of the activities of people. By way of example, Smith (1990) points to the concept of *role* commonly defined as “the function assumed or part played by a person or thing in a particular

situation” (Google Dictionary, n.d.a., para. 1). Such a concept could not be conceived by people living in the early middle ages because Europe at that time lacked the social structures such as a bank or a hospital that stood independently of individuals; people “would not have known how to take person and role apart conceptually” (Smith, 1990, p. 41). Thus, our way of knowing the world is given and ideologically predetermined by the social relations and historical conditions into which we are born. This is problematic for understanding the social because ideology as a practice of knowing society obstructs and masks the actualities of people’s everyday experiences because ideological practices (e.g. concepts, categories) are embedded in social relations. Smith (1990) explained that “[to] think ideologically is to think in a distinctive and describable way. Ideas and concepts as such are not ideological. They are ideological by virtue of being distinctive method of reasoning and interpreting society” (pp. 35-36). The challenge for the institutional ethnographer is how do we go about revealing the ideological distortions in our thought and understandings of the social relations in which we are bound up?

Smith draws on Marx and Engels’ definition of ideology in *The German Ideology* (1846) as a method or a process and extends it to the ruling relations (Smith, 1990). Ideology as a process is a way by which ruling relations objectify, standardize, and universalize our everyday experiences and exert influence and power over our everyday world. Ideological processes give primacy to concepts and categories and as such make it possible to examine society (Smith, 1990). The conceptual ordering of ideological processes is inscribed in texts and reflected in how we talk about things. By paying careful attention to either makes it possible for us to reveal the social relation and organization of our local setting so that things happen as they do.

The point of an institutional ethnography is to explain the social, not people’s behaviour. However, the social is not isolated and treated as a distinct phenomenon. The social is

not society. It is not a *thing* with agency. Within institutional ethnography, the social cannot exist outside of people. The social is people's activities, their doings, as they are coordinated with those of others. The social, or what Smith has referred to as social relations, are explored to provide insight into the shaping effect of the relations of ruling (Smith, 2005). The intersection between the activity of the subject and the reach of the ruling relations is the problematic of the everyday world that Smith argues should be the focus of sociological inquiry. The topic of a particular inquiry arises out of a disjuncture—a “bifurcation of consciousness”—between how we know and experience our everyday world and how that world and experience is known by those outside of it (Smith, 1987, p. 82).

The Bifurcation of Consciousness and the Everyday Problematic

Smith (1987) defines the everyday problematic as “the place from within which the consciousness of the knower begins” (p. 88). It is a world in which we are located physically, socially and which we experience directly. This world, as Smith points out, is necessarily historical. Smith argues that people's everyday work experiences and actions should be regarded “*as [emphasis in the original] sociology's problematic (the complex of concerns, issues, and questions which generate a horizon of possible investigations)*” (Grahame, 1998, p. 348). The problematic locates the researcher, the inquiry, and the experience of individuals as knowers in actual lived situations and directs “attention to a possible set of questions that may not yet have been posed or a set of puzzles that do not yet exist but are ‘latent’ in the actualities of the experienced world” (Smith, 1987, p. 91). Through articulating the problematic, Smith shifts sociological inquiry from treating the everyday world as an object of study, to the study becoming a property of the everyday world.

In order to articulate the problematic, the researcher must locate the bifurcation of consciousness for those involved. The bifurcation is a splitting of the worlds. Campbell and Gregor (2002) simply explain the issue of disjuncture as knowing something from two realities: one from the ruling and the other from the everyday and experiential. Smith notes that the two sides of the bifurcation are not equal. The work of the institutional ethnographer begins at the point of rupture. It is at this point that the researcher must ask “how is it [the everyday social world] organized, how is it determined, and what are the social relations that generate it” (Smith, 1987, p. 50). The researcher must thus become very familiar with the lived experience and actualities of the participants so she can help “make problematic” that which is poorly understood or taken for granted (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 47). In order to discover the problematic the researcher must be in “the picture as an actor in what is going on. . . . taking the side of the potential informant” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 48). The examination is thus centered on *how* things happen the way they do, rather than *why* things happen the way they do. At her disposal the researcher has a number of tools primarily the examination of texts and how those texts are taken up by individuals—the text reader conversation—and paying careful attention to how people talk about and make sense of their everyday experiences—the talking with people—and examining both for the ideological discourse that is organizing the local setting so that things happen as they do (Tummons, 2017).

The Role of Texts

The investigation of how texts mediate relations of ruling is foundational to institutional ethnography. Texts are embedded within ruling relations. It is through texts that ruling relations are able to coordinate activities across multiple sites. The goal is to map out how extra-local ruling relations coordinate and permeate the everyday local experience. Texts are actual things,

made and used by people, that exist in actual places. They are material, replicable, and iterative. Their ubiquity makes them the ideal go-between amongst individuals. Texts are created within a particular time, space, and context, yet they do not seem to exist in “the same temporal and local world in which we exist as bodies” (Smith, 2005, p. 102) because they are both in the here and now, yet endure over time: “The power of the sacred text to remain across seas and generations is a condition of its holiness and its capacity to be read again, rediscovered, reinterpreted in the ever changing local actualities of people’s lives and doings” (Smith, 2005, p 102). Texts bring the outside in. The reader, in turn, brings her own context and attention to the text. Texts are thus dialogical. Texts are activated at the moment of their reading. They appear benign but they are not neutral:

In becoming the text’s proxy, she [the reader] takes on the text’s organizing powers as her own. Just knowing how to read it enables the text to creep into her consciousness and take over . . . not necessarily forcing the reader to agree with it, of course, but to adopt its organizing framework. (Smith, 1999, p. 150)

The process of reading activates the text and brings objectification into existence. For example, Campbell and Gregor (2002) demonstrate how medical forms are geared toward collecting facts that are relevant to the organization rather than the particulars and concerns of the individual. Texts thus have a purpose and intentionality. Through replicability texts regulate (e.g. policies and laws) and support an objective reality (e.g. standardized forms). However, it is important to understand that texts do not have agency in reproducing or challenging the social relations that are in and of us. Discourse and text do not dictate activities but rather provide “the terms under which what people do becomes institutionally accountable” (Smith, 2005, p. 113).

It should be noted that Smith conceptualizes discourse as coordinating individuals' consciousness. Extending Mikhail M. Bakhtin's notion of utterances as social acts, Smith maintains that discourse is an actual social relation between people; it is "discourse as social organization" (Smith, 2014, p. 168). For Smith discourse is active in ongoing social relations and courses of action. As individuals, we not only engage in discourse but are part of it. In this way discourse can be explicated in actual practice. For example, a recent *Empathy in Libraries* survey asks the following question: "Do you think that libraries have a role in fostering the development of empathy in library staff?" If we rewrite the questions as "Do you think that library buildings have a role in fostering the development of empathy in library staff?" we see how the language of the survey orientates the focus of the speaker (the researcher) and the reader (potential survey participants) to the primacy of the institution that is the library. The *Empathy in Libraries* survey illustrates Smith's point that terms and phrases are not just a lexicon but coordinators of consciousness (Smith, 2014). Texts, such as this survey, are the physical manifestations of discourse. However, texts are not inert. For Smith, texts are like a speaker. They speak to us in our reading of the text. When we read, we operate the text: "We become the text's proxy in the text-reader conversation" (Smith, 2014, p. 172). In the text-reader conversation the reader takes on the texts organizing capacity. This does not mean that the reader is devoid of agency, but text and discourse are conceived as *projecting* an organization of consciousness (Smith, 2014). As texts are read, watched, seen, in a particular context they hook up our consciousness to trans-local social relations.

The issue of individual agency is discussed by Wilmont (2011) who makes the point that as individual's we express agency in the choices that we make. As individuals we always have some choices. These choices can challenge or reproduce existing social order but ultimately

institutional discourse and processes will frame the actualities. Ideological processes of conceptualization and categorization may frame a choice of action as deviant or insubordinate or exemplary. The actions will be judged as such; for example, by an official who is granted such power by the “bureaucratically organized relations of officialdom as a whole” (p. 79). Texts are the purveyors of power but not its keeper. Text are not the subject of an institutional ethnographic inquiry but rather how they are activated and taken up. This is the text-reader conversation that allows us to explicate regulating discourse and map social relations to reveal how the relations of ruling accomplish coordination and control at the local level. However, where one stands determines what can be known and how it is known (Campbell, 2006); it is to the issue of researcher standpoint that I now turn.

Role of the Researcher and Standpoint

The point of entry in an institutional ethnography is the problematic. The problematic must be created from a standpoint. The standpoint creates a point of entry without subordinating or objectifying the subject. Standpoint serves as a tool that keeps the researcher oriented to the subject’s position of the experience and the real, material, social conditions through which the subject experiences and makes sense of the world. It is only from this embodied standpoint position that relations of ruling become visible (Smith, 1997). Institutional ethnography’s ontological commitments necessitate that the researcher is not an outsider looking in but an intimate actor looking out. The institutional ethnographer must learn to “think, hear and talk about the setting as various participants in it know it, but she must also attend to institutional ethnographer’s interests in how a setting is organized (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 50). McCoy (1998) took courses in managerial and financial accounting to develop basic level practitioner knowledge to conduct her inquiry of how accounting texts reshaped the managerial practices of

an Ontario community college. Diamond (2006) added nine months to his research “design” to become a certified nursing home assistant and worked another 16 months in three separate nursing homes in order to conduct his institutional ethnography of Canadian nursing homes (p.48). Gruner (2012) had “(well over 150) conversations” with community members and First Nations people from the Treaty 9 region to familiarize herself with local issues and concerns to conduct her institutional ethnography of land use, planning and development in a northern Ontario First Nation (p. 34). As a 20-year veteran of the profession, I am intimately familiar with the lived experience and daily practices of the academic librarian and arguably can forego onboarding processes such as described by McCoy, Diamond, and Gruner. Indeed, I locate the problematic by foregrounding my own experience. As such, my approach is, at least partially, more aligned with the work of Taber (2010) who used autoethnography and narrative methods as well as institutional ethnography to “problematize the normalization of family in the military” (p. 9).

In locating myself within the locus of inquiry I want to emphasize the importance of the researcher standpoint. Ontologically institutional ethnography assumes that reality is socially produced and can be revealed through our daily work. Epistemologically, institutional ethnography assumes that knowledge is experiential, what we know is shaped by our socio-economic, historical, and political experiences. The synthesis of our experiences forms a standpoint, a point of view, through which we see the world. For Smith, one of the core problems with sociological inquiry is that it begins within the vantage point of the ruling relations. Because our knowledge is constructed within the framework of the ruling relations it is alienated from people’s everyday experiences. Smith (2004a) is suggesting that the relationship between the researcher, the object of her knowledge, and the problematic be reshuffled to make “the direct

embodied experience of the everyday world the primary ground for our knowledge” (p. 22). Institutional ethnography, as an alternative sociology, “must preserve in it the presence, concerns, and experience of the sociologist as knower and discoverer” (Smith, 1990, p. 23). The researcher thus seeks to be situated with those whose acts and experiences will serve as the basis for epistemic claims.

A researcher thus situated within the locus of inquiry must also address the issue of bias. The bias of the researcher is based on the belief that we understand in terms of what we already know, thus the researcher’s interpretation depends in part on her location and experience of social relations, background, culture and so forth. The German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer argued that prejudice was in fact beneficial because knowledge cannot be constructed from a clean slate, “thus, the forestructure of understanding (our prejudices) is the scaffolding upon which knowledge is built” (Patterson & Williams, 2002, p. 23). Our biases and prejudices in fact push us to developing new insights and understanding, rather than limiting us to the testing of existing hypotheses and presuppositions. For Gadamer, “both what we seek to understand and our prejudices are dynamically involved in each other” (as cited in Patterson & Williams, 2002, p. 24). In institutional ethnography, the role of the researcher as a knowledgeable insider with personal experience and intimate familiarity of the phenomena allows for a more accurate and perceptive mapping of the relations of ruling.

Data Collection Methods

Methodologically, institutional ethnography is concerned with two sites of exploration: the local setting of lived experience and actualities, and the extra-or translocal that is outside the boundaries of one’s everyday experience. Correspondingly, data collection is focused on the talking with people and observing their local setting, and texts and the text-reader conversation,

to form an understanding of which texts are meaningful, and how they are interpreted and put into practice. An institutional ethnographic research approach thus demands various data collection methods such as in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and textual analysis.

Two research questions served as the impetus for this study:

- 1) How is it that the academic librarian's lesser status is the ideal at Canadian universities?
- 2) What are the social processes that shape this ideal?

It is a challenge if not an impossibility to fully plan out an institutional ethnography. DeVault (2012) describes the process of inquiry “like grabbing a ball of string, finding a thread, and then pulling it out” (p. 755). The data collection process is not sequential linear but iterative where the researcher can circle back, refine, and pursue data sources as they are revealed by experiences of the participants. Generally speaking, there are two stages to data collection within institutional ethnography: the participants' or informants' stories, and the descriptions and examination of institutional processes. Questions that guide the data collection process and that the institutional ethnographer tries to answer are: How is it that the participants are doing what they are doing? How is it that they are talking about their experience as they do? (Campbell & Gregor, 2002; DeVault, 2006). Although individual narratives and observations that describe what people are doing are critical to the inquiry, institutional ethnography necessitates a shifting of focus from people to the examination of texts and institutional discourses that shape the experience for those at the local setting.

In this second stage the focus is on the documents. In practice the two phases of the data collection do not always occur sequentially but rather concurrently or even simultaneously. For example, I was often reviewing documents between interviews and looking for connections

between the everyday and the institutional while the interview experience was still fresh in my mind.

I conducted my research at three separate universities in Canada. The point of selecting multiple sites was not to compare but to determine if social relations shaping local experiences could be traced to a macro generalizing discourse operating at a national level. In short, I wanted to see if librarians' experience of being academic staff at the local setting can be hooked into ruling relations extending beyond the university and provincial boundaries. I received ethics approval in September, 2017 and began the process of securing potential research sites.

Institutional ethnography as a research approach is particularly fraught with ethical implications because the focus of the inquiry, certainly from an administrative perspective, is not only on concerned staff but the entire institution. The goal of institutional ethnography is to reveal hidden power structures and as Smith (1987) explains, "[to] allow one to disclose (to the people studied) how matters come about as they do in their experience and to provide methods of making their working experience accountable to themselves . . . rather than to the ruling apparatus of which institutions are part (p. 178). Institutional ethnography's unabashedly political nature and the type of data sought can be a challenge to winning organizational approval. Taber (2010) who wanted to explore how the ideologies of the military careerist and military mothers merge and clash, found organizational access to a national defense force an insurmountable obstacle.

Universities especially large, research intensive institutions are billion-dollar conglomerates with a jurisdictional scope that includes everything from a restaurant to a nuclear reactor. In such a complex environment, it is unrealistic that a single entity or individual can provide institutional clearance. And it is unlikely that such a clearance could compel or prohibit individuals from participating given academics' inherent autonomy and implications for

academic freedom. As such, I considered a piecemeal approach to seeking organizational approval to be more realistic. Not sure of the response or uptake for my research, I began tentatively. I initially reached out to six heads of academic libraries (from now on referred to as the University Librarian or UL) at Canadian universities. In the email I introduced myself and my research and attached an information letter (see Appendix A). The information letter was lengthier and more detailed than most (Carpenter, 2011; Hongxia, 2009; Wilmont, 2011). Given the probable administrative concerns regarding institutional integrity, the letter stressed my interest in documents that are publicly available or documents that are internal to the organization but not confidential. The letter further assured administrators that I will not be filing “access to information” requests, and that institutional and participant anonymity will be protected to the best of my abilities. In the description of findings that follow in Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9, the institutions are referenced as Red University, Green University, and Blue University. Keeping with the feminist research ethic of transparency and open communications, the letter also included a list of questions that would guide my interview with academic librarians as well as planned pre-interview drawing activities (PDAs).

Of the six ULs contacted, one responded immediately indicating a willingness to participate, another indicated the need to consider the matter, and four did not respond. The initial six universities were selected based on their differences including institutional mandates, legislative frameworks, size, location, and the level of academic rights and responsibilities accorded to the librarians. Institutional ethnography is a very situated and context-based research approach, but the goal of institutional ethnography is not to assess the impact of geographical or demographical factors or to study a particular population. Institutional ethnography is not an inductive research approach, nor are findings considered representative of a particular

phenomenon. The purpose of the present study was to determine what constitutes ruling at each site with the ultimate goal of enabling participants' critical engagement with dominant organizing narratives.

The UL that needed time to consider the matter eventually responded in the affirmative. In this and a couple of other instances that resulted from subsequent rounds of reaching out to the heads of university libraries, the initial email contact was followed up by a telephone conversation which centered on anticipated timelines, potential dates for my visit, and allowed me to answer questions and discuss concerns: For example, how will I suppress distinctive institutional features. The ULs that declined to participate did so for various reasons. In one case the general timeline of the study overlapped with significant library renovations, in another a major project was monopolizing the time of many librarians, or the library was in a midst of organizational restructuring. I eventually secured three sites, and in the fall of 2017 began familiarizing myself with available documentation relating to the participant universities including provincial legislation and institutional texts such as faculty association collective agreements; policies relating to tenure, promotion, and sabbatical leaves, and documents outlining institutional governance structures.

The fieldwork which included non-participant observation, interviews, and document analysis took place between November, 2017 and March, 2018. However, contact with participants and the sleuthing and review of documents continued throughout 2018. The initial visit to each university included a group meeting with the librarians. The invitation to attend such a meeting was facilitated by the UL or designate. In all three instances the meeting was already planned and part of ongoing organizational operations, such as a regularly scheduled departmental meeting. I was simply added to the agenda. I did not have a formal presentation.

This was due to time constraints, but also because I wanted to set an informal tone that would encourage librarians to ask questions and give me the opportunity to respond in an open and public manner. As noted by Myers (2010), institutional ethnography requires that feminist ethics guide the research process therefore “communication is relatively open and transparent between the researcher and all of the informants in the research setting” (p. 58). Myers goes on to explain that as part of her inquiry into the experiences of tenure among female academics she would outline her own understanding of how texts shaped the phenomenon. For Myers this openness established a common base of understanding of the problematic of the research. In a similar fashion I shared my personal and academic background and how I came to doctoral work and the research question with the librarians. I outlined the nature and goals of an institutional ethnography and stressed that the point of my research is to reveal how institutional power is exerted and shapes academic status. While the approach is unabashedly political and can be perceived as a fishing expedition for aggrieved employees, I emphasized that my research is not a case study of the said institution or interpersonal dynamics. I was interested in seeing *how* things work not *why* or *who* was at fault.

At two of the institutions, I had more than one opportunity to meet with the librarians as a group. On these occasions I provided a brief update regarding the data collection progress including how many interviews I conducted, how many meetings I attended, and which documents I reviewed and was interested in. In all three instances, documentation about the study, that is the recruitment letter, sample interview questions and pre-interview drawing activities, and consent form, as well as my contact information and the date and duration of my stay were shared with the librarians prior to the first group meeting. After my introduction to the study, librarians were invited to contact me directly if they were interested in participating in the

research. I typically made plans to “hang around” the library for the remainder of the day and two to three days following. I visited the universities on seven separate occasions.

For the purposes of this study, an academic librarian was someone who had a Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) or equivalent graduate degree from an accredited institution and was working as a librarian at the time of the interview. There are instances where an individual with a MLIS degree may work in a library but not as a librarian; for example, in a library technician role. Library technician roles are not academic staff roles and were therefore excluded from this study. I was interested in hearing from all librarians regardless of their professional scope of responsibilities, experience, or position within the organization. However, librarians who were active in faculty associations or interested in labour issues were especially sought out based on the assumption that these individuals would have a more in-depth understanding of the rights and responsibilities of academic staff as articulated in various institutional policies, collective agreements, and enacted throughout the university. Realistically, factors such as a particular participant’s availability and willingness to engage, institutional size, and networked sampling, as when a participant recommended someone to interview, influenced and guided the selection process.

Interviews. Although the focus of the investigation is on what people are doing relationally, individual perspectives are essential to discovering how the actual is put together. Individual viewpoints are not supplanted. The knowledge of people, in this case the academic librarian, working and living at the local is critical to claims of validity. Interviews were used to gather data about academic librarians’ work experiences as academic staff. The work experiences described and shared with me in the interview process were critical as they served as a point of entry into the discovery of social relations that shape those experiences such as they

are. Institutional ethnography is not concerned with the individual experience for its own sake but rather as that experience provides an authentic window into institutionalized power. The interviews are what grounds this inquiry within the standpoint of the academic librarian. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed but not coded or arranged thematically. The process of coding or thematically arranging data threatens the importations of priori frameworks or concepts and can potentially conceal the institutional aspects that are critical to an institutional ethnographic approach to inquiry. Instead, I looked for patterns, repetitions, unusual terms, and was attentive to when a librarian expressed discomfort or emotionality as such unease can be indicative of a disconnect between one's daily actuality and the institutional shaping of that actuality.

Over the course of 14 months I spoke with over 50 librarians, of these 21 were pre-arranged interviews—nine men and 12 women—and the rest could be described as “talking to people” (Diamond, 2006; Wilmont, 2011). The talking to happened as I was walking across a campus I was visiting and noticed a familiar face, an impromptu dinner with a colleague I had not seen in years, or conversations at conferences sparked by a topic related paper, presentation, or panel discussion, most notably at the Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians (CAPAL) conference were issues relevant to the librarians' role within the academy dominate. I would often jot down notes after these informal chats as reminders to follow-up on a thread, a potentially connecting document, or idea.

The interviews were in-depth and open-ended. The goal of an open-ended interview is to give participants “the space to express meaning in their own words and to give direction to the interview process” (Ellis, Hetherington, Lovell, McConaghy, & Vickzo, 2013, p. 489). Within institutional ethnography, the scope of the open-ended interview is defined by maintaining a

focus on the actual work processes that connect individuals to the broader organization and institutional relations (DeVault & McCoy, 2006). Although I came prepared with questions to be used as prompts if conversation lagged, the interview never proceeded in a sequential-linear fashion. I would often start out with a purposefully broad question such as “Tell me what’s it like to be an academic librarian here?” The conversation would meander where it did revealing particularities and aspects that I would have never known or considered relevant to ask but which later proved key hooks into the ruling relations. The average time per interview was 1:39 hours with the shortest being 0:49 minutes and the longest stretching over 2:30 hours. In some instances, the interview was conducted over two sessions. The interviews took place in personal offices (most often), campus coffee shops, or nearby restaurants. Twenty of the 21 interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. In one case a request was made that I not record. In this instance I relied on my notes.

The pre-interview drawing activities (PDAs) were included with the information letter and consent form that was emailed to all librarians at the three universities. For a sample of possible PDA activities see Appendix B. The PDAs were encouraged but completely optional and offered those who were so inclined a different way of sharing their local experiences. Of the 21 librarians interviewed, eight prepared a PDA, a sample of which can be seen in Appendix C. In these instances, the interview typically began with participants sharing with me what they had drawn. Subsequent questions were shaped by the stories that came out of the PDAs. The nature of the PDAs promotes a storytelling narrative versus a verbal account. In the case of the verbal account the burden of interpretation falls more to the researcher with storytelling however “the narrator takes responsibility for making the relevance of the telling clear or the point of the story clear” (Ellis et al., 2013, p. 490). The storytelling approach is in keeping with institutional

ethnography's belief that the participant is the expert in what they do. As such, the PDA method is aligned with an institutional ethnography being an empowering and emancipatory approach that is genuinely concerned with recognizing and valuing localized expertise.

Arguably the rapport between the researcher and the participant can affect the authenticity and depth of the information collected. The researcher can do much at the outset to ensure a successful open-ended interview. All efforts were made to develop a trusting relationship with each participant. To reassure participants of their rights and my responsibilities, consent forms stressed that each participant's interview will be held in confidence and that each participant had the ability to leave the study at any time. I reaffirmed these commitments prior to each interview and stressed that a member check process (discussed below) is part of the study. The PDAs were also helpful in establishing a relationship between the interviewer and participant. Scholars note that PDAs help develop rapport, encourage participants to speak expansively during the interview, and allow the researcher to learn the participant's personal and cultural vocabulary (Ellis et al., 2013).

Member checks, which Lincoln and Guba (1984) posit as one of the most crucial techniques for establishing validity and credibility, is when the data, analysis, observations, and conclusions are verified with participants. The member check process was an informal component of this study. Interviewed librarians were provided with the opportunity to review the transcript of their interview and were encouraged to edit as they saw fit. Eighteen librarians provided feedback on the interview transcript. They corrected typos, inserted contextual comments, clarified language and my misunderstandings, and suggested sources I may be interested in pursuing. Librarians' engagement with the transcript elevated the rigor of the data and I remain extremely grateful to the concerned librarians for their time and attention. The

member check process is consistent with an ontology that is conceptualized as dynamic and in a constant state of flux, and a research approach that recognizes all participants to be experts in what they do. Although I conducted the interviews, I stress that the data was co-constituted and co-authored by each interviewed librarian.

The actual process of transcribing is rarely discussed in detail, yet I feel compelled to highlight my experience. The process is exceedingly time consuming: one hour of audio is approximately four to five hours of transcription work depending how fast a speaker talks. Many researchers rely on research assistants and/or resort to the plethora of professional transcription services available. I did too. Concerned with the slow progress I was making in transcribing the interviews, I sent a few audio files to a professional firm recommended by a colleague and was delighted to see neatly typed documents appear in my in-box four days later. However, as I began reading, countless errors emerged; not because the transcription service was poor, but because the terms, nomenclature, and context were unfamiliar to whoever was doing the transcribing. Titles, names, as well as references to specific policies, practices, or procedures were garbled, at times beyond recognition, while homonyms and choice of punctuation altered meaning.

Research indicates that as much as 60% to 70% of meaning in messages in interpersonal communication is transmitted nonverbally (Fontenot, 2016). Visual cues are of course absent from audio recordings; and transcripts, stripped of the rich intonations—laughter, sarcasm, and so on in the speaker's voice—are even more limiting and noticeably flat. I needed to re-listen to the audios. The process brought me back to the interview. I paid attention when a librarian voiced frustration, or sounded uncomfortable, or expressed a high degree of emotionality as these behaviours can be indicative of a disjuncture that participants are experiencing. I added

notes such as “joint laughter” to contextualize the otherwise detached words on a page and was particularly attentive to when a librarian’s work bumped up against an institutional policy or process. To maintain the integrity of the data I needed to be as close as possible to the experience of the local in which it was collected. Timelines be damned, I determined I needed to painstakingly transcribe each audio myself; the process was a necessary commitment that resulted in a more authentic actualization of the participants’ experiences.

Observation. I engaged in participant observation in hopes of being able to “locate the institutional in the local” (Diamond, 2006, p. 6). One of the key goals of institutional ethnography is to find evidence of the ruling relations as people go about their doings (Diamond, 2006; Campbell & Gregor, 2002). As an observer, I was particularly attentive to how librarians’ public engagements aligned with librarians’ work and academic role. I considered the method an integral part of this study and anticipated engaging in the observation during the latter stages once I had an awareness, if not a thorough understanding, of institutional culture and particularities. In reality, my ability to observe was restricted by the timing of my visit, which in turn was determined by the UL and already planned meeting schedules, and even dictated by flight times. On a couple of occasions a meeting I was hoping to attend was cancelled. In another instance a meeting was suddenly re-scheduled. The observations happened haphazardly and by coincidence, and not nearly as often as I had hoped.

I realized I overestimated the opportunities to observe. To be clear I was not so much interested in observing librarians going about their professional practice of librarianship such as the teaching of information literacy classes or meeting and working with students. I was interested in observing librarians as they interact with the university by virtue of being academic staff: For example, serving on a university committee. Needless to say, some of the rights and

responsibilities that are associated with academic staff, such as the participation in hiring processes or peer review deliberations, are confidential processes. Nevertheless, I did have a number of opportunities to engage in non-participant observation. I attended a university senate meeting, as well as a number of open house type of events, and a few library level committee meetings that included both librarians and university faculty. I also sat in on two presentations as well as a student engagement and feedback activity conducted by librarians. In these situations, I was attentive to particularized nomenclature and references to institutional documents, policies, and practices. I paid attention to how issues were talked about and addressed, and how the role of the academic librarian fit into the mix of what I was observing.

I recorded my observations in a notebook. I did not use my laptop. I wanted to be as unofficial, unassuming, and unobtrusive as possible. Although the observations helped me gain an understanding of how things are done at a particular site, they were not as useful to data gathering and overall research findings as initially anticipated. I'm terrible at taking notes. My handwriting quickly degenerates to scrawls. At times, I was too interested in the event I was observing and actually forgot to take notes. On these occasions I would rush to my computer after the fact and quickly jot down the impressions that were fresh in my memory. However, for the most part, since the events themselves, like a senate meeting or an open house event, were not about the actualities of librarians' work, they proved less meaningful to the study.

Texts. When considering what texts to analyze, a few can be assumed including job or role descriptions, policies and procedures for tenure and promotion, and collective agreements. I discovered texts by following a document chain link, as when a policy document referenced a corresponding procedures document, or as texts came up in participants' talk. Document gathering continued through the interviews, and non-participant observation, and into data

analysis. When reading and analyzing various texts I was less concerned with how a document enters and moves through an organization and how it is specifically taken up, as is typical of an institutional ethnographic inquiry, than with how it projects the organization and organizational priorities on the subject (Smith, 2006). I was particularly attentive to categories and descriptors used to describe or reflect the work and role of librarians.

Ethical Implications

Institutional ethnography is a politically charged research approach. It perhaps goes without saying that such an inquiry demands that the researcher possess the highest level of integrity, sound ethical judgement, professional discernment, as well as a good dose of humbleness and gratitude. It should be recognized that potential participants may have concerns about the researcher's contact with organizational leadership. Campbell and Gregor (2002) caution that participants may be skeptical or suspicious that what they say may be to their detriment should organizational leadership become aware of it. Consent forms may not be reassuring enough. It is thus important that the researcher develop a trusting relationship and "avoid developing deals with organizational leaders that compromise their relations with informants" (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 66). It is worth noting that the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board reviewed and approved this study on September 27, 2017, and reviewed and renewed the application again on September 6, 2018, and lastly on August 19, 2019.

Data Analysis

I drew on the work of Liza McCoy (2006), who relied on her own extensive experience with institutional ethnography as well as that of many others including candid interviews with Smith, to provide insightful commentary to guide the novice researcher. For example, McCoy

points out that the issue is almost always too much data; however, institutional ethnography is not interested in all aspects of the institutional process. Researchers can be quite selective in what they utilize from a particular interview or text. It will likely be a specific thread of social organization. One researcher explained her process of determining what to analyze as “it’s never instances; it’s always process and coordination. It’s all these little hooks. To make sense of it, you have to understand not just the speech of the moment, but what it’s hooked into” (as cited in DeVault & McCoy, 2006, p. 40). The goal of the researcher is to pick out relevant threads and make the connections between what people are saying and doing and the institutional context.

Analysis of data within qualitative research often includes coding and the grouping or sorting of text into themes or categories. However, the process of categorizing or labeling risks masking the very relations the researcher seeks to uncover. Such an approach further threatens to unhinge the data from its situated context and is counter to institutional ethnography’s epistemological assumptions that knowledge is historically, contextually, and materially bound arising out of the direct activities of people. The foci of analysis in an institutional ethnography are social relations. Campbell and Gregor (2002) emphasize that “the meaning of the data is in their setting of use as they arise there” (p. 85). Rather than looking for themes, institutional ethnographers are more attentive to patterns or repetitive instances of words, phrases, or experiences. I was particularly alert to experiences or events that were raised by academic librarians working independently of one another, as when located in different institutions, and different provinces, yet the experiences were reoccurring. For example, librarians spoke of their challenges and practices of working with accreditation bodies and the need to meet prescribed standards at two of the three sites. Issues of equity and value as related to salary were raised by librarians at all three sites. Librarians also used the same language to talk about their day: e.g.

teaching versus instruction.

As Campbell (2006) points out the process of interpretation and analysis is “disciplined first by the analytic framework of social organization of knowledge then by the materiality of the data” (p. 98). As such, data is not the object of interest. These repetitive instances in the data are an entry point into social relations. It is here that I would change my focus from the librarians’ accounts to the institutional and the review of texts. The process was not sequential linear. At times I needed librarians’ guidance and would follow up to ask about a particular policy or practice. The transcripts were another source of valuable additional information. As individual librarians reviewed and returned the transcripts, they added notes, explanatory comments, or pointed out a source, event, or a person I should speak with. Jung (2000) in her study of a university disability policy found through her interviews a prevailing idea of “unfair advantage.” In discussions with university employees Jung discovered that doubt clouds accommodation requests. Jung’s study highlighted the accommodation work that disabled students must engage in if they are to invoke relevant policies. Institutional ethnographers are interested in recursive relations such as patterns or repetition of experiences because they connect local settings and are indicative of the organizing influence of broader power structures.

Institutional ethnography researchers want to explicate how things are put together. How they happen. That means we are interested in more than collecting data and describing what is happening. Each informant’s experience, each document, and each observation adds a piece to the puzzle so that a bigger picture emerges. Campbell and Gregor (2002) note that a “successful analysis supersedes any one account and even supersedes the totality of what informants know and can tell,” (p. 85) that is because the subject is often not aware of how their own experience is structured and how as individuals we are complicit in our own subjugation. Indeed, I was

directly responsible for drafting some of the language that I highlight in the findings as objectifying within the textual discourses of my own institution. The explication is another level of analysis and is a distinctive feature of institutional ethnography (Campbell & Gregor, 2002). The explication process is what directs the researcher to the examination of social relations and how things are organized at the local.

Interviews are used extensively in institutional ethnographies. However, the interviews that were conducted as part of this study are better characterized as “talking to people” (DeVault & McCoy, 2012). Majority of the interviews were more like a conversation and were often mutually informative. Librarians had their own experiences to share but they were also interested in mine. Librarians likewise had their own perspectives on various policies and experiences with them, but they were not considering the text in the way I was. Ruling relations are built into the texts. I found, and as other researchers have observed (DeVault & McCoy, 2012), that my analytical thinking often started to happen in the interview. It was often during the interviews that I noticed a misalignment between talk and text. I noted the context and would later pursue with concerted effort once the interviews was transcribed. When reviewing the transcripts, and particularly in the early stages of the study when I was training myself to focus the analysis on the “institutional order” and not the individual participant (McCoy, 2006, p. 110), I kept informants’ identifiable information in a separate code sheet but suppressed it on the actual transcript. Each transcript was tagged with a randomly selected letter/number combination. I also avoided tagging quotes with particularizing characteristics such as sex, race, years of experience, or professional role. Such an analytic approach individuates each librarian and promotes a line of reasoning which treats the problematic as potentially inherent to individuals rather than produced through institutional processes.

The practice of explication was slow and iterative. The findings emerged through the writing process. For example, I would begin writing a chapter around a repetitive pattern such as that created by the requirements of accreditation bodies. The investigation continued as I wrote, rewrote, circled back, reviewed texts, reviewed transcripts, and wrote again. I pulled out quotes and chunks of transcript text, at times excessively so, to make the reader see what I was seeing. I revised and refined each chapter eight, nine, ten times. In fact, the title for each findings chapter, and the concerned ideological process, were endlessly reworded and refined as I tried to get to the essence of academic librarians' actualities. The actuality of a local setting is always more than can be described, explicated, or shared.

Summary

Institutional ethnography is a research approach that arose out of a critique of established sociological practices of inquiry. Dorothy Smith, the Canadian sociologist who theorized and developed institutional ethnography, argued that mainstream approaches generate knowledge that is objectified, self-referential, and detached from the actualities of people's daily experiences and activities because sociology favours "the constructed realities of privileged experts over the lived realities of its subjects (Grahame, 1998, p. 348). However, Smith's critique is not focused on the experts; Smith is concerned with broader institutional processes and ideologies that with an unassuming presence enforce and reinforce dominant forms of organization and power. In conducting an institutional ethnography, the researcher is focused on two sites of exploration: the everyday lived experience of research participants, and the institutional and ideological processes and priorities that shape that experience.

Institutional ethnographies utilize numerous data collection methods including non-participant observation, open-ended interviews, as well as the examination of texts. Over the

course of 14 months I visited three institutions, on seven separate occasions, and formally and informally spoke with over 50 librarians across Canada. Informal conversations are an integral, even necessary, component to examining how ideologically infused discourse benignly infiltrates our way of talking, reasoning, and interpreting. I also engaged in non-participant observation and examined over 1000 pages of texts including collective agreements, institutional policies, job descriptions, provincial legislation, and accreditation standards. Throughout the data analysis process, I was mindful to maintain a focus on the institutional and the ideological and took care not to individuate or personalize librarians' experiences.

In the section that follows, Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9, I outline my findings. In a seminal paper, "Political Activist as Ethnographer," George Smith (1990) discussed two of the earliest studies employing institutional ethnography: The policing of gay men in Toronto and the management of the AIDS epidemic in Ontario. In his analysis Smith brought into view the institutional and ideological processes that shape and organize the daily experiences of individuals. In the first study, AIDS activists and gay men speculated that police raids on bathhouses were motivated by prejudice and homophobia. However, Smith's work revealed that it was the *Criminal Code* that predominantly organized the work of police rather than the personalities of individuals. The ruling regime, through the *Criminal Code*, enforced heterosexuality by identifying bathhouses as bawdyhouses. The author concluded that in order to alter police action, it is laws rather than attitudes that must be changed. In the case of the AIDS crisis management study, Smith discovered that no government agency had an actual mandate to manage the delivery of experimental and potentially life-saving drug treatments to people living with the disease. Furthermore, public health regulations prohibited treatments that were unlicensed. Doctors risked malpractice lawsuits as well as the loss of hospital privileges if they

prescribed experimental drug cocktails. The legislative and structural bureaucracy of the ruling regime enforced an ideology that AIDS was a fatal disease, despite on the ground evidence that people with AIDS were living longer. Public health efforts centered on palliative care rather than treatment that could potentially extend life. Smith's revelation prioritized the efforts of AIDS activists to focus on human rights legislation and the actual management of the delivery of experimental drugs.

In a similar manner, my own research reveals how a nested web of texts including institutional policies, collective agreements, professional associations' reports, as well as accreditation and quality assurance standards concretize ideological practices that reify the library, deny professional skill and expertise, and assign value to librarians' labour on the basis of sex and gender role construction. Each of the following four chapters describes social processes, located in the daily experiences of the librarian participants as well as that of my own, that objectify and abstract the work of academic librarians. Chapter 6 reviews salary scales and explores how value, expressed in librarians' wage, is socially constructed based on sex and work that is perceived as women's work. In Chapter 7 I examine how ruling relations organize the work of subject librarians as library work rather than academic work. Chapter 8 explores the structuring effect of accreditation and professional bodies. Chapter 9 reviews texts and processes that forefront the librarian as a worker of the library rather than as academic staff. The findings and related social processes reveal *how* things come about so that librarians' experiences as academic staff are such as they are; however, it is ideology as a procedure of reasoning, a way of making sense of our daily reality, that helps us understand *why* things are as they are.

I propose that two ideological codes—*women's work* and *the library*—permeate our social consciousness, including speech, text, and talk. Smith (1999) uses the concept of an ideological code, an analogy to a genetic code, to underscore the generalizing and replicating effect of ideologies. Smith explains that an ideological code is not an idea but rather “a constant generator of *procedures for selecting syntax, categories, and vocabulary in the writing of texts and the production of talk and for interpreting sentences* [emphasis in the original], written or spoken, ordered by it” (p. 159). An ideological code is a universalizing schema that can replicate across multiple and dispersed sites and generate “the same order in widely different settings of talk or writing—in legislative, social scientific, and administrative settings, in popular writing, television advertising, or whatever” (p. 159). An ideological code cannot be identified with a particular formulation as such, rather it is its capacity to generate formulations. The women's work and the library ideological codes are not identified with a particular librarian or institution. They apply to any.

In social consciousness the women's work ideological code constructs the librarian as a content female—always present, always there, always available. The librarian simply *is* rather than *does*. Librarianship, along with other feminized professions such as social work, has long been regarded as a natural complement to the woman's role at home (Brand, 1983). The women's work ideological code thus confines the librarian to the library. Because the librarian is situated within the library rather than the profession of librarianship or the discipline of library and information science, her work is deintellectualized. The code's universalizing schema of locating the librarian in the library can be found in almost any definition of a librarian:

- A librarian is a person who works professionally in the library, providing access to information and sometimes social or technical programming to users. In addition, librarians provide instruction on information literacy (Wikipedia, 2019c, para. 1),
- A person in charge of, or an assistant in, a library (Oxford English Reference Dictionary, 1996, p. 826),
- Librarians select, develop, organize, and maintain library collections and provide advisory services for users. They are employed in libraries or other establishments with library services throughout the public and private sectors (2016 National Occupational Classification, Government of Canada),
- Administer or maintain libraries or collections of information, for public or private access through reference or borrowing (2018 Standard Occupational Classification System, Bureau of Labour Statistics, United States Department of Labour).

While the women's work ideological code constructs the librarian as a de-professionalized, de-intellectualized content female, the library ideological code fetishizes the building. In public, academic, and professional discourses the focus is the library: library as place, library resources, library services, or what is accomplished in the library by others. The librarian disappears; the labour rendered invisible. It is the library that has agency. These text/talk/images are infused with the library ideological code. It is the library, rather than disciplinary knowledge and expertise, that is the defining characteristic of what it means to be a librarian.

Institutional ethnography is a research approach based on the epistemology and social ontology of Karl Marx. As such, it is understood that ideological practices of reasoning are rooted in and arise out of our material, social, and historical conditions. These conditions are

defined by the mode of production. The capitalist mode of production is critically implicated, indeed inexorably linked, with the identified ideological codes. In Chapter 10, I discuss how the library and women's work ideological codes are implicated across the social processes identified in Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9, and examine how these ideologies are rooted in and rise out of the capitalist mode of production and the necessary gendered exploitation of labour.

Chapter 6

The Social Constructions of the Value of Librarians' Work

This study is an investigation of how the way academic librarians are perceived comes about. It is an investigation into the historically and ideologically determinative assumptions about librarians' work, into the texts that concretize the conceptual, and into the social relations that organize and stretch through librarians' work spaces and local environment. The study begins from the standpoint of the librarian and that of her daily work. However, this is not a study about librarians' work. This is a study of how the ruling regime—the academy, the professions, and government—enforces ideological practices so librarians' experience as academic staff are as they are. An institutional ethnography is not focused on explaining or theorizing why this may be so but rather on revealing how it comes about. Below I examine librarians' remuneration practices at four different universities in Canada. The guiding question for this chapter is: How is it that a lesser financial reward and attainment for academic librarians becomes the ideal of an organization? I demonstrate how the women's work ideological code replicates its ordering across four sites so that value of librarians' work is constructed in a particular way.

Salary Parity and Disparity

In the summer of 2015, librarians at Blue University found themselves in an enviable position. In the newly negotiated collective agreement considerable steps were taken to align librarians with faculty: Clauses that dealt separately with librarians were removed and the previous four ranks of librarian I thru IV were collapsed into three to parallel the established rank structure for professors (assistant professor, associate professor, professor). The overall effect was that librarians' role within the university was more aligned with the rank and collegial

processes of faculty colleagues. However, the greatest validation came from a significant bump in salary that many librarians experienced as a result of the collapse of ranks. As one librarian at Blue University shares, the increase in salary was significant:

We used to have a much lower pay scale, of course, and so they actually aligned us with the faculty pay scale. So I went from being a Librarian I to being Assistant Librarian because they re-classed us for Assistant, Associate, and then Librarian and my pay went up by like \$15,000 in a year. It was an incredible feeling of value for me. I felt more valued by the institution because they were no longer treating librarians as second-class faculty.

Although the salary scales for librarians at Blue University are not fully aligned with that of faculty (on average the salary floor for each professorial rank is approximately \$18,000 higher than the salary floor for the corresponding librarian rank) the negotiated agreement was a bold effort to decrease the gap.

A differentiated salary scale for librarians is generally understood and accepted because the terminal degree for librarians is a masters while the terminal degree for faculty is typically (although not always) a doctorate. The following rationale provided by another participant is illustrative of the point made:

We should have parity in free speech, academic freedom, but I don't think we should be earning as much money: We haven't put as much into it, and I don't resent it. If I wanted to be a professor then I would go and get my PhD.

An overall salary differential between librarians and faculty due to the latter's doctorate credential seems reasonable. However, as argued in Chapter 4, how we rationalize, conceptualize, and otherwise make sense of our everyday world is an ideological process—a way

of thinking. Smith (1990) makes the point that “what can be thought is already organized in people’s actual activities and is given explicit expressions at the level of discourse through the concept” (p. 41). How we think about the world is relational to our activities in it. In other words, our conceptualization of the value of librarians’ work is predetermined by how concepts such as gender role and skill are historically and socially constructed and expressed in complex relations of wage and evaluation systems. The conceptualization of gender role and skill is a critical salary determinant (Steinberg, 1990) and the implications for a feminized profession—74% of Canadian academic librarians identify as female (Revitt, Magnus, Schrader, & Wright, 2019)—cannot be ignored when examining how the institutional suppression of librarians’ salaries comes about.

Skills, Gender Roles, and the “Library Keeper”

In 1997 the Industrial Relations Commission of New South Wales (IRCNSW) conducted a pay equity inquiry and found that concepts such as “‘work value’, were developed in relation to male-dominated occupations and industries including the metal trade . . . and recognized that some features of women’s jobs have not been thoroughly identified before industrial tribunals nor ascribed the skill level and pay rates comparable with equivalent characteristics of male-dominated classifications” (Cortis, 2000, p. 54). In the Commission’s report, which reviewed the work of librarians, among others including nurses, child-care workers, geoscientists, and mechanics, found clear evidence of undervaluation of work based on gender and that occupational segregation adversely impacts women’s earnings. Specific reasons cited for the undervaluation of librarians’ work in particular and their low rates of pay included a “resistance to the recognition of librarianship as a profession,” an “inertia in recognizing the growth of a profession and a failure to adequately recognize professional qualifications held by female

librarians,” and that “the rates of pay for female librarians were determined over the first half of the century by reference to male librarians who actually held inferior qualifications . . . The female pay was artificially limited by the ceiling created by the male rate of pay” (Industrial Relations Commission of New South Wales [IRCNSW], 1997/1998, p. 489).

Findings of the Commission in Australia align with historical research data and scholarship examining the work of academic librarians in North America. In colonial America the earliest “library keepers” were men starting in 1638 when Harvard College was endowed with 380 books. The library keeper was responsible for security, opening the library twice a week for a period of two hours, monitoring circulation, and creating an alphabetical catalogue of the collection (Wiegand, 2015). Colonial America’s curriculum focused on mathematics, philosophy, and the development of moral character. Students did not have much need for the library or its books as neither were a high priority. Moreover, the colonial perspective that books were to be protected and sequestered rather than used established the librarian’s role as that of a “mere janitorship of books” (Bowker, 1877, p. 62). The academic tradition and attitude lingered into the 19th century with the librarian’s role often assigned to “the least-busy professor, the registrar, a secretary, or a student assistant” (Bailey, 1986, p. 676). From the very beginning the role of the library keeper lacked prestige and was financially depressed. The lack of status would continue to plague librarians long after exponential growth of library collections, services, the establishment of graduate credentials, and despite the academic relevance and rising prestige of the library itself.

The low status accorded to academic librarianship was what enabled women, and college-educated woman in particular, to enter the profession in large numbers (Bailey, 1986). In the latter half of the 19th century opportunities for men were also expanding and few chose

librarianship. The depressed wage and the fact that library work was increasingly identified as women's work (school and public librarians were almost exclusively female) disincentivized men and offered an employment opportunity for women. As universities started to adopt the German teaching model that emphasized research, seminars, and graduate education, library collections grew and libraries increased in prominence and became spaces where "students gathered routinely to learn, form, and reinforce community" (Wiegand, 2015, p. 90). As the maintenance of university libraries began to require full-time work universities and colleges turned to women because they were available and they were a cheaper source of labour (Bailey, 1986). Women were a cheaper source of labour because it was assumed 1) they were not the main breadwinner, and 2) that the skills required to do jobs associated with women's work were less complex (Steinberg, 1990).

Women's Work as Less Complex Work

In a seminal article, Steinberg (1990) examined how the definition of skill has been historically and socially constructed to illustrate the relationship between skill and gender and its impact on pay equity. Steinberg maintains that a gender ideology and cultural assumptions of the industrial era artificially separated men and women into public and private spheres, and became institutionalized in salary structures and job evaluation systems that gave preference to male oriented jobs and male characteristics. For example, technical skills and contact with higher level persons, as would be typical of management positions usually held by men, were considered more complex than caring for people or interacting with the homeless. Our present-day evaluation schemas are actually based on perception and assumptions of the incumbent rather than the actual job, this in-turn effects our assessment of complexity and definition of skill within occupations. How else Steinberg asks can managing a budget be regarded as more complex than

working with welfare clients, and why are physical conditions of working with dirt less desirable than working with human excrement? These perceptions of skill and complexity promote wage discrimination and reflect “the systemic undervaluation of women’s work *because* that work has been and continues to be done by women” (p. 456). In other words, our perceptions of skill and complexity are influenced by whether the job is typically done by a man or a woman rather than an objective analysis of the skill involved. In fact, “there appears to be no objective procedure for establishing standards of complexity across types of skill” (Steinberg, 1990, p. 452) yet employers have historically regarded work typically done by women as less skilled or unskilled. The end result is a gendered wage system based on gender role stereotypes.

Men’s Work: Men’s Salaries, Women’s Work: Women’s Salaries

The alignment of higher salaries with masculine work, that is work that has traditionally been done by men, is particularly evident in the academic library. Historically, the University Librarian (UL) was almost always a man. In 1972, over 95% of library directors of the 124-member institutions of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) were men (Deyrup, 2004). To this day men continue to disproportionately hold top administrative positions in academic libraries. In 2004 men made up 43% of ULs despite making up just 20% of academic librarians in the United States (Record & Green, 2008). The majority of ULs are librarians who hold a master degree in library and information science. According to the 2016 and 2018 census of Canadian academic librarians, which included librarians in administrative positions, less than 5% of academic librarians hold a doctorate credential¹² (Revitt, Schrader, & Kaufman, 2016; Revitt,

¹² In the 2016 Census of Canadian Academic librarians, 4.5% out of 759 responses, indicate a PhD degree. In the 2018 census, 10% of responses indicate a PhD credential; however, because the question was structured differently (the “not applicable” option was removed) 481 skipped the question. When those who skipped the question is factored into the response rate, the number of respondents holding a PhD drops to 4.6%.

Magnus, Schrader, & Wright, 2019). Nevertheless, academic librarians holding senior administrative positions are paid, more or less, on par with the typically PhD credentialed dean. The exceptions are deans in disciplines such as business or medicine where market modifier adjustments push up salaries to an outlier value. For example, at Blue University the salary in 2017 for the Dean of College of Medicine was \$448,448. Table 2 illustrates how the salaries of ULs at Blue, Green, and Red University, as well as my own university compare with the Deans' salaries at the same institution:

Table 2

Annual Salary Information for the University Librarian and Deans (2018)

University	University Librarian Salary	Deans' Salaries		
Green*	\$172,546	Dean, Faculty of Science \$195,753	Dean, Faculty of Humanities \$165,084	Dean of Education \$121,031
Blue	\$215,600	Dean, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies \$224,952	Dean, College of Engineers \$216, 701	Dean, College of Arts and Science \$211,635
Red	\$170,839	Faculty of Education \$175,231	Faculty of Arts \$185,578	Faculty of Health \$190,645
My university	\$177,278	Dean, Continuing Education \$177,663	Dean, Faculty of Health & Community Studies \$186,303	Dean, Faculty of Arts & Communications \$180, 534

The above salaries reflect annual pay only and do not consider "Other Pay" as may be applied. The salary information was obtained from salary and compensation disclosure lists posted on university sites. *The salary information is for 2014-2015.

The salary discrepancies between the UL and the position of the Dean at Green, Blue, Red, as well as my own institution range between 0% and 13%. In some instances, the UL’s salary is higher. At Green University the UL’s salary is 4% and 30% higher than the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and the Dean of the Faculty of Education respectively. At Blue University the UL’s salary is 2% higher than the Dean of College of Arts and Science. Here we can see how the work of academic librarians working in an administrative capacity, using skills and doing the work traditionally associated with men and done by men, is considered of comparable value to the institution as that of their institutional counterparts.

The Canadian Association for University Teachers (CAUT) reports that for the 2016-2017 academic year the average salary for teaching faculty at Canadian universities for all ranks was \$131,550 (Canadian Association for University Teachers [CAUT], 2017). The average salary for librarians in 2017 was \$97,883 (CAUT, 2018). The salary discrepancy between librarians and teaching faculty is 26%. Thus, the work of academic librarians working in a non-administrative capacity, associated with women and traditionally done by women, is considered to be of less equal value than that of their institutional counterparts. At Green University librarians’ salaries are lower than that of teaching professors, which in turn is lower than that of professors in the research stream. However, as one librarian shares, “*That I can live with.*” But the further devaluation of librarians’ work through a differentiated merit increment (MI) and career progression increment (CPI) borders on stigmatizing:

Table 3

The Annual Value of CPI and MI for Members at Green University

Year	Faculty CPI	Faculty MI	Librarian CPI	Librarian MI
2014/15	\$945	\$730	\$835	\$615

2015/16	\$945	\$730	\$835	\$615
2016/17	\$1245	\$730	\$1100	\$615
2017/18	\$1245	\$730	\$1100	\$615
2018/19	\$1245	\$730	\$1100	\$615

The table illustrates that the value of a MI and a CPI increment is lower for librarians than for all other faculty which includes lecturers, artist-in-residence, academic administrators, teaching professors, and professors in the research stream. The MI and CPI have traditionally been considered outside of the purview of the Public Sector Employer’s Council (PSEC), a provincial body established to oversee compensation for public sector employees. At times of retrenchment, the MI and CPI are an important mechanism for increasing salaries. According to Green University’s collective agreement “[a] CPI recognizes career progress of a Member whose performance is judged to have satisfied the expected standard of career progress in the period of review. MIs serve to recognize increasing levels of meritorious performance.” MIs and CPIs are thus financial incentives that recognize career progress, achievement, and effort. Why is the progress and effort of individual librarians valued less than the progress and effort of a lecturer, a professor, or an artist-in-residence? At the negotiations’ table administration refused to align librarians’ salary increments with that of faculty because, as noted by a librarian involved in the negotiations process, “historically there has always been a difference.” In a subsequent arbitration ruling meant to address the increment discrepancy and other financial proposals relevant to the faculty, the arbitrator declined to deal with the increment matter as inevitably any agreement would require “trade-offs” that need to be decided between the parties. The arbitrator does not appear to have considered the increment disparity particularly unfair. In fact, the trade-

off rational implies that the increment disparity is justified and any merit equalization award to the librarians would warrant an equal return in gains.

My personal experience with differentiated salary scales may also provide insight into institutional shaping of the value of librarians' work. The institution where I work is a teaching focused undergraduate university without graduate level programming and a doctorate degree is *not* the terminal degree for many of the faculty. In the Faculty of Health and Community Studies, Faculty of Fine Arts and Communications, the School of Nursing, as well as the School of Business many of the faculty have strong connections to professional practice and many hold a master degree. Being a teaching focused university means that teaching remains the primary focus and responsibility for all faculty including those in the research stream. Despite having equivalent credentials, negotiations for the 2017-2019 collective agreement closed with librarians being bumped to a lower salary scale than the rest of the teaching faculty. From the university's inception as community college in 1976, librarians and counsellors were designated as academic staff and were on the same salary table as instructional faculty. Any differentiation in salary was between individuals based on experience and credentials attained: a bachelor degree, a master degree, a double master, or a doctorate. In the 2017-2019 round of negotiations the salary tables were converted from tables based on credentials to tables based on rank, as is typical of universities; and librarians, along with counsellors, were placed on a salary scale that significantly reduced librarians' earning potential as compared to teaching faculty.

Ironically, the recognition of librarians' equivalent credentials was a key argument for salary parity between librarians and the professoriate at Red University. Recollecting negotiation discussions from almost four decades ago, one librarian shared the rational as put forth to university administration at the time:

The context at the time was that we had an awful lot of faculty with masters degrees, not doctorates, because we were a new university it was a little easier to argue that librarians were equal. . . . So I had a masters in history. I could be teaching history for say, \$12,000 a year. I've got two masters and I was in the library for \$7,000. So it was hard to make the case that one master degree was worth less than another.

Librarians at Red University were successful in obtaining full salary parity; and to this day, salary discrepancy at Red University is between individuals—not groups—and is based on rank.

The above vignettes demonstrate the very contextual, almost arbitrary, and at times contradictory rational for determining librarians' wage. However, as Marx reminds us when are we focused on appearances we are often misguided in our conceptions of what is really happening: That is because reality is internally relational and more than what it appears (Ollman, 1993). If we recall from Chapter 4, presented visually the concept of internal relations may look something like Figure 2.

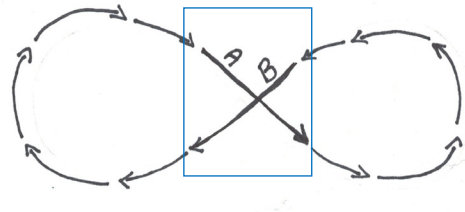


Figure 2. A potential illustration of Marx's concept of internal relations.

If we only consider what is in the box, "Feature A" and "Feature B" appear independent, unidirectional, and divergent, when in fact a broader perspective reveals they are internally related. In a similar manner, the salary scales for librarians at Red, Blue, and Green universities as well as my own institution may appear independent of one another; after all, each is the result of negotiation processes that are contextually bound to a particular institution. However, a

broader perspective and examination reveals ideological practices ordering librarians' wage. Ideological practices construct concepts and then use them as if they are self-evident (Smith, 1990). Concepts such as skill and gender role arise historically and socially in our activities and relations. They are baked into the social order of society and made visible in salary structures which allow the ruling regime to enforce a wage-gender segregation. In fact, gender roles such as that of the male provider are so engrained into the fabric of modern society, that librarians at Red University may have not been successful in achieving salary parity without it.

In the industrial society of the 19th century families no longer had to make what they needed to survive. The home and the family unit “shifted from being a site of production to one of consumption” and a new gender ideology emerged that recognized the home as a private and feminine sphere and work as a public and masculine sphere (Fehlbaum, 2016, para. 1). A “cult of domesticity” emphasized that the woman’s role was in the home. In the 1800s and into the early 1900s few women worked outside the home; and if they did, it was on the assumption that they were not the main breadwinner. Men’s wages were significantly higher because it was accepted and assumed that the man was the primary wage earner. Most librarians at Red University, then and now, are men. When I asked a librarian who was a driving force for salary parity at Red University, “*Do you think it made a difference that you were a man versus a woman?*” The response was direct, “*Of course, of course. It was one of the arguments we used. These guys, our librarians, they’re supporting families.*” We can see how our distinctive and discernable way of reasoning and interpreting society—the men need to work to support families sort of reasoning—ideologically predetermined the academic experience and status for librarians at Red University. Smith (1990) argued that social relations, that is complex social practices of how we go about doing things such the determining of a salary, are historically rooted and pre-set in our lives:

The ideas, concepts, and categories in which the ordering of people's activities becomes observable to us are embedded in and express social relations. Thus those social relations are already given to us in the basic terms of our thinking about society and history.

(Smith, 1990, p. 38)

We can see how the concept of the male breadwinner is an ideological process that becomes observable to us as it is enacted in librarians' salary parity at Red University. The single-family wage, embodied in the male breadwinner, rests on the gendered division of labour: reproductive labour (typically associated with women) and productive labour (typically associated with men). Feminist scholars such as Fortunati (1995) and Federeci (2004) have long pointed out how reproductive labour, that is housework, childrearing, and child raising, not only produces and sustains the labour force necessary for capitalism to function and flourish, but its separation from productive labour is artificial and the result of systems of domination that are necessary to a capitalist mode of production. Reproductive labour must be naturalized, or made to appear as natural, because it is, and must be, accomplished without remuneration. Free reproductive labour is required for the realization of surplus value, capitalism's ultimate and endless goal. The inter-relation between productive and reproductive labour and the capitalist system is detailed by Fortunati (1995), and its relation to academic librarians' work more fully discussed in Chapter 10. For now, I want to point out that librarians' work appears to fall outside of the circuitry of capitalist mode of commodity exchange (although as argued in Chapter 10, this is a false assumption). As such, the work is aligned with immaterial reproductive type of labour; the type of work that is presumed a "natural fit" for women.

Wyndham (1980) makes the point that teaching, social work, librarian, housewife have long been regarded as "the pinnacle for girls' aspirations" (p. 562) because of the invariable

assumption that “a woman’s true function lies in service” (Wyndham, 1980, p. 562). Along with nursing, these fields have been regarded as uniquely suited to women’s natural talents and the work role a natural complement with the woman’s role at home (Brand, 1983). When women’s work is *naturalized*, it is regarded as less complex; requiring less specialized training, skill, or expertise. When work is naturalized; its value is diminished. We can see how the women’s work ideological code is implicit in the naturalization process—the ever-present librarian content to be of service. Like mothering and domestic work, she is particularly suited to this work. The task-oriented diversity of the work does not require a particular focus or expertise. The work is accomplished discretely, quietly, and reproduced in the service of others. The skills and knowledge associated with segregated and gendered professions are concretized in salary structures and stubbornly persist.

Equality versus Equity and the Negotiation of Rights

The collective agreement is a key document that coordinates librarians’ experience as academic staff, and the negotiations process has been integral to advancing librarians’ rights as academic staff (Dekker & Kandiuk, 2014). However, the inherent compromise of the collective bargaining process is precisely the reason why Kruth (2014) argues against its use to address issues of pay equity and instead advocates a legislative approach. Pay equity legislation is concerned with job worth and seeks to ensure that men and women receive the same pay for work that is of comparable value to the organization (Singh & Peng, 2010). The older principle of pay equality, that is equal pay for equal work, seeks to ensure that (differences in education or experience notwithstanding) a female electrician and a male electrician, for example, will be paid the same. Pay equity legislation attempts to address the rights of employee groups and

means that male dominated occupations and female dominated occupations considered of comparable value to the organization will be paid the same. Pay equity legislation is part of a network of national and international laws that aims to negate a persistent gender pay gap¹³ as well as address systemic occupational segregation and discrimination where jobs historically performed by women are perceived as requiring less skill (Steinberg, 1990; Singh & Peng, 2010; Kruth, 2014). In Canada all provinces and territories have *pay equality* legislation: equal pay for equal work; unfortunately, not all provinces and territories have *pay equity* legislation: equal pay for equal value. British Columbian, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador are currently without (Kruth, 2014). Kruth (2014) argues that pay equity is a fundamental human right and thus subjecting pay equity to concession of collective bargaining “undermines its quasi-constitutional status” (p. 4). Kruth points out that Canada is a signatory to international laws that recognize equal remuneration for work of equal value. Furthermore, Ontario’s *Pay Equity Act*, considered one of the most progressive legislations regarding pay equity anywhere in the world (Singh & Peng, 2009), proactively legislates that all employers in the public sector and those in the private sector with more than 10 employees have to develop pay equity strategies. However, currently no penalty exists if employers chose to ignore the legislation.

Assessing whether librarians’ work is worth of equal value to the organization as that of an artist-in-resident, a lecturer, or a professor for example is beyond the scope of this study. However, precedent indicates that when appraising whether a particular job is worth of equal value, more than our problematic conceptualization of skill should be considered. Compensation practices point to a persistent under-evaluation of work simply because that work is done by women. Ontario’s Pay Equity Commission as well as Ontario’s Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal,

¹³ According to Statistics Canada report, women earn \$0.87 for every dollar earned by men (Moyser, 2017).

which hears and decides pay equity disputes, provide much information regarding employer obligations in meeting the requirements of the Ontario *Pay Equity Act* including the need for employers to determine job classes; job value based on skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions; as well as the method of comparison (Kruth, 2014; Pay Equity Commission, 2018; Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal, 2018). Librarians may have more success in advancing issues of salary parity when making the case that librarian's work is of equal value to the institution. It is an argument worth exploring particularly in jurisdictions with pay equity legislation.

Summary

Historically the status of academic librarianships suffered a triple blow: 1) the library keeper of colonial America was a lowly job with depressed wages even when men were the primary incumbents; 2) social assumptions and attitudes of the industrial era dictated a lower wage for women because they were not the main breadwinner and; 3) ideological conceptualization of work value, complexity, and skill were developed in relation to male dominated occupations. The historical and social situatedness of academic librarianship committed the profession to segregation, under-evaluation, and wage suppression that within the relations of ruling and through text mediated processes, has become established, normalized, institutionalized, and is ongoing. A closer examination of salary tables and related documentation at four universities reveals how ideological processes, shaped in part by the factors mentioned, predetermine librarians' wage compensation. For example, the wages of librarians working in administrative capacity, skill sets and work associated with men and traditionally done by men, are aligned with the wages of their administrative dean counterpart. Librarians working in non-administrative capacity, skill sets and work associated with women and traditionally done by women, are earning on average 26% less than their academic

counterparts. At Green University, librarians' merit and career progression increments are also less than that of all other academic staff, demonstrating that not only librarians' work is considered of less value to the institution but so is their career progress, effort, and achievement. Ultimately, salary structures are reflective of particular ideologies, gendered processes, and systems of domination necessary to a capitalist mode of production. Focusing on the value of librarians' work to the institution rather than its nature, may prove to be a more successful argument for narrowing the gender wage gap. In the following chapter, I discuss how *the library* ideological code renders the work of academic librarians as library work rather than academic work.

Chapter 7

The Social Construction of Librarians' Work as Library Work

Librarianship is a profession that is preoccupied with quantification and subsumed by the institution that is the library, the characterization of the work fused with books and resources. Although academic librarians engage in scholarship, research, professional development activities, as well as service to the university and the profession, the practice of librarianship is the primary responsibility for most. It is the librarianship work as described and experienced by librarians that is the focus of this chapter.

Within institutional ethnography, the *problematic* is a technical term not unlike “triangulation” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002). It is a conceptual tool from which research questions arise and puzzles of the everyday emerge (Smith, 1987). Institutional ethnography problematizes people’s everyday experiences; that is, the everyday is the problematic of investigation. To be clear, the problematic is not a problem to be studied. It is a tool used to ground social science inquiry in people’s actualities. Smith argued that methodologically social research must dispense with theories, concepts, and categories because terms like “delinquency” are more reflective of the organization of the administrative systems, i.e. the courts and the police, than people’s experiences. When we identify delinquent youths as the problematic of our study we not only objectify the individuals but also pluck them out of the social relations and organization that shape their daily experience:

To aim at the everyday world as an object of study is to constitute it as a self-contained universe of inquiry. The effect of locating the knower in this way is to divorce the everyday world of experience from the larger social and economic relations that organize its distinctive character. . . . In constituting the everyday world as an object of

sociological examination, we cut it off methodologically from the ways in which it is actually embedded in a socially organized context larger than may be directly known in that mode. (Smith, 1987, p. 90)

Institutional ethnography recognizes that our daily experiences are not self-contained. They are socially organized by relations that originate elsewhere. The researcher's standpoint, as an actor standing beside the informants, is thus critical to maintaining the focus of the study on people's actualities.

Within institutional ethnography participants are typically referred to as informants to underscore that the subject is the expert in their experience and setting. I want to make explicit that I identify with the librarian informants and am on their side. Indeed, I am one of them. Campbell and Gregor (2002) remind us that “[research] is always framed from the perspective of those that need to know whether those who are living in the setting or those who are located outside and looking in” (p. 48). In this case, the interest of the research is presented from the perspective of the academic librarian. The academic librarian and the daily practice of librarianship is the basis of inquiry—the problematic— from which my questions arise.

The Splitting of Our World

It is within the everyday, in this case, the daily practice of librarianship, that we can experience a bifurcation of consciousness (Smith, 2004) also referred to as a disjuncture or a rupture (Smith, 1993). Whatever the term, what Smith is getting at is a disconnect between how we know our everyday world versus how that same world is presented to us—perhaps not even at all—by the relations of ruling. This disjuncture happens, for example, as when we try to fill out a form but the questions and/or provided tick box answers do not match our actualities. The profound division and specialization of labour in a capitalist mode of production removes

individuals from the human relations that constitute our daily experiences. This alienation is fertile ground for ideological practices of knowing and making sense of our world. For academic librarians, the disjuncture is between what we do versus what others think we do as a function of the building. It is ideological practices that cement the librarian with the building.

Barlow (2008) asks, “What other profession shares the same name with the building in which they work?” implying librarianship’s unique claim to the occurrence (p. 314).

Librarianship is indeed a profession named after the building. It is perhaps not surprising that in public perception and discourse the librarian and the library are fused and conflated in a way that a teacher and a school, a doctor and a hospital never is. This sharing of name comes with mixed benefits. In a study exploring the rhetorical connection between the library and librarians’ professional identity construction, Hicks (2016) observed that when describing themselves as professionals, librarians

draw on the positive cultural associations of the library as an institution: however, an unintended consequence of this rhetorical device was the work and expertise of librarians was ignored. Libraries, as a result, could appear to function without the skill and effort of librarians. (p. 328)

And here lies the problem: In our talk, we assign the intellectual labour of the librarian to the library; rendering effort and expertise invisible. In our talk, we give primacy to the institution, the library ideological code infused discourse melds the librarian with the functions of the library. Hicks (2016) discovered that librarians also used the library as a product of professionalism and skill, and a tool to demonstrate professionalism. Hicks concluded that “when librarians *strategically* [emphasis added] slip between library and librarian when describing themselves and their profession, they illustrate that the library is central to their professional

identity construction” (p. 328). While I do not dispute Hicks’ conclusion, I do question whether the “metonymic slippage” (Hicks, 2016) is strategically done. A metonymy is a figure of speech in which a thing or a concept is referred to by the name of something closely associate with that thing or a concept (Google Dictionary, n.d.b.). For the institutional ethnographer the question of interest would be how is that librarians are describing their professionalism in this way? I suggest the metonymic slippage is not strategically intentioned but a discursive procedure that is active in organizing consciousness. As individuals, we not only engage in discourse but are part of it. Librarians’ way of talking, of slipping between “library and librarian when describing themselves and their profession,” is a concretized articulation of the coordinating of consciousness, and a reflection of embedded ideological and social processes that shape librarians’ work experiences. The metonymic slippage is infused with the library code ideology that constructs the librarian as synonymous with the library.

The Work of Academic Librarians

Academic librarians typically have a functional and/or a liaison subject role. Functional roles can be highly specialized and devoted to a particular aspect of librarianship; for example, metadata. Liaison roles are public facing roles where librarians work with students and faculty. Liaison librarians have subject expertise in a particular discipline(s), such as law or the humanities, and many hold relevant graduate degrees. In the 2016 survey of Canadian academic librarians, out of 759 responses, 365 or 48% indicated they have a graduate degree in addition to a Master in Library and Information Science (MLIS) (Revitt, Schrader, & Kaufman, 2016). Broadly speaking, subject librarians teach, develop collections, and provide reference and research services. It is common for librarians’ work to include some combination of liaison and functional role responsibilities including administrative and supervisory work. The below

excerpts are of librarians with subject responsibilities describing their day and talking about their work.

Librarian A:

I'm preparing for a class. So, I might be interrupted by [a staff] person who has a question. I go back to preparing my class. In comes a student who wants to talk about nursing research. I go back to preparing my class. Then I go off and teach the class. Then it's time to go off to a committee meeting. I volunteer to write something up. . . . I do a hell of a lot of teaching 60, 70 presentations a year. . . .almost three hours [each]. I do a lot of graduate. In fact, almost all of the masters programs.

Librarian B:

I teach physicians here and what I teach them, the whole course outline has to be sent back to the national body in Canada so that it gets approved: Is this quality enough for the physicians who attend your sessions to get continuing education credits for attending it? They have to get so many of those to maintain their practice. . . . These are papers [pointing to a 3" stack] I need to read. In medicine I need to know how the clinical practice guidelines are changing. This is stuff I need to know because I'm the one telling the clinicians, clinicians who are working with patients in the hospital. I also do work with people in the hospital . . . because they teach—not full time—but they teach in the program. So, they are part of the program and have library privileges, so I have to help them too.

Librarian C:

They have four different departments that have different graduate programs, I am embedded in every single one of their research methods courses, so they come to the

library for either one 3-hour session, or two hours plus one session. We meet in the lab and I walk them through, and I follow up with office hours after with graduate students, and we walk through the literature review process. When you are searching for things in the literature, it is at the same time clarifying your topic, so it is this very iterative process. . . . I also create a lot of library guides as well that are really specific to my discipline I teach off my guides. We look at these and go through what is quantitative and what is qualitative . . . I get questions all the time, and cut and paste send it in an email and have them go over it before scheduling a meeting. So last week I met with a student who was looking at women who experience intimate partner violence and counseling interventions, so we scheduled forty minutes, and found things that she can research and read on her own.

Librarian D:

All my reference essentially is with med students or PhDs or masters students, so they are all at least one hour to a few hours in my office.

Liaison responsibilities have always been part of my work and I relate to the above statements well. No two days are ever the same; they are filled with teaching, working with students, meetings, collection work, project and research work, and endless emails. The amount of time subject librarians teach and meet with students varies between disciplines however for many, such as librarians A, B, C, and D above, teaching and working individually with students is a considerable component of daily practice. And yet, this work is suppressed, if mentioned at all, in many collective agreements and policies articulating librarians' roles and responsibilities. At Green University, the *Evaluation Policy for Librarians* and the collective agreement state librarians are evaluated on many aspects of professional performance including “providing

reference, consultative, instructional and research services.” The meeting with students is turned into a consultative service, while teaching becomes instruction. Similar language is found in the collective agreement of the institution where I work where effectiveness in professional practice of librarianship includes “information literacy instruction” and “research and reference consultation.” Phrases such as these are ubiquitous in documents across Canadian universities articulating librarians’ work, evaluation, and promotion practices.

When reviewing the collective agreements and relevant policies at Green university and at my institution, it becomes quickly apparent that librarians instruct while faculty teach. Librarians provide consultative and reference services while faculty hold office hours and help students. These distinctions are not semantically benign. The terms instruction and teaching are often used interchangeably but Fernández-Armesto (2006) insists they are distinct: “You instruct soldiers. You teach students” (para. 1). Teaching is liberating education that provokes and challenges. Instruction is prescriptive, regimented, and devoid of imagination (Fernández-Armesto). Turning teaching into instruction renders what librarians do as mechanical and routine with the added implication that librarians do not engaged in praxis or critical pedagogy, nor do we have the need or desire to bring broader social issues into the classroom. Those of us engaged in the teaching trenches of information literacy know this is not true. A quick glance at two recent Workshop for Instruction in Library Use (WILU) conference programs reveals that librarians are very engaged, even preoccupied, with critical theory, learner engagement, privilege, inquiry-based learning, contested notions of truth, and critical practice to name a few (Workshop for Instruction in Library Use [WILU] 2017; 2018).

Phrases and terms such as consultative or reference services are equally problematic. A common definition of consultative is “to describe anything or anyone in the business of

providing advice or counsel” (Vocabulary.com Dictionary, n.d. para. 1). Librarians who meet with students to “*walk through the literature review process*” (Librarian C) and mentor to refine, critically appraise, contextually situate, and help students grasp the analytical scope of a research topic, are not in the business of advising. The librarian and student discussions are where knowledge and skills are exchanged and where teaching and learning happens. The business-speak nomenclature emphasizes the transactional while masking the inherently pedagogical nature of this work.

Etymologically the term reference is derived from the Latin *referre* meaning to “direction to a book or a passage” (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d. para. 1). Practically it is associated with the reference desk and the provision of reference services. Popular sites such as Wikipedia (2019b) define the reference or information desk as a “public service counter where professional librarians provide library users with direction to library materials, advice on library collections and services, and expertise on multiple kinds of information from multiple sources” (para. 1). I point to Wikipedia to underscore how reference services is conceptualized in popular discourse. Phrases such as “provide library users,” “advice on library collections,” and “multiple kinds of information” denote a uni-directional, resource based, transactional exchange of information where an expert directs the user to a relevant information source. The following excerpt from an online reference discussion between a librarian and a student may provide some insight into the actuality of the work. The librarian is me helping a first-year student who is writing an argumentative essay where both sides of the argument have to be considered. The student chose residential schools as their research topic:

Student: *Hello, im trying to find some sources for a research paper on residential schools. How would I find a good source for keeping them?*

Librarian: *can you tell me more about what are you looking for?*

Student: *im looking for a pro cause of keeping residential schools.
Refurbishing them into something better then what they were.*

Librarian: *this is not something that you will likely find information on
specifically*

Student: *i am writing a research paper and need the pros of keeping them
and you must integrate at least three acceptable and appropriate
scholarly research sources into your essay*

Librarian: *you will likely not find scholarly article focused on the positives of
residential schools,*

Librarian: *you may find articles about the stories of survivors and some
talking about less abusive circumstances than others*

Student: *ok, so if i find something and i cant read it online, i can save it and
pick it up in the library later?*

Librarian: *majority of the articles will be available online*

Student: *ok thank you*

Librarian: *you welcome. go to the library website and try the following
search: residential schools and survivors*

Librarian: *on the left hand side of the screen you can limit your search to
scholarly articles*

Librarian: *you will find thousands of articles, but not anything that focuses on
the positives of residential schools just like you are likely not to
find articles on the positives of concentration camps*

Librarian: *you will have to read about the experiences of survivors and some
may be less traumatic than others*

Student: *thank you*

Student: *what is a scholarly articles?*

The confusion, the naiveté, the literalness of the student's approach, the gaps in knowledge, the fraught ethical implications of topic treatment, the limited conceptualization of an argument, and lack of information discernment are common challenges throughout the information seeking process. The assignment guidelines called for scholarly sources, "you must

integrate at least three acceptable and appropriate scholarly research sources,” examining both sides of an issue. The student was struggling to find scholarly sources that discuss “*the pros of keeping them.*” And this is where the situating, the contextualizing, and the examining of the analytical scope of a research topic happens. Albeit, the above is not a good example of these teachable moments. This was mid-November—the height of paper writing season—and very typical for those of us working with students via online chat to have multiple conversations going at the same time. The virtual lineup and pleas for help are a constant this time of year; the inherent limitations of the medium painfully obvious. If assignment deadlines permit, students are encouraged to come and meet with a librarian in person, as happened in this case. There are two things I want to emphasize: 1) Much of what happens between librarians and students is not about library resources but about topic; 2) Helping students, be it on the reference/information desk or in our offices, is affective and intellectual labour.

The resources are tools; the actual work is in the topic: “*When you are searching for things in the literature, it is at the same time clarifying your topic, so it is this very iterative process*” (Librarian C). This topical conversation is one of the most complex forms of communication because the user is inquiring about something they do not know. This is especially true of students who by their nature are in the process of learning and intellectually grappling with issues and concepts unfamiliar to them. Uncertainty and anxiety about the writing process, the assignment, and its requirements often compound the complexity. In the excerpt above the “*How would I find a good source for keeping them*” is suggestive of knowledge gaps and confusion in conflating source with argument. The “*Refurbishing them into something better than what they were*” hints at the student’s intent, is indicative of challenges with topic articulation, and exemplifies my initial failure to illicit and understand the student’s need. As our

conversation and searching continued, Amelia (pseudonym) and I shaped and formed the topic around the role of buildings in collective memory. This conversation, Amelia's and mine co-constitution of the topic is not a "reference transaction" but a continuum of what happens in the classroom and the social processes of teaching and learning. This one-on-one student-librarian discussion leads me to my second point about reference work: It is affective and intellectual labour.

The information seeking process is a holistic process that involves the entire person. Kulthau (2019), one of the first scholars to examine the role of feelings in the information seeking process, noted the "sharp increase in uncertainty and decrease in confidence *after* [emphasis added] a search had been initiated" ("Role of affect"). It is often at this point that students seek out help. The "formulation of a focus or a personal perspective of the topic" is critical to overcoming anxiety, developing confidence, and interest in the topic (Kulthau, 2019, "Model of the information"). It is here that the affective and intellectual labour coupled with disciplinary expertise of academic librarians is instrumental to learning success: As feelings of anxiety and uncertainty diminish a corresponding shift in knowledge state to more focused and clearer thoughts is also observed (Kulthau, 2019). Arguably, such affective and intellectual labour is accomplished in countless classroom settings, including those taught by academic librarians concerned with developing learners' information literacy and fluency. Certainly, the librarians in this study teach and they consider what they do as teaching. And yet, the inherently pedagogical nature of this very librarian work—the teaching of information literacy and meeting and working with students—is down-graded, if not outright denied, in collective agreements, policies, and the documents of professional associations.

Although affective labour—variously defined as care work, emotional labour, reproductive labour—has been valorized in a post-Fordist society that privileges human services, as well as individualized care and attention, the value that is assigned to it remains deeply marred in gender and capitalist dimensions. Sloniowski (2016) observed the contradictions in the relationship between the academy and affective labour in a capitalist system. The university as a place of knowledge creation and objective inquiry is regarded as a rational, emotionally neutral space that nevertheless relies on the emotional labour and care work of countless faculty, librarians, and staff employed in an ever growing plethora of student services that support an increasingly diverse and internationalized student body through the education process to “produce correctly calibrated human capital for the labour market” (p. 658). Sloniowski makes the point that not all affective labour is equal and notes its stratification within the neoliberal university: managing relationships and developing partnerships with donors, the private sector, and governments, for example, is highly prized. However, the affective labour congealed in the teaching and learning processes is less prized and remains underappreciated. In the case of academic librarians, the affective labour and disciplinary expertise required to effectively scaffold students through topic articulation, development of a personalized focus, and information seeking processes, is not only underappreciated but invisible despite the fact that “the skills required to find, organize, synthesize, and manipulate information are prized in the neoliberal knowledge economy, as information is the preeminent commodity form of contemporary capitalism” (p. 659).

The artificial separation of emotional or affective labour from mind work or intellectual labour is an ideological process rooted in gender binaries, including the essentialization and naturalization of women’s work and capitalist social relations. As capitalism is globalized and

universalized, more and more people are drawn into its vortex as handicrafts, local industries, all manner of human services, and the public sphere become privatized and commodified. The women's work and library ideological codes locate the librarian outside of the immediate circuitry of capitalist relations; and yet in the knowledge economy, her labour is indispensable to it.

Demonstrating the Value of Libraries

The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) is a key professional organization that provides leadership on behalf of Canada's research libraries with the goal of advancing "sustainable knowledge creation, dissemination, and preservation, and public policy that enable broad access to scholarly information" (Canadian Association of Research Libraries [CARL], n.d.b "Our Mission"). Its members include Canada's 29 largest university libraries as well as Library and Archives Canada, and the National Science Library. CARL's statistics program was started in 1976 and serves as a key source of data about academic libraries' staffing, salaries, services, collections, and overall expenditures. CARL's latest report is 70 pages of comprehensive data tracking everything from the number of librarians per institution, to benefit expenditures, to the ratio of circulation transactions per student (CARL, 2018b). The statistics are an indispensable source of academic library data. However, a closer examination of CARL's statistical survey, specifically the instructions to member libraries that collect and annually submit statistics to the program, provides insight into the institutional shaping of librarians' work. The section dedicated to library instruction reads as follows:

3.1 Number of library presentations to groups

Report the total actual number of *library instruction sessions* during the year. Count sessions presented as part of formal *bibliographic* instruction programs including class

presentations, orientation sessions and tours. If the library sponsors multi-session credit courses that meet several times over the course of a semester [emphasis added] each session should be counted. Presentations both on and off the premises should be included when they are sponsored by the library. Do not include training for staff. (CARL, n.d.c., p. 2)

The overriding objective to count and quantify is readily apparent and not surprising, the purpose of the survey after all is to gather data for the statistics program. However, a closer and critical reading of the instructions reveals how the work of librarians is constructed: It is groups and not students, instruction and not teaching, sessions and not classes. The content of the instruction sessions is the library. The sponsor of the sessions is also the library. Thus, the library is simultaneous the subject and author/owner of the sessions. Bibliographic (a term that fell out of vogue in the 1990s) denotes resource-focused. Presentations, orientations, and tours underscore the academically basic and optional nature of this work. The organizational prerogative to quantify reduces for credit course to the clumsily described “multi-sessions that meet several times” over a semester. Each session is to be counted individually. The fact that these are for credit courses is irrelevant, what matters is the number of sessions. Image 1 is a screen shot of a table presented in “Section C: Use, Facilities and Services” of the mentioned report (CARL, 2018b). In the table, teaching is “library presentations to groups,” students are “participants,” and the helping and working with students is “transactions.” The agent is the library. Here we can see how the ruling relations organize the work of librarians as library work and not academic work.

Table 4

Reproduction of a Segment of Table II from CARL's Statistics 2016-2017 Report

CARL STATISTICS / STATISTIQUES DE L'ABRC 2016-2017

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Table II - Library instruction and facility use
Tableau II - Formation et utilisation des installations

Start here	# of library presentations to groups # de présentations de groupe	# participants in 3.1 # participants à la ligne 3.1	# of reference transactions # de questions de référence	Turnstile count Compte au tourniquet	# of seats # de places assises
Question	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5
British Columbia	1,140	27,132	52,788	3,927,281	4,703
Simon Fraser	1,414 ³⁵	26,003	57,903 ³⁶	1,849,420	2,002
Victoria	456	14,105	26,039	1,302,921	2,377
Alberta	686	21,511	120,880	2,810,233 ³⁷	6,137
Calgary	642 ³⁸	15,646	38,573 ³⁹	2,409,721	2,968
Manitoba	935	15,339	98,594	1,480,172	2,413
Regina	274	5,876	8,663 ⁴⁰	U/A	1,050
Saskatchewan	558	15,131	13,160	1,822,173	3,474
Brock	214	10,427	10,440	U/A	1,507

The instructions for “reference transactions” are equally disconcerting:

An information *contact* that involves the knowledge, use, recommendations, interpretation, or instruction in *the use of one or more information sources* [emphasis added] by a member of the library staff. Information sources include printed and non-printed materials, machine-readable databases (including computer-assisted instruction), catalogues and other holdings, records and, through communication or referral, other libraries and institutions, and persons both inside and outside the library.

Include information and referral services. If a *contact* includes both reference and directional services, it should be reported as one *reference transaction* [emphasis added].

When a staff member utilizes information gained from a previous use of information sources to answer a question, report as a reference transaction, even if the source is not consulted again during this transaction. *Duration should not be an element* [emphasis added] in determining whether a transaction is a reference transaction. Sampling based on

a typical week may be used to extrapolate for a full year. If you are using sampling, please include a footnote. Include virtual reference transactions (e.g. e-mail, web form, chat). (CARL, n.d.c, sec. 3.1)

Thus, the working and meeting with students is reduced to an objectified contact. The nature of this contact is transactional, its purpose utilitarian and strictly resource based: “in the use of one or more sources.” In fact, the contact is all about sources: “When a staff member utilizes information gained from a previous use of information sources to answer a question, report as a reference transaction, even if the source is not consulted again during this transaction.” The implication is that the number of sources used during a contact is quantifiably consequential. Nowhere in here is the affective and intellectual labour of librarians and students working diligently together to co-constitute a topic; or the frustration of both with the inherent limitations of mediated technologies; or the student’s struggle to articulate that what is not known; or the challenge in determining the relevance of that what is not readily understood, or the anxiety; or the mentoring, the guiding, the explaining, the reassuring, and the encouraging; or the student’s effort to integrate, identify with, and find meaning in what it is they are looking at or for. People have completely disappeared.

And unlike faculty whose time outside of class time is recognized and even considered in promotion and evaluation processes (e.g. the evaluation policy and procedures for social science faculty at Green university contemplate faculty’s “Availability and helpfulness to students outside class time”) librarians’ time is explicitly made invisible: “duration should not be an element in determining whether a transaction is a reference transaction.” To underscore the point, it is further stipulated that “personal one-to-one instruction in the use of sources should be counted as reference transaction.” Thus, the learning and teaching, the pedagogical experience

that happens between a student and a librarian for what may be an hour or two is necessarily reduced and condensed so it can be quantifiably repurposed to demonstrate use and need.

The annual survey and instructions are a stark and vivid example of how organizational priorities subsume work actualities. The number of sessions and contacts, along with other data such as the number of interlibrary load requests or database logins is evidence of library use. Library use data aligns with one of CARL's key 2016-2019 strategic goals to demonstrate library value and impact on research, teaching, and learning (CARL, n.d.d. "Strategic Direction"). Demonstrating the value of academic libraries is a 21st century obsession spurred by the advent of the internet and neoliberal approaches to managing the public sector. Key organizations, such as CARL in Canada and the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) in the United States, support and guide not only the collection of self-reported library data but also the standardization of user satisfaction surveys "to measure the quality of library services based on the perceptions of faculty, students and staff" (CARL, 2013, "What is LibQual?"). This librarian's keen insight encapsulates how organizational priorities subsume a focus on student learning,

We have so much quantitative data in the library world. What we don't have enough is really, how we are impacting student behaviour for their own academic success. . . . what we are really measuring is our performance through student satisfaction.

In other words, the purpose of library statistics is self-affirmation. The collapsing of the librarian into the library is a function of ruling relation in an effort to maintain and advance organizational integrity and relevance. Ironically, highlighting rather than masking the actual work of librarians may more effectively demonstrate impact on students' learning and academic success, except that in a capitalist system the ultimate goal is not academic success but a "correctly calibrated

human capital for the labour market” (Sloniowski, 2016, p. 658). Within such a system a focus on outputs is rational.

A capitalism mode of production necessitates competition for resources, in this case funding for the library. Through the relations of ruling the work is constructed in such a manner as can be quantified to demonstrate library use, and therefore the value of the library, as opposed to the value of librarians’ work. The reporting of the number of library presentations to groups, the number of participants, the number of reference transactions and so on is a process of abstraction where what is selected for reportage is information relevant to demonstrating a particular purpose. Affective and intellectual labour has no role in this purpose. Such abstraction is necessary to the valorization of the library.

As the lead investigator on the biennial Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians (CAPAL) census of academic librarians (Revitt, Schrader, & Kaufman, 2016; 2017; Revitt, Magnus, Schrader, & Wright, 2019), I am well aware of the reductionist and objectifying nature of statistics. However, for all their imperfections, statistical data is vital to society. I am not advocating that we cease collecting statistics. I am however making an argument for the need to reframe what it is that we are collecting and to critically interrogate what it is that we are measuring, with what purpose, and for whose benefit.

Summary

In public, scholarly, and professional discourse, the library and the librarian are metonymically fused in a way that other professions and their place of employment are not. It is argued that a metonymy, as when an attribute or an adjunct is substituted for what is meant e.g. *suit* for a *business executive*, is not only a figure of speech but a discursive procedure that is reflective of ideological practices that contour the work of librarians. The actual work of

academic librarians is varied and can include functional and liaison responsibilities. Liaison roles are public facing roles where librarians with subject expertise teach, meet with students, work with faculty, and develop collections.

An examination of librarians' actual work as well as the institutional policies, collective agreements, and the documents of the CARL reveals how ruling relations organize the work of librarians' as library work and not academic work. Key institutional and professional texts diminish the inherent pedagogical nature of many roles. Categorizing teaching as "sessions," the working with students as "consults," a class as "groups," and students as "participants" betrays organizational priorities that are focused on quantification, demonstrating use, and asseveration of "library value" rather than students' learning. A focus on outputs is rational, indeed necessary, within a capitalist mode of production and the endless goal of profit creation. Such a system necessitates a competition for resources, or funding, which in turn necessitates the presentation of evidence of a demonstrable need.

Chapter 8

Books and Journals: The Social Construction of Library Quality

Librarianship's *raison d'être* was summarized by one librarian as follows: *What we do in three words would be: organization of knowledge. Everything pertains to that. Knowledge is a huge project. That's the commonality. One way or another it connects to that.* Books have long been recognized as the purveyors of knowledge and the library, as the place where books are collected, a gateway to knowledge. McGann (2012) raised the importance of *placeness* and situated context of physical books and argued that separating the reader from the book “negates the power of a collection of books when experienced by an individual” (p. 7). It is perhaps the power, the allure, and the enduring metaphorical association between knowledge and books why accreditation bodies and various academic quality assurance processes continue to focus on library collections as a measure of library quality, this despite embedded information literacy teaching and programming at most universities, and the evolving nature of library services including scholarly communications, data management and visualization, open education resources, 3D printing and modelling, and virtual reality to name a few.

In examining how academic libraries are assessed and valued as an indicator of institutional quality, Jackson (2017) noted that “most aspects of library quality as conceived of by librarians are not considered central to university quality as understood by accreditors” (p. 86). For example, librarians and library organizations have been at the forefront of the open access movement that has been gaining momentum worldwide. In May, 2015 Canada's three key research funding agencies, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) released the *Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications*

which requires researchers to make their publications available open access within 12 months of publication for research funded with the agencies' monies (Government of Canada, 2016). The Tri-Agency's draft open data policy is currently proceeding through a review process. Librarians, as information science professionals, and library organizations such as the Canadian Organization of Research Libraries (CARL), and the Portage Network, launched by CARL to coordinate expertise, services, and technology in research data management, are integral to advancing open access principles and developing institutional capacity in knowledge creation, dissemination, and access. However as noted by Jackson (2017),

Accreditation agencies want to see evidence of library capacity to support academic programs, but relatively few have substantially modified their written standards to reflect evolving notions of the library's impact . . . [or consider] non-traditional library services such as scholarly communications and research data management. (p. 85)

Jackson's research, as well as my own, is indicative of the dichotomy, the disjuncture, that exists between how the nebulous concept of library quality is conceived by librarians versus how it is constructed by ruling relations.

In the previous chapter I examined how collective agreements, institutional policies, and a key professional organization downgrade, obscure, and otherwise render invisible the pedagogical work of librarians with liaison subject responsibilities. In this chapter I continue the focus on the actualities of librarians' work and the institutional shaping of that work as advanced by professional accreditation bodies, provincial quality assurance processes, and the professions.

Quality Assurance: Library Resources as Library Quality

Higher education in Canada falls under the jurisdiction of the country's provinces and territories, and unlike some countries (e.g. in Australia the Tertiary Education Quality and

Standards Agency [TEQSA] is a single body responsible for accrediting all courses of study) Canada does not have a single accreditation body for the university sector. Instead, a multi-layered system is responsible for quality assurance, including the assurance standards and procedures as determined by provincial and professional accreditation authorities, disciplinary experts, as well as the university itself. Although the process is undertaken by each university, it is mandatory, formalized, and the findings made public. Compromised findings can impact an institution's reputation as well as the decisions of external stakeholders including potential students and funding bodies. Quality assurance processes are thus taken seriously by administrators and faculty alike. The library's presence in quality assurance processes is longstanding, if peripheral. Jackson (2017) noted that as early as 1922 the North Carolina State Department weighed in on the number of volumes a college library should have—8,000—and recommended that the library be professionally administered. In some jurisdictions, such as the United Kingdom, even information literacy skills are considered in program level accreditation processes (Jackson, 2017). In Canada, quality assurance processes remain focused on library collections, although provincial standards regarding the library vary and some are more comprehensive than others.

Canada's Council of Ministers of Education (2007) *Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada* [the *Statement*] is a "guideline to be employed in decision making relating to new degree programs and new degree-granting institutions within a province/territory" (p. 2). As such, the *Statement* articulates categories, standards, and procedures that shall be considered by provincial and territorial governments in institutional and program accreditation processes. With respect to the library, the *Statement* stipulates that a degree granting institution is responsible for ensuring that students and faculty have access to

“appropriate learning and information resources (such as library, databases, computers, classroom equipment, and laboratory facilities)” (p. 9); “appropriate information services and learning resources to support the academic programs” (p. 11); as well as a “physical plan and facilities including laboratories, classrooms, library, technology . . . (p. 11). Within the context of information services and learning resources, institutions are further required to consider how acquisition priorities are established, maintained, and supplemented. The Council of Ministers of Education *Statement* sets the precedent for recognizing the library and information resources as important and relevant to post-secondary education quality assurance processes.

Quality assurance processes and documentation at the provincial level continue the resource-centered priorities of the *Statement*. Ontario’s *Quality Assurance Framework* stipulates that universities provide “evidence that there are adequate resources to sustain the quality of scholarship produced by undergraduate students as well as graduate students’ scholarship and research activities, including library support” (Gold et al., 2016, p. 11). In British Columbia, the *Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines* likewise consider library resources, specifically “the number of holdings (print) relevant to the field of study and number of holdings (electronic) (i.e. program-specific databases on-site resources” as well as “web-based or inter-library arrangements” (British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills, and Training, 2006, p. 30). Quality assurance documentation by the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, an arm’s length organization that conducts quality assurance reviews in all publicly funded universities in the Maritimes, also contemplates the “appropriateness of the support provided to the learning environment, including but not limited to library and learning resources” (Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, 2010, p. 29). Saskatchewan’s *Quality Assurance Review Process: Organizational Review Standards and Criteria* provide a more

fulsome set of criteria outlining appropriate access to learning and information resources and services and require an institutional commitment to not only provide but also to maintain “learning and other resources specific to the program, and supplement them as necessary” (Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board, 2014, p. 20). An even more thorough consideration of information services and systems is found in the quality assessment and assurance handbook of the Campus Alberta Quality Council where institutions are required to produce analysis of library holdings including collection policies, policies regarding ordering and budget allocations, accessibility and usage information, space analysis, and “resource staff and their vitae and job descriptions” (Campus Alberta Quality Council, 2018, p. 108). Alberta is the only jurisdiction to consider the role and expertise of library staff as relevant to quality assurance.

When Red University recently underwent an accreditation review, the university template developed for the purpose was predictably collection focused. The following exemplifies one librarian’s frustration with the template’s narrow scope, and underscores the pervasive mantle of invisibility shrouding the work of librarians and library staff:

There’s a section on the templates for reporting, programs’ reporting, that had something about library resources. And it said something along the lines of, have a statement ready about the collections available to support the program or the collections’ ability to support the program. So, my comment was libraries and archives are about more than just collections, we’re people who play a role in teaching and learning, instruction and research.

Overwhelmingly, provincial accreditation processes do not contemplate the people—the necessary expertise that is required to acquire, develop, and make library resources available and

accessible. Within the context of the curriculum, the equivalent would be limiting quality assurance considerations to subject content while disregarding the need for qualified faculty. This of course is not the case. Ontario's *Quality Assurance Framework*, for example, considers the number of faculty as well as areas of research and expertise indispensable to demonstrating a university's capacity to deliver quality education.

The preoccupation with library resources is disconcerting, even misleading. Data demonstrates that the amount of money that academic libraries are spending on electronic resources, including e-books, has been steadily increasing (Canadian Association of Research Libraries [CARL], 2018a). For example, between 2008 and 2016 University of British Columbia libraries' expenditure on e-resources increased from approximately seven to \$18 million (CARL, 2018a, p. 3). At my own institution, in 2018 the library book collection was comprised of 225,000 print titles and over 739,000 e-books. Thus, the majority of our collection is only available electronically. And this is true of most academic library collections. In 2016-2017, Canada's 29 largest academic libraries spent almost \$271 million on ongoing resource purchases versus \$61 million on one-time resource purchases (CARL, 2018b). Ongoing resource purchases means annual subscriptions to journals and other serialized works, which are overwhelmingly digital. One-time resource purchases typically include books, both in print and in electronic format. CARL member libraries expend almost five times more on online subscription content than one-time purchases. Library resources are acquired and developed to support the learning, teaching, and research mandate of a university. Resources are made available to any member of the university community, and sometimes members of the public as well, who can go to a shelf and borrow a book or read an e-book or article online. However, particularly with online resources, it is not only what is available that matters but how accessible is it. The relevance and

value of the largest and most financially resourced collections can be seriously compromised if individual titles are not readily discoverable. Resource stability or continuous access is equally important. The stability and effective discoverability of online collections is a complex ongoing project that requires expertise in information systems design and development, cataloguing and metadata standards, user information seeking practices, knowledge of electronic resource acquisition processes, policy development, budget management, licensing and contract negotiations, contract law, preservation, and copyright to name a few.

The comments below exemplify the constancy, complexity, and on the ground reality of ensuring that library collections are not only available for use but accessible to the user:

Librarian E:

Last week I was in Germany . . . while I was there I re-booted the library system the first day I was there. . . .So, it's not like it stops, right? It continues. I also updated the proxy.

Librarian F:

For me it is, the students are my bottom line. I think about us as we serve the entire campus. So, we can have more impact than a single liaison because when Science Direct goes down . . . We are the ones who can fix it. I think of the entire campus as our client.

Librarian G:

[my work is] more front-end user experience. I'm not a programmer but I do some of the backend configuration and things like that as well. I have a team of programmers that work with me, not for me, and I work with them to develop stuff. I think of myself as kind of the translator that sits between the users and the rest of the library faculty and

technical team. I kind of go back and forth and back with requirement and work with them on things.

Librarian H:

I negotiate all the licenses. I manage access. I oversee all the troubleshooting, basically, anything to make our online collection work. I have responsibility of the funds. . . . I work closely with a lot of staff . . . So I functionally lead the work for [online collections]. I kind of set a direction, the overall vision.

Librarian I:

[I work with] IT to improve our easy proxy database and make sure it's functioning well and that we've got a data structure that works properly with our user permissions system on campus.

Library quality assurance processes that organize library priorities around the “adequate amount” of library resources are woefully out of step with the realities of collection work in the 21st century. None contemplate the *working with IT to improve easy proxy database and that the data structure works properly with the permissions systems*, or the *working with a team of programmers to translate user needs*, or the *negotiating all the licenses*, or the *rebooting of library systems while in Germany* that is the actuality of ensuring the stability, accessibility, and discoverability of library resources.

Library quality as resource quantity is an ideological process concretized by relations of ruling in standards and guidelines that order local practices accordingly. The comments below by one librarian participant underscore the frustration and on the ground reality when library resources are the overriding measure of quality :

All I know is that our resources are shrinking. We get one more position for a position

that we've lost, but over the past several years we've lost several. Even to get one back feels like its pushing a big rock up a hill. We had more funding for collections this year but that is only because we took everything there was out of operations. . . . And we were very unhappy about it. . . .our systems librarian, has literally no one to turn to for back up and is on call 24/7, 365 days a year.

At the heart of the disjuncture is a contested notion of library quality. Librarians' experiential knowledge promotes a conceptualization of library quality that is complex, multifaceted, and goes considerably beyond resource quantity to include service development (Jackson, 2017), expertise, and human resource capacity. However, ideological processes promote a narrowly conceived and resource-based conceptualization of library quality.

When salary lines of four library staff who took advantage of an early retirement package were moved to collections, an already expansive professional scope of some was stretched even further:

Researcher *You're the only systems librarian that's supporting the consortia for a system that you developed?*

Librarian *Pretty much. I do all the upgrades, I do anything involved with it. I'm responsible for the institutional repository, for the website such as it is, which is probably the reason why it looks like it does, for various other sort of open source solutions.*

Researcher *Then on top of that, you're a Chair.*

Librarian *Chair, and also scholarly communications librarian. And liaison to [name of three faculties] and service on [name of committee e] and Senate and [provincial level] committee, Archives committee, Chair for the selection committee for [name of program].*

It is not unusual for librarians to juggle a plethora of divergent areas of professional practice including subject liaison, administrative, and multiple functional role responsibilities, in addition to having significant service commitments to the university and the profession, as well as scholarly engagement. The broad span dilutes expertise and makes professional focus impossible. Such work practices run counter to an academic culture that valorizes specialization and expertise and challenge librarians' integrity as academics, as noted by another participant:

Well, you know it's a tribute to how versatile we can be . . . by and large librarians tend to be pretty intelligent and they can really study up fast. But, it makes it pretty impossible to really create credibility with faculty if I with an English literature background am now doing linguistics. Well it took me two years to figure out the language used to talk about their subject area.

Limited research exists on academic librarians and stress or burnout likely do to “assumptions of the scientific community regarding the nature of the librarian's job as relatively static and undemanding” (Shupe, Wambaugh, & Bramble, 2015, p. 264). However, in a study that included 282 academic librarians in the United States, the authors found that academic librarians experience role ambiguity, role overload, and burnout at or above the level experienced by other occupations. The wide professional scope of responsibilities and service commitments of many librarians is not only incompatible with academic norms but also inconsistent with accreditation standards of professional bodies, which in addition to library resource requirements, ironically, presume a dedicated focus.

The Structuring Effect of Accreditation Bodies and the Professions

Accreditation standards are typically concerned with evaluating and accrediting programs whose graduates are members of a particular profession such as engineers, veterinarians,

journalists, or architects. The Canadian Architectural Certification Board defines accreditation as the “public recognition accorded to a professional program that meets established professional qualifications and educational standards through initial and periodic evaluations (Canadian Architectural Certification Board [CACB], 2015, para. 1). In reviewing the documentation of three accreditation bodies: the Canadian Architectural Certification Board, the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada, and the Federal Law Societies of Canada, the requirements concerning the library are generally more demanding and thoroughly considered when compared to quality assurance standards at the provincial level.

The Canadian Architectural Certification Board’s *Conditions and Terms for Accreditation: For Professional Degree Programs for Architecture* require institutions to provide a comprehensive analysis of library collections, as well as a thorough assessment of library staff including a description of the library’s administrative structure, librarians’ education and work history with highlighted reference to subject expertise in architecture or related field, written position descriptions, as well as consideration if library staff and architectural librarian are part of the architecture program and educational team. Although the standards do not explicitly state, they imply the requirement for a dedicated librarian position with relevant subject matter expertise, that is administratively situated within the academic program and faculty.

The *National Requirements* of the Federal Law Societies of Canada require that “the law school maintains a law library in electronic and/or paper form that provides services and collections sufficient in quality and quantity to permit the law school to foster and attain its teaching, learning and research objectives” (p. 5). Again, although the standards do not specifically stipulate an independent law library, they imply it. It is perhaps for these reasons

why universities across Canada are far more likely to have a separate law library than an anthropology or an English one, with dedicated professional positions often funded by the concerned faculty or school. The *Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools Standards and Elements* document mandates access to a “well-maintained library resources sufficient in breadth of holdings and technology” with professional staff familiar with regional and national information resources and data systems to oversee library services (Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools Standards and Elements, 2018, p. 9). The determinative influence of these accreditation bodies is exemplified below:

Every review they [departments] complain they don't have enough faculty. That people aren't being replaced. You go to the English department. You know, the person I used to work with . . . not replaced, etc. So, it's not just us [reference to library name]. It's a university phenomenon, where the people who tend to retain their faculty are those who have accreditation. So, in social work there were three people teaching a Bachelor's of Social Work. Well, [to get accreditation] they had to boost that up, so they did.

Here we can see how accreditation bodies, particularly in times of financial constraints or exigency, organize institutional priorities around the requirements of the concerned profession. This organizing and coordinating effect is keenly felt in the academic library where accreditation standards, particularly of the higher status professions such as law or medicine that have autonomy and independence to define their own practice and professional boundaries (Macdonald, 1995), assume some jurisdictional scope over library resources, services, and staffing. The sway, structuring effect, and professional privilege can be considerable and shape everything from collections and service priorities, to librarians' reporting structure, and perceived scholarly engagement:

In the faculty of law for example, there are 12 graduate students and about 400 undergraduate students. They have three and a half librarians and a huge library. They also have a way bigger collection. The faculty of education has about 600 undergraduates and about 700 graduate students and they have me. So, these organizational challenges within the library really get in the way of me doing my job.

The leverage, if not monopolization, of the traditional professions within the academy, and the library in particular, is all the more possible because institutional budgets are often aligned to accommodate accreditation requirements. The budgetary cross-pollination means that librarians need to negotiate complex bureaucratic structures.

At Red University funding for the concerned collection as well as the librarian position is coming from the professional school. Although the librarian officially reports to the University Librarian (UL), the source of the position's funding makes for an interesting dynamic,

I report to the UL, but it's this fine little dance because they also want me to be on the faculty there [reference to a school]. I don't have a joint appointment and that has been a discussion at some points as they're developing their constitution. I'm a part of those discussions But I'm still beholden to the main campus because I'm in a branch library. So, it's kind of a funny dance.

The intricacies of this dance are apparent in something as benign as taking a day off:

When I request time off, I would be contacting [the UL] but then as a courtesy I'm cc'ing both the academic secretaries for the library and for [the school] and both cc'ing the library assistant and the director so that everybody knows, plus the chair I guess. I try to cover all my bases.

The above reveals a nested level of bureaucratic interdependencies and hints at the required

finesse to aptly maneuver between two administrative worlds when professional responsibilities are divided. Disciplinary norms and requirements, particularly of the more regulated health professions, can add another layer of complexity and have workload implications:

I actually have a very interesting role here because I report to two people technically. I mean unofficially I report to . . . head of learning and research, but officially on paper I report to the UL. I also report to the associate dean of medicine for [title] because I am actually paid for by [name of institution] to be the medical program librarian. I wear two hats sort of thing, because right now I report to two masters. . . . The thing that is hard for me is that I have to meet [home university's] operational standards and also have to meet [name of institution] of medicine's operational standards—the two are completely different.

The juggling and maneuvering between various officialdoms and the divided accountability can be professionally demanding and add duress to an already full schedule:

I am accountable to be on a medical program, but I am also accountable here, at least I think, to doing an excellent and outstanding job. I feel a pressure to always do more and to always be on top of things.

Professions not only organize and shape librarians' practice but also scholarship, where the requirements of disciplinary norms and standards can profile librarians' work as scholarly engagement or simply an aspect of daily practice. In discussing a recent initiative, a librarian mentioned that she and a colleague were conducting a scoping review of the literature. I inquired if the review would result in a co-authorship:

It depends on who I'm doing it for. In nursing they use the JBI method, which requires me to be a co-author. In medicine though it is up to the

principle investigator. Also, in medicine there is the ICMJE and in it they have very clear guidelines about who should and shouldn't be considered an author. In those guidelines it says you have to also be coming up with the methodology, you have to have done analysis of research and be able to explain every part of the paper. So, in some, if there is a large statistical component you may or may not be considered a co-author.

The Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) is an international not-for-profit research and development center that developed a comprehensive guide to assist authors in conducting systematic and scoping reviews. The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) is a group of medical journal editors working together to improve the quality of medical science reporting. The ICMJE *Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly work in Medical Journals* endorse that authorship be based on four criteria the foremost of which is the “substantial contribution to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of the data for the work.” (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, 2019, “Who Is an Author”). Scoping or systematic reviews can be complex and laborious undertakings requiring considerable searching, subject knowledge, and analysis expertise. However, depending on the discipline, the librarian is either a co-author or an assistant. The research reporting practices can thus shape the work of librarians as research and scholarship on the one hand, or as an assistant supporting the work of faculty on the other.

The women's work ideological code confines the librarian to the library, implicates the librarian's role as static and always in service of the library and its collection. The ideology frustrates a broader contemplation of the scope of librarians' responsibilities and expertise that

are necessary to resource discovery and library operations. The serendipity of resource discovery is not serendipitous but the result of the invisible labour of countless of individuals and a profession dedicated to the huge project that is knowledge.

Summary

In this chapter the structuring effect of quality assurance standards, accreditation bodies, and the professions—the relations of ruling—was made implicit within the context of the academic library and work experiences of academic librarians. The quality assurance of Canada's post-secondary education is determined by a multi-level system that includes directives from Canada's Council of Ministers of Education, provincial bodies, as well as guidelines and standards from the accreditation bodies of various professions, and the university itself. Texts are principle instruments of ruling relations through which power can be exerted. The texts of quality assurance processes including the Council of Ministers of Education *Statement* and various provincial level directives equate library quality with resources quantity: an organizationally appealing and expedient ideological process as the quantifiable is readily demonstrable.

Grounding the inquiry from the standpoint of the librarian reveals that the preoccupation with resources in quality assurance processes is out of step with librarians' experiential knowledge and 21st century collection practices that are centered around resource accessibility, stability, and discovery. The problematic that was brought into view is the narrowly conceived notion of library quality by the relations of ruling, versus librarians' complex and multifaceted conceptualization of library quality which is centered on professional expertise and capacity, as well as service development. Library priorities are also ordered by the various accreditation standards of professions as institutional budgets and resources are often aligned to meet

accreditation requirements. The organizing and prioritizing effect of autonomous, prestigious professions such as medicine and law can be considerable and presumes a level of jurisdictional scope within the library including the foregrounding of relevant professional expertise, resource and service allocation, and the integration and situatedness of subject librarians. In this chapter it is revealed how assurance processes and accreditation standards give material form to the relations of ruling.

Chapter 9

The Social Construction of the Librarian as a Library Worker

They accept me, but I also always feel like I'm a little different. I don't do research the way they do. I don't teach the way they do. So, a lot of their issues have to do with things like workload and academic freedom or other things. It's not that I'm not familiar with that stuff but we just don't have the same issues in the library. Of course, workload is something that we do have which is different from what they have. They have teaching loads but actual 80% day to day work, they don't do the same things. I'm there to educate, but also listen to what they are going through and then bring it back.

The above excerpt from a librarian reflecting on their role and collegial fit within a particular committee represents the kind of straddling that librarians as academic staff but not quite faculty often do between the world of the professoriate and the practice of librarianship. In the previous chapter it was revealed how ruling relations order, structure, and prioritize the local so that librarians' expertise is simultaneously undermined by quality assurance processes that emphasize resource quantity and coveted by professions' accreditation standards that prioritize disciplinary expertise. In this chapter, I reveal how the ordering and structuring continues to prioritize librarians' role as library workers rather than academic staff, privileging the needs of the library as a hierarchical organization rather than an academic unit. The focus of inquiry in this chapter, the problematic, is the discrepancies that characterize the academic librarian's role.

As academic staff librarians' rights and responsibilities are articulated in policies and collective agreements alongside those of faculty colleagues. However, there are key distinctions

between librarians and faculty responsibilities including librarians' higher workloads with less emphasis on research and scholarship, typically a lower salary scale, and a differentiated ranking structure. Across Canadian universities librarians' ranking structure is particularly fragmented and context specific varying from six ranks at the University of Waterloo to no ranking system at the University of Alberta (CAUT, 2015b). The nomenclature also varies from librarian I, II, III, IV, V, or VI to assistant, associate, and full or senior librarian. This lack of professional cohesion reverberates in institutional policy where librarians are inconsistently presented and often characterized by what they are not. As one participant observed: *Within university policy there's the administration, faculty, and everyone else.*

At Green University out of 132 policies librarians are specifically referenced less than a handful of times. This includes the policy dealing with the appointment and re-appointment of the university librarian, copyright, and a policy dealing with the allocation of professional development funds. In other instances, such as the policy dealing with the review and appointment of the university president, librarians are considered staff and eligible to be part of the process through the staff category as one participant explains:

It's not been the case here really that librarians are pulled up as a separate group. They've been, my perception at least, lumped in with staff in the policies of the university, not with faculty. Things perhaps should or are changing over time, but they are very much based on where the academic faculty participate and where everyone else does.

The distinctiveness and exclusiveness of the role of faculty and their place within university processes is understood. By comparison, librarians' role within university processes is far less clear. At my institution, librarians are variously dispersed across university policies and the

collective agreement: at times conceived as librarians; or, along with counsellors, nursing lab supervisors, and writing and learning skills specialists, packaged as Professional Resource Faculty (PRF). The PRF category is not an account of our role, but a characterization of it. The staff category at Green University, and the PRF category are relations between the institution and the librarian that express institutional interests. At the individual level, the staff and PRF categories necessarily obfuscate librarians' work and role by at times grouping librarians with non-academic staff in the case of the former, objectifying and masking in the case of the latter. I once arrived at a committee meeting and was presumed to be the typing, filing, searching "resource" for the committee to do its work. However, nowhere is the straddling divide, even ambivalence, regarding our role and fit within the academy more pronounced than in the areas that articulate librarians' work hours and engagement with research and scholarship.

The 35-hour Work Week Crutch

In reviewing the collective agreements of 32 universities, Leckie and Brett (1995) found that 50% of the agreements specified work hours. Almost two decades later, Harrington and Gerolami (2014) discovered a very similar pattern with 42% of agreements defining the number of work hours for librarians. In the 2018 census of Canadian academic librarians, out of 876 respondents, only 36% indicated they have flexible work hours (Revitt, Magnus, Schrader, & Wright, 2019). Both the collective agreements of Green university and the institution where I work stipulate a 35-hour work week for librarians. A set work week is inconsistent with the nature of academic work, identified by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), among other responsibilities and including "professional practice, the building of library and archival collections, [and] the provision of mediated access to information"

(Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2016, para. 1). The CAUT statement on *The Nature of Academic Work* calls for a balanced approach between academic responsibilities and service, and affirms the need for flexibility if academic staff are to engage in the full gamut of their responsibilities. Not only does a set work week not fit with the “faculty model, which gives faculty the autonomy, freedom and responsibility to make professional decisions to manage their own work” (Harrington & Gerolami, 2014, p. 159); it is entirely inconsistent with librarians’ actual work practices:

I am teaching via collaborate. These were sessions for graduate nurses, so it was an hour and a half session. They are your typical distance students, except they are graduates and they are typically working; so, I do them at night often, or on Saturdays; and because their schedule isn't great, I offer two to three of the same session at multiple times. I offer it at different times to try and get as many to come as possible. So, this week was Monday, Wednesday, and I'll have one Saturday mornings.

Most librarians can relate to a work week that resembles the above. Yet, at Green university there is discomfort with removing the 35-hours stipulation in the collective agreements:

There are elements of the collective agreements that are built in that the librarians should really negotiate out if they want to be considered faculty. For instance, faculty in our collective agreements don't have a set working week: number of hours. Librarians insist that that's in there—35 hours a week—so every time that comes up there are questions, serious questions, amongst the administration about why are the librarians in the collective agreement with faculty if they are hourly waged.

At my institution there is likewise a hesitance to do away with the 35-hour stipulation for fear that librarians can then be “overworked.” The presumption that our professional autonomy

can be so easily infringed is curious; particularly as librarians generally agree that they have considerable flexibility and self-determination in their daily work:

Librarian L:

And that is one of the nice things about working here, I don't feel like someone is watching over my shoulder, counting my hours. If I have to leave at 2:30, I don't have to justify it, I just have to say this is what I'm doing. There is a really good understanding here. People here don't necessarily work to the 35-hour thing. They are professionals. They are doing their job. They are putting in much more usually than 35 hours. Nobody is looking at the clock and saying, "oh I'm at 33.5 hours, so I am going to finish this up, then I am done." Vice versa, from the administrative side, they never make us feel that way. I would have to say the autonomy is one of the best things . . . I have always felt that people respect my ability to do my job. They leave me alone, and they don't micromanage me about it.

Librarian M:

I like the autonomy. I can set my own schedule, I can work on what I want, when I want, and in as much depth as I want or not, and I appreciate that. I think that people do a better job, and quality shows with the more autonomy you give . . . And that is one thing I love about this place; and I think that in my experience of academic librarianship, both here and when I worked at colleges . . . autonomy is one of the commonalities of academic librarianship.

The incongruity between librarians' actual work practices and the regularized 35-hour week is stark, but in line with the historically entrenched managerialism of the library and the librarian. A careful reading of the collective agreements—texts intended to articulate and protect

academic rights—reveals how texts as purveyors of power of ruling relations undermine, even disempower, librarians’ academic status at these institutions. At Red and Blue universities, the librarian appointment is embedded throughout the collective agreement alongside that of faculty, the focus is on alignment and fostering a community of interest between librarians and faculty. To contrast, the librarian appointment at Green university and at my institution is separated out in the collective agreement, the effect is an othering of the librarian role. For example; at Green university for faculty “duties and responsibilities of Members will be equitably distributed,” for librarians they are assigned. Upon resignation faculty are required to give a four-month notice; librarians are required to give one, presumably because organizationally the work gap is more easily filled. Yet, for faculty vacation days are taken, for librarians they are approved. Librarians have job descriptions and supervisors: practices that organizationally align librarians as workers rather than academic staff; and both of which are distinctly absent for faculty.

At my own institutions, librarians may engage in scholarly activity “if approved” and only “as appropriate” or “where applicable” (Collective Agreement, 2017, pp. 26-28). This of course begs the question: Who approves? Based on what criteria? And, when is scholarly activity not appropriate for tenured academic staff? Setting aside academic freedom implications and the practice of approving scholarly activity, the mere presence of the “as appropriate” phrase signals doubt regarding the need for such scholarship. Another limitation is the requirement for librarians to make a formal request to engage in *any amount* of scholarship:

A Member will provide the Chair with a summary of anticipated scholarly activity which will include: how the scholarly activity will be disseminated; how it will benefit the Academic Unit, the University, and student learning; and how it will benefit career

progression. The request will also indicate the percentage component of annual workload requested for the scholarly activity. (Collective Agreement, 2017, p. 34)

The excessive bureaucracy intimidates, discourages, and locks librarians into a static, predetermined framework that is counter to the evolutionary and reiterative process of scholarly engagement and dissemination. At Green university librarians' position descriptions likewise tag scholarly activities with the ubiquitous "as appropriate" phrase. Librarians' scholarship is also more narrowly defined. For faculty, scholarly and professional achievement includes: emerging forms of scholarship, creative achievement, awards and fellowships, membership on boards or councils, as well as recognition by learned and professional societies: options which are absent from scholarly and professional achievement for librarians. A librarian noted how an authored chapter, currently in progress, is considered scholarly activity but the performing with a semi-professional music group would be perceived as "*playing badminton on a Thursday night.*" And yet, it is this librarian's engagement with performance that is regarded as relevant among faculty colleagues:

In two incidents when I was helping a student and a faculty member, the faculty member refused to talk to me till he found out I had a masters in music and then he was like, "Oh you have a Masters in music, Oh you're one of us." And then I was performing and I had a solo, and I had several faculty members approach me and say, "we didn't know you play, oh you're one of us." So, it changes your status.

Thus, the hesitance to remove the 35-hour work stipulation is within a context where duties are assigned, responsibilities approved, and scholarly engagement regulated. The institutional processes that undermine librarians' academic status are evident in practices that deviate from

academic norms and betray an ideological ordering of librarians' work as workers of the library rather than academic staff.

Librarians' Research Guilt

It is perhaps not surprising that within work experiences where the organization's management characteristics mix, and at times supersede, its academic ones, for some librarians, the perceived level of autonomy changes when the concerned activity is research and scholarship:

Librarian N:

It varies a lot throughout the building but the whole feeling about research days is that they are not fully embraced. They are there hypothetically for everyone to make use of, but I think if you were to do a survey of how many research days everybody in the building actually made use of, it would probably be like a quarter of what they are actually entitled to. . . . Some of it is because of supervisors not wholly approving it, and some of it is individuals feeling like it would not be really approved of, self-censorship. Not asking for it because you feel it looks bad.

It is not that librarians feel they cannot do research, as it is that they cannot or should not do it on "work-time," the specific concern being that it may be frowned upon "because it looks bad."

Thus, librarians' comfort level in exercising their autonomy is relative to the type of work being done: professional practice versus research and scholarship. Even when research is administratively encouraged, supported, and an expectation for promotion and tenure, as it is at Blue University, getting to a place where librarians are comfortable with setting work/research boundaries takes concerted effort:

Librarian O

I'm about three years in now for having research time and I would say the first six months I didn't have a research program set-up. I had never done original research, so it was a lot of figuring out what it meant to be a librarian researcher, what I might be interested in building a program of research, reading up and different ways that I thought I could do research to enhance my practice. When you are doing that work, I found it hard to spend a whole day on it, so I would still work a little bit on my [library] work . . . it took me about a year and a half to really learn that I have to set firm boundaries and to be okay with setting those boundaries.

Librarian P

Fridays are generally research days. . . . I have office space set-up in my home and I mostly work there, or if I'm working on a couple of collaborative projects I might meet those people at a coffee shop somewhere; or if we meet on campus, we'll meet in a totally different location. I am not in my department on research days. . . . But if there is something that needs my attention on a Friday . . . I will check [chat] at least a couple times a day while I'm on my research day, but I don't check email if I can help it. It's taken a lot. It's been difficult to actually block that time and only spend it on research.

While faculty workloads may also make it difficult to block out research time, the issue that is of concern here is the accompanying guilt experienced by librarians who devote time away from the library to engage in research and scholarship. For academic staff, working in a university, to be concerned that scholarly engagement is somehow inappropriate is completely incongruous with academic norms and expectations. Yet, I appreciate the frankness of the “*it looks bad*” comment, and concur. My own scholarly engagement is almost exclusively accomplished outside of the library and the said 35-hour work week. I also know colleagues who are more likely to take a

sick day or a vacation day to engage in scholarly activity than an actual research day. The question is why? Why the guilt and discomfort in asserting autonomy over the entire scope of our responsibilities?

The Collegiality Norm and Performance Management

How librarians value and conceptualize collegiality may provide some insight into the research guilt. In a survey conducted for the Massachusetts State Colleges Association, 85% of the respondents defined collegiality as “‘treating each other with respect, fairly’ followed by ‘working together effectively among individuals holding the same rank or power’” (Freedman, 2012, p. 110). Libraries are collaborative institutions—internally and externally—and the work of librarians often requires teamwork and collaboration with other libraries and campus departments. For example, libraries were some of the earliest adopters of computer technology and have been collaboratively sharing bibliographic data since the 1960s. Librarians’ work is inherently collaborative and increasingly so as ubiquitous technologies foster “edgeless environments” (Davies, 2013), the convergence of public facing services, and the development of collaborative networks, and community partnerships (Weaver, 2013). Among academic librarians, collegial and collaborative relationships are a necessary cultural norm. As defined by Freedman (2012) collegiality is about co-operative interactions, shared power, and shared authority among colleagues. The *CAUT Policy Statement on Collegiality* affirms that “collegiality does not mean congeniality or civility” (CAUT, 2010, para. 1). However, within librarianship, the focus tends to be on interpersonal relationships rather than interprofessional work and a common purpose (Freedman, 2012). The inherently collaborative, team-based nature of librarians’ work rubs against the marked individualism and personal achievement that is often associated with scholarly engagement. Many librarian participants in this study when asked

“what works?” or “what is going well?” invariably mentioned other librarians: *“I really like my colleagues,” “I feel loyalty towards them,” or “Good colleagues that I like.”*

Librarians’ allegiance and commitment, even kinship as the othered, is noteworthy and relevant to the examination of research guilt. In fact, at Blue University, where scholarly engagement is required and librarians’ role as researchers supported, it is specifically the encouragement from colleagues that alleviated research guilt and affirmed a librarian’s right to set work/research boundaries:

A lot of support from [mentor] and from other librarians who talked to me about the sacredness of your research time. That research is work. That it is valued. That it’s important for tenure. That your professional practice is 80% of your time so it’s important, but you also need to be spending the time on research and really not treating it as second class.

However, it is not only collegial norms that challenge librarians’ commitment to scholarly engagement and research, but also performance management practices. At my institution faculty members are evaluated, among other things, on performance evaluation criteria as developed by each faculty, school, or the library, and norms of the discipline. In the case of librarianship, disciplinary norms often focus on collegiality and teamwork. The *Librarian Performance Evaluation Criteria* (2017) further consider:

- Contributions to the development or assessment of services, programs, or other initiatives,
- Development of innovative practices recognized by the academic unit, university or the profession,

- Recognition for effective professional practice through the receipt of awards, nominations, or similar citations,
- Evidence of engagement in relevant professional development
- Feedback regarding professional practice, from students, peers, or other stakeholders.

The stress is on contributing, developing, assessing—that is on doing—as part-of a collective effort. There is nothing here, for example, that speaks to more individualized accomplishments such as a demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the profession or the discipline. A focus on more individualized accomplishments, however, is evident in promotion and tenure criteria that articulate a high level of professional competence, depth of professional knowledge, and commitment to professional values (Collective Agreement, 2017, p. 27).

Similarly, the *Evaluation Policy for Librarians* at Green university likewise stresses the doing of professional duties:

organizing, managing and facilitating access to library resources; providing reference, consultative, instructional and research services; developing, organizing, and maintaining the Libraries' collections and information systems; developing and maintaining archival acquisition strategies and archival records management frameworks; managing human and financial resources and contributing to library administration

Given the inherent collaborative nature of the profession, the “doing” within librarianship invariably means working with other people. The below comment qualifies and underlines the social relation that is not specifically articulated but ever present in evaluation processes:

The emphasis on our expectation is “has this person been a good colleague,” “have they done their work,” “can we depend on them.” All those really positive things, but it ignored largely what we might want to call the academic element of our work.”

For librarians, evaluation processes are overwhelmingly concerned with professional practice, as opposed to scholarship or service. This is not surprising as professional practice constitutes the primary focus of librarians’ workloads. Within the evaluation policies discussed above, the academic elements, such as references to the pedagogical, students’ learning, one’s knowledge or expertise, are absent. We see how the library code orders evaluation processes that forefront the library, rather than disciplinary expertise. The main actor is the library: providing access to it, maintaining it, organizing it, developing services with it, and so on. The evaluation process is one of attesting the primacy of the library. Texts and documents are typically studied in organizational contexts; however, Smith (2001) points out that such an examination of texts does not “address the problem of texts as constitutive of organization or institution” (p. 169). Institutional ethnography recognizes that texts are foundational to the actualization of an organization and presumes that texts have organizational properties through which the organization is produced. The above examination reveals how collective agreements and evaluation processes intended to facilitate librarians’ academic status, actualize the library as a hierarchical organization and the librarian as the worker within.

Summary

The University Librarian, and thus the academic library, typically reports to the Provost, situating the library as an academic unit (Murray & Ireland, 2018). Yet, processes and ideologies that have emerged historically continue to preference the library as an organizational hierarchy and align librarians’ role as library workers rather than academic staff. The muddling of

librarians' academic status is accomplished by texts that deviate from academic practices by assigning, approving, and regulating of librarians' duties and scholarly engagement.

The social organization accomplished at the local level by the relations of ruling appears to be done to librarians, however, it is important to remember that we all participate in the concretized ideologies. The role of the institutional ethnographer is to reveal, to bring to the forefront the social relations that structure our daily experiences. For librarians, the focus on personal relationships versus interprofessional work—the collegiality norm—contextualize and shapes our experience in unexpected ways as academic staff.

Chapter 10

Discussion

I began this study from a place of experiential knowing of the work that I do as an academic librarian, and the disconnect that I have often felt between my experience of that work versus how that work is perceived and understood by others. The work of librarians is often viewed through an organizational rather than an academic (disciplinary) lens. What librarians do is understood as a function of the library with a set of regularized, utilitarian, and service-oriented types of responsibilities. How is it that the discourse of academic librarians' work comes about this way? This characterization of librarians' work is not context bound and goes beyond individuals and particular settings. What are the generalizing and standardizing processes that structure this discourse? The goal of this study was to make visible the processes that exert such power and influence at the local level. Two research questions served as the impetus for this study:

- 1) How is it that the academic librarian's lesser status is the ideal at Canadian universities?
- 2) What are the social processes that shape this ideal?

Women's Work and The Library Ideological Codes

Perhaps the most defining aspects of librarians' work is that it is typecast as work done by women and that it is invisible. I propose that the discourse and social consciousness of librarians' work is ordered by two powerful ideological codes: the ideological code of *women's work* and the ideological code of *the library*. However, prior to discussing the codes, it is worth revisiting how ideology and discourse are uniquely conceptualized within the research approach that is institutional ethnography. Smith, who developed institutional ethnography, draws on the

work of Marx and Engels (1970), specifically *The German Ideology*, where the argument is made that ideology arises out of our material condition:

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. . . .Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc.—real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces, and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. (p. 47)

For Marx and Engels, ideology is produced out of and bound by the material conditions, social relations, and attenuated means of material production of any given period and into which we are born. On its own ideology, or the “phantoms formed in the human brain,” has “no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking” (p. 47). Thus, ideology is not a system of ideas per se, “which descends from heaven to earth,” (p. 47) but rather a process—a defective process of reasoning that artificially separates individuals from their material, social, and historical conditions, but which is necessarily rooted in those very same conditions.

Institutional ethnography is based on the epistemological premise that how we come to know our world is ideologically predetermined. Our practices of reasoning are socially, historically, and materially conditioned. Concepts, categories, schemas, models, systems are ideological forms that arise out of our definite settings, experiences, and contexts. This way of understanding and knowing the social is problematic because ideology as a practice of reasoning

obstructs and masks the actualities of people's everyday experiences. Smith (1990; 2004a) draws on Marx and Engels' definition of ideology as a process and extends it to the concept of ruling relations. Ideology as a process is a way by which ruling relations objectify, standardize, and universalize our everyday experiences and exert influence and power over our everyday world. Because ideological processes give primacy to concepts and categories, it is possible to examine society (Smith, 1990). The conceptual ordering of ideological processes is evident in public and institutional discourses—inscribed in texts and reflected in how we talk about things.

Discourse, in the most common sense, is written or spoken communication. However within institutional ethnography, discourse is “relations coordinated by text” (Smith, 2014, p. 168). It is discourse as action, an activity that can be explicated as an actual practice. Smith observes how “the materiality of text, its replicability and hence iterability, is key to addressing discourse as actual social relations between reading, writing, speaking, hearing subjects—actual people” (Smith, 2014, p. 168). Smith makes the point that texts are not typically recognized as being active. Texts are often treated as inert, as something that is given to us. In this conceptualization of texts people have disappeared. The focus of research or analysis becomes the text as opposed to how the text is taken up. In order to “lift the discourse off the page and give it presence in the everyday” (p. 168), Smith introduces the notion of the text-reader conversation: A special kind of conversation where the reader “activates” the text and responds to it in some way. The text may be read selectively, interpreted variously, misunderstood, and so on, however in reading the text “the reader's consciousness is coordinated with the words of the text” (Smith, 2005, p. 108). The reader, in a sense, becomes the text's voice “through how its words and sentences activate the reader's response” (p. 108). Smith argues that texts have in them embedded instructions, signposts, procedures for reading them. The words, sentences,

visual cues, and symbols are implicated in coordinating our consciousness. Within institutional ethnography texts are not limited to the written word and include images and media that can be replicated or broadcast across multiple sites. However, it is important to realize that Smith is not giving agency to texts, rather the text reader conversation “brings text into action *in* the readers who activate it” (p. 105) within localized social relations, connections, and sequences of actions.

Smith brings the text into the activities of people and demonstrates how language actually happens (Smith, 2005, pp. 101-122). We are able to see how discourse, via text and talk, regulates local practice. Institutional ethnography is focused on the institution and institutional discourses. These discourses objectify because they shift the perspective of the individual to “a view from nowhere” (p. 120). Ultimately, they are a function of the ruling relations concerned with institutionalized power. They provide “the terms under which what people do becomes institutionally accountable” (Smith, 2005, p. 113). Ideological codes operate within institutional discourse. They rise out of our material, social, historical conditions infiltrating our way of sensemaking and knowing.

An ideological code can be thought of as a genetic code: it is a replicating, universalizing schema that orders discourse (Smith, 1995; 1999). The power and effect of an ideological code is in the consensus vocabularies that people (unconsciously and often uncritically) take up along with the “beliefs on which they rest, which come to be widely accepted” (DeVault, 2008, p. 293). An ideological code can provide insight into how people’s opinions and understandings are formed. As Smith (1995) explains, an ideological code “operates in the field of public discourse to structure text or talk, and each instance of its functioning is capable of generating new instances” (p. 26). Once established, the code is self-replicating;

no one seems to be imposing anything on anybody else. People pick up an ideological

code from writing, hearing, or watching, and replicate it in their own talk or writing.

They pass it along. . . . Ideological codes operate as a free-floating form of control in the relations of public discourse. They can replicate anywhere. They organize talk, thinking, writing, and the kinds of images and stories produced on film and television. (p. 27)

Women’s work ideological code. Social consciousness constructs the librarian as female. This construction is empirically rooted as approximately 70% to 75% of librarians identify as women. In the Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians’ 2016 and 2018 census of academic librarians, 72% and 74% respectively identified as women (Revitt et al., 2016; 2019). However, it is the *women’s work* ideological code that infuses librarians’ work with particular characteristics: work as less skilled, de-intellectualized, and feminized—a “natural fit” for women because of women’s innate qualities and suitability. Feminist scholarship has challenged the idea of inherent qualities based on sex—i.e. women are intrinsically suited to childrearing—and revealed how even the family is a constructed social relation with an ulterior purpose within a capitalist mode of production (Fortunati, 1995; Mies, 2014). Furthermore, scholars examining work skill and complexity make the point that there is “no objective procedure for establishing standards of complexity across types of skill,” and our perceptions of work value, complexity, and skill were developed in relation to male dominated occupations (Steinberg, 1990, p. 452). It is on the basis of faulty assumptions that managing a budget, for example, is considered as more complex work than working with welfare clients. Skills associated with work that has been traditionally done by women are perceived as less complex simply because that work is done by a woman. The ideological processes that shape our conceptualization of suitability, skill, and complexity are socially formed and historically rooted,

based on job segregation, occupations traditionally done by men, and the capitalist mode of production.

A closer examination of salary tables in Chapter 6 at Blue, Green, and Red universities, as well as my own institution, reveals how the wages of librarians working in administrative capacity, skill sets and work associated with men and traditionally done by men, are aligned with the wages of administrative dean counterparts. However, librarians working in non-administrative capacity, skill sets and work associated with women and traditionally done by women, are earning on average 26% less than faculty counterparts. At Green University, librarians' merit and salary grid step increments are also set at a lower rate than that of faculty so that even librarians' efforts and accomplishments are institutionally valued as less than.

The feminization of librarians' work (work that is perceived as feminine e.g. organizing) and the naturalization of librarians' work (work that is considered as inherently suited to women) are separate but intertwined ideologies that construct the value that is assigned to that work. The work of librarians has long been considered a natural complement to a woman's role at home (Brand, 1983). It is perhaps unsurprising, that within public discourse and social consciousness the librarian's role is confined to the library. A search on the term "librarian" invariably yields a smiling woman situated in-front of or amongst the ubiquitous stacks of books. Cut off from the disciplinary grounding of library and information science, the academic librarians' work is deintellectualized—its scope and diversity rendered superfluous and not requiring particular expertise. Ideological practices prioritize the book and construct the organizing, purchasing, and recommending of books as *the* librarian role. It is the book as the container of knowledge and information, versus the ethical, social, and cultural dimensions of knowledge production, creation, organization, mobilization, and dissemination, that is discursively constructed as the

librarian's preoccupation. Yet the practice of librarianship rests on a discipline that critically interrogates how knowledge is presented and organized and includes areas of specialization such as the philosophy of information; information systems and design; critical information studies; theories and practices of reading; multimedia literacies; publishing; digital preservation, curation, and access; information and society; and human information interaction to name a few.

The narrow lens within which the librarian's role is conceived is particularly evident in the textual discourse of quality assurance standards and processes of accreditation bodies examined in Chapter 8, where the nebulous concept of library quality is typically equated with the quantity of books and journals. Resource quantity as library quality is an organizational process that is administratively relevant: concerned with the quantifiable and the readily demonstrable. Grounding the inquiry from the standpoint of the librarian reveals that the preoccupation with library resources is out of step with librarians' experiential knowledge and 21st century collection development practices. Canadian university libraries, for example, expend almost five times as much on online subscription content than one-time purchases (Canadian Association of Research Libraries, 2018b). The majority of library resources are electronic—not physical books. The availability, stability, and effective discoverability of online collections is a complex ongoing project that requires expertise in systems development and interface design, programming and metadata, user information seeking practices, as well as knowledge of licensing, contract negotiations, contract law, and copyright to name a few. While librarians' subject matter expertise is important and is typically a consideration in accreditation processes, the specialized knowledge and breadth of skills that are necessary to the discovery and accessibility of the very resources that are so privileged in the various standards are not

contemplated at all. Yet, this knowledge and skills is the invisible and necessary expertise and labour that allows the user to “discover” the relevant book or article.

The resource focus belies a conceptualization that students’ information-seeking and research needs are met with the appropriate number of books and journals. These assumptions pluck the librarian and the content out of the professional relations and the necessary digital infrastructure to resource discovery and access. It is an artificial separation, rooted in categorical rather than relational conceptualization of librarians’ roles. The naturalization of librarians’ work invariably denotes the role as singular. It is always *the* librarian. Although the work is structurally and inherently collaborative, it is rarely depicted or conceptualized as such. The librarian simply, always, just *is*. It is a librarian as *being* versus as *doing*

The library ideological code. *The library* ideological code constructs the librarian as being synonymous with the library and it is perhaps most implicit within the profession itself where professional associations are overwhelmingly associations of *libraries* versus associations of *librarians* or *library and information science professionals*. The discourse within the profession is focused on the building: what can be found in the building, what happens in the building, what is accomplished in the building. The code’s universalizing schema is implicit in almost any definition of a librarian which defines the role by the place of work. The following definitions of a librarian and a teacher exemplify the point made: “A librarian is a person who works professionally in a library, providing access to information and sometimes social or technical programming to users,” (Wikipedia, 2019c, para. 1) while a teacher is “a person who helps students to acquire knowledge, competence or virtue” (Wikipedia, 2019d, para. 1). In the case of the former, the building features prominently. In the case of the latter, it is the teacher’s

role that is at the forefront. I highlight Wikipedia to underscore how the role of the librarian is framed within popular discourse.

The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) is a key professional organization that provides leadership on behalf of Canada's 29 largest university libraries as well as Library and Archives Canada, and the National Science Library. The CARL's annual statistical survey and associated nomenclature is examined in Chapter 7. Thoroughly infused with the library ideological code, the survey is an initiative entirely preoccupied with the building—its contents, services, and expenditures—and the overriding objective to demonstrate use and accountability. I'm not contesting the need to collect data; I am problematizing how key pillars of professional practice, such as the teaching of information literacy and working directly with students, become observable to us in the first place. The 29 Canadian research libraries that participate in the annual survey, for example, are instructed to count the number of participants, groups, reference transactions, turnstiles, and seats (CARL, 2018b, p. 25). The nomenclature could just as easily apply to a data collection process at almost any corporate vendor exhibition where service providers track the number of visits to a particular booth or event. This nomenclature is active in text/talk discourses and taken up at local library sites and work practices. The actuality of the work: the preparing, the teaching, the meeting, the supporting, and working with students to co-constitute, refine, and find meaning in a topic, to contextualize, evaluate, adapt, synthesize, and re-use information, all of which requires higher-order cognitive skills and deep learning (Webber & Johnston, 2000) is rendered invisible and statistically presented as an organizational achievement. The affective labour that is critical to helping students overcome anxiety, develop confidence, and find a personal connection and thus interest in the topic (Kulthau, 2019); the necessarily complex form of communication (the student is

typically asking about something they do not know) that underpins the librarian/student engagement; the inherently pedagogical and academic nature of this very librarian work—the teaching of information literacy and working with students— is de-intellectualized and de-professionalized, the work constructed as library work. Arguably, the women’s work ideological code is likewise implicit in this structuring. When describing their work, subject librarians talked about teaching students, preparing to teach, and working with students. However, within the textually mediated discourses regarding academic librarians’ work, students are almost completely absent. Librarians’ work is not presented as working with student—an actuality that is accomplished daily, countless of times, across university campuses—but rather as a function of the library: the provision of consultative and reference services, or the instruction of how to use resources.

The textual discourses within collective agreements and institutional policies, examined in Chapter 9, also belie a library infused rendering of the work. The necessarily collaborative nature of librarians’ work rubs against the marked individualism and achievement that is often associated with scholarly engagement, along with policies and evaluative processes that stress librarians’ utilitarian accomplishments. For example, the evaluation policies for librarians at Green university as well as at my own institution stress duties: the organizing, the managing, the developing, the maintaining, the providing, while the required disciplinary, pedagogical, and professional expertise—that is the academic bedrock that enables the practice—are minimized if not completely ignored. The evaluative process is more about attesting the primacy of the library: developing, managing, providing resources, services, functions for it and within it. Moreover, textual discourses that stipulate a 35-hour work week and articulate a role for supervisors, job descriptions, the assignment of duties, the approval of days off, and that deem

scholarly engagement “as appropriate” are practices woefully incongruent with the nature of academic work and betray an alignment of the librarian as an employee of the library rather than academic staff.

Regardless of where and when ideological codes start, once “born” their capacity to benignly infiltrate all manner of discourses is considerable. The library and women’s work ideological codes are taken up and reverberate through social processes of wage remuneration, accreditation, and role definition. These processes are concretized in collective agreements, evaluation and promotion documents, institutional policies, quality assurance and accreditation standards, as well as reports of professional bodies such as the CARL. The library and women’s work ideological codes frustrate a broader understanding, much less an appreciation, of the scope and breadth of responsibilities and areas of expertise that constitute the practice of librarianship in the 21st century. In a recent bargaining experience at my own institution, when librarians sought to update the language in the collective agreement that outlines librarians’ responsibilities and replace the “instruction of information literacy” with the “teaching of information literacy,” the request was denied. Teaching, the rationale went, is a distinct type of activity and it is what professors do in the classroom. Librarians, on the other hand, instruct students in the use of the library and its resources—it’s like saying computing science professors instruct students in the use of computers. Ideologies are a powerful tool in regulating public discourse and conceptual practices across multiple sites of ruling. The codes firmly situate the librarian outside of the classroom and the academic processes of teaching and learning.

The library and women’s work ideological codes further construct the librarian as singular, artificially plucked from the social and professional relations that actually make up the work of teaching, meeting with students, collaborating with colleagues, developing, managing,

writing, designing and so on. Situated within the library, the librarian is discrete, devoted, and innate to the role of *being* a librarian. The fetishization of the library—when we give power and agency to the building—contributes to a dichotomized, first impressions, ideological way of thinking that leads to an erroneous conceptualization of academic librarians' work actualities. It is the appearance versus the essence of what is really happening (Colley, 2002).

Marx (as cited in Allman, 2007) argued that we are closer to reality and truth when we think relationally (discusses more fully in Chapter 4). To think relationally means to focus on the process, not the end result, and to examine “how the attributes of the phenomena that are internally related are continually shaped and determined within the relation” (Allman, 2007, p. 8). Relational thinking is difficult because the components of internal relations are rarely experienced or thought of as related. The very complexity of our modern lives within a capitalist mode of production necessitates a profound interdependence, and yet physically and temporally separates the individual from the complex of human relations and doings that constitute our daily experiences. Ideological thinking takes root in this temporal and physical dislocation.

Recognizing the interrelatedness of social life in the 21st century means that the librarian, the library, the university, the ideological codes, and the texts, and text/talk discourses are likewise intertwined within broader social capitalist relations. It is to the capitalist mode of production and the necessary gendered exploitation of labour as relevant and related to the academic librarian that I now turn.

The Academic Librarian, Ideological Codes, and the Capitalist Mode of Production

Institutional ethnography is founded on the ontological and epistemological premise of Karl Marx, and it is to Marx and feminist scholarship interrogating Marx's thought that I want to draw the reader's attention to to explain how is it that academic librarians' lesser status is the

ideal at Canadian universities. The *women's work* and *the library* ideological codes that infuse institutional and public discourses about academic librarians' work, role, and place within the academy do not just appear. They are rooted in and rise out of our historical, dialectical, social, and material conditions. These conditions, according to Marx (as cited in Marx & Engles, 1970) are shaped by the mode of production. Since Marx's time and to the present, the predominant mode of production is capitalism. Drawing on Marx's analysis of capitalism's inner workings and relations, feminist scholarship has highlighted the necessary gendering and exploitation of roles that must happen within such a mode of production.

The most important law in Marx's economics is that "*live* [emphasis in the original] human labor is the source of all value and hence the basis of profit and thus all capital accumulation" (Allman, 2010, p. 26). Marx considered labour-power a uniquely human characteristic that includes our mental and physical capacities to create, produce, and reproduce. He distinguished between two types of labour: productive and reproductive labour. The former produces surplus value, which is the source of profit, the latter does not. The former is integral to the circuitry of capitalist production, the latter is outside of it. Marx's exhaustive analysis of capitalist relations is primarily concerned with productive labour. In *The Arcane of Reproduction*, Fortunati (1995), points out that without a rigorous consideration and analysis of reproductive labour, Marx's critique of capitalism is an incomplete project. Fortunati's work is a laborious examination of how reproductive labor is not only a part of the cycle of capitalist production, but essential to it.

Capitalism emerged between the 15th and 18th centuries: a transition period from the feudal order to the capitalist mode of production as common land became increasingly privatized and masses of people became dispossessed. With the collapse of feudalism, serfs became

separated from the land and their means of subsistence and production. These were difficult times as war, disease, and starvation ravaged the general populace. This was the time of the Reformation and the Peasants' War, of Absolutism and Enlightenment, of the rise of nation states, wars of religion, and the French Revolution. It was a time of brutal conquest and colonization of Africa and the Americas. This period also witnessed the emergence and empowerment of the bourgeoisie, Europe's middle class, that had become wealthy as a result. Separated from the land the serfs' only option was to sell their labour-power to the capitalist in return for a wage. Thus began the rise of capitalism. Fortunati (1995) points out that within the feudal system, the serf as an individual had value, but within capitalism the individual has no value, only his labour-power does. In the transition from feudalism to capitalism the individual has been stripped of value. This is an important point to which I will return later.

Throughout this transition, the household unit also transformed from a site of production to a site of consumption. The home became a private sphere devoted to social reproduction that relied on the unpaid labour of women. It is at this time that the concept of the family wage took hold. While the social and family costs of reproduction have never entirely been met by the single-family wage, "the idea took a concrete form in the institutions of collective bargaining and the social security systems" particularly as women's employment was positioned as a threat to the male wage and status (Bruegel, 2000, p. 215). Thus, the single-family wage, indeed the entire system of social reproduction and capitalist production rests on a large wage discrepancy between men and women, and the segregation of women into particular sectors and part-time employment. A key differentiating factor that helped to secure full salary parity for librarians at Red University in the 1970s—the majority of whom, then and now, are men—was the argument that male librarians had financial obligations to support their families. This rationale was perfectly

aligned with the male breadwinner ideology operating within a capitalist mode of production. As Fortunati argues, capital's ability to appropriate and accumulate the value of reproductive labour is critical to the accumulation of surplus value. Social institutions have a vested interest in this arrangement.

Capitalism will always strive to increase productivity (Allman, 2010), and as such, it is always in need of labour-power in order to generate capital, surplus value, and ultimately profit. An adequate supply of labour-power is essential to capitalism's survival and growth. Feminist scholars such as Mies (2014) point to the witch hunts as one social marker of patriarchy and an attempt to subordinate women to capitalist relations. Witchcraft was closely associated with practices of contraception and abortion. Colley (2002), Federeci (2004); Fortunati (1995), and Mies (2014) among many others, argue that women's bodies, labour, and reproductive capacities are economically meaningful and demonstrate capitalism's abject dependence on the social reproduction work of women in the home and family: "Despite their seeming separation, the capitalist mode of production is based on the indissoluble connection that links reproduction with production, because the second is both a precondition and a condition of the existence of the first" (Fortunati, 1995, p. 8).

The capitalist system has tried to obfuscate this dependence (and women's potential power) by representing reproductive labour as non-work, a natural process, or a personal choice. Fortunati's unique contribution is less a moral rebuke about women's subjugation, than a politically and economically rooted argument about reproductive labour: its complexity, how essential it is to capitalism, and that it is *productive* labour. Fortunati argues that within the single wage system, reproductive labour is in fact indirectly waged labour. The woman exchanges reproduction work for a portion of the male wage. This exchange is actually between woman and

capital, and the man is only the intermediary. Fortunati further explains that while “the subjects of this exchange appear to be on the one hand reproduction and on the other the wage, in reality they are labour power and money which both function as capital” (p. 9). However, this exchange does not appear as formally recognized in the capitalist circuitry. The reason for the obscurity is that when reproduction is presented as natural it allows capitalism to exploit two workers with one wage, and “the entire cost of reproduction to be uploaded onto the labor force” (p. 9). For these reasons, capitalism privileges heterosexuality and the family along with ideologies that conceptualize women’s work as non-work because women “have a mission as wives and mothers” (p. 22). Only work within the process of production can appear as waged. Through this exploitation, capitalism is much more productive than pre-capitalist modes of production.

Even when the female worker sells her labour-power in the waged labour market, her labour-power is always subordinated because she is simultaneously “selling her labour-power as capacity for the production *and* [emphasis added] reproduction of labour power—which latter must always be given precedence” (p. 67). Women are paid less because their labour-power is offered under different conditions from that of men. In a capitalist system, women’s reproductive labour power is more important. We can recognize the root of the women’s work ideological code in capitalist relations, and the particularizing discourse that constitutes academic librarians’ work as less than, as innate. Because librarianship is a predominantly female profession, academic librarians are automatically subjected to the prioritization of women’s reproductive capacities above all else.

It is not only that within capitalism women have a prioritized role as labour-power reproducers that affects remuneration for feminized professions, but also whether the particular labour produces surplus value. Labour-power can be exchanged for a wage and in this sense, it is

a commodity. Marx called labour-power a “special commodity,” arguably the most important commodity because it is the only commodity that produces value and upon which all other commodities depend (Allman, 2010). Despite its eminence, labour power, like any commodity, has a use value and an exchange value. The exchange value is the basis of the wage. The use value refers to usefulness, to utility. What is essential for capitalism is not the type of labour performed but that it takes place within the labour capital relation and that it produces surplus value:

The only worker who is productive is one who produces surplus value for the capitalist ...[who] contributes toward the self-valorization of capital. If we may take an example outside of sphere of material production, a school-master is a productive worker when, in addition to belabouring the heads of his pupils, he works himself into the ground to enrich the owner of the school. That the latter has laid out his capital in a teaching factory, instead of a sausage factory, makes no difference to the relation. (as cited in Allman, 2010, p. 55)

The work of university professors, who have always been hired on the basis of their area of expertise (their content) versus their ability to teach it, takes place within the labour capital relation because students pay to acquire the content that professors have. This is in contrast to the academic librarian who is hired on the basis of professional practice rather than disciplinary expertise (the content). A professor’s labour power, their commodity, has a use value (utility) and an exchange value (the basis for the wage). Within a capitalist mode of production, what matters is that the content is acquired by the student so the student can exchange their labour-power on the waged market. It does not matter how the content is acquired. The focus is the labour capital relation (in this case the relation between content and the job market). Value in the

professor's labour is in the content—and hence why research, especially commodified research, is more highly prized than teaching.

The librarian's labour power, her commodity, also has a use value and an exchange value. But the value in the librarian's labour *appears* as having a use value only in the utility of the work and not the content. In fact, the librarian is not recognized as having any content. The women's work and the library ideological codes confine the librarian's role to within the library, de-intellectualize the work, and give organizational primacy and agency to the building. In actuality, of course, librarians have disciplinary expertise as any other academic and thus content. The librarian's labour power (and institutional status) is further compromised because the work *appears* to take place outside of the labour capital relation. The women's work ideological code plants the librarian in the library, while library ideological code cements her identity with it. The library is a cost centre. As utility work, librarians' labour is auxiliary to the productive (real) labour that takes place within the university. The codes' infused text/talk discourses artificially separate librarians' labour from the teaching, learning, research, and scholarly relations that constitute productive labour. The dichotomization and stratification of academic labour leads to false conceptualizations about academic librarians' work.

Ideological codes are insidious and legitimize practices such as that at Green university where librarians only recently have been granted the ability to be the principal investigator on an internally funded research grant. One librarian explains the latter-day charade of having to find an academic that would front the librarian for an internal grant application:

And that's just a very recent change. And I think that is the result of many years advocating on librarians' behalf by [name and title] librarian. I have successfully applied for internal research grants before but I had to find a professor to be my kind of

mascot to sign the document . . . I was having to find a professor who would have enough interest so that he or she would be willing to put their name on something, or even take part.

The fronting of librarians' labour is not unique to Green university. Sloniowski (2016) observes that

the rise of digital humanities has opened doors for librarians and programmers to be more involved in academic projects, but nonetheless such projects are generally managed and funded within traditional academic-labour hierarchies, with professors directing the work of librarians and other alt-academics whose intellectual contributions are devalued as merely service work or project management. (p. 661)

That is because "service work is considered more useful to the corporate goals of the university" (p. 661). I posit that librarians' service work is not only considered more useful, but that librarians' labour must be presented *as* service in the process of library valorization that is necessary in a capitalist mode of production.

Within a capitalist mode of production, people are valued for their labour power potential, the actual individual disappears. What is prioritized is aggregate outcomes—university rankings, citation scores, and graduates' potential as a labour-power commodity. A capitalism mode of production necessitates competition for resources, the library is competing for funding within the university, and the university is competing for funding within the public sector. Ruling relations construct librarians' work in such a manner as to demonstrate library use—the organization's utility with which the librarian is cemented. The librarian's labour-power has use value and an exchange value; however, organizationally it is only the utility that is relevant because the quantifiable utility of librarians' professional practice is critical to the valorization

of the library. Affective and intellectual labour is futile to demonstrating library use. The library designed data collection practices generates a representation of the librarian that reproduces the library. It is the library ideological code that orders the work of librarians as library work and in service of library consumption. This results in an undervaluation, if not a complete negation, of librarians' work with students, faculty, or within the community.

Summary

Ideology and discourse are uniquely conceptualized within the research approach that is institutional ethnography. Smith draws on Marx who argued that ideological reasoning is a faulty approach to understanding and learning about our social world. We reason ideologically when we presume that ideas and concepts are expressions of our everyday life and social processes (Smith, 2004a). The women's work and the library ideological codes are reasoning processes that infuse discourse. The women's work ideological code pervades librarians' work with particular characteristics: work as less skilled, de-intellectualized, and a "natural fit" and extension of the women's role at home because of women's innate qualities and suitability. The library ideological code fetishizes the library. Within institutional, public, and textual discourses, it is the library that has agency and organizational primacy. The librarian is in service of the library. Smith (2014) reminds us that people are active in discourse. Discourse is spoken and written language that can be explicated as an actual practice. By examining texts we can see how discourse organizes people's actualities because institutional ethnography presumes that texts activate a response in the reader. Texts are not inert.

However ideological processes of reasoning—that is ideas, concepts, models, theories, systems—do not just appear as mere expression of everyday life but are actually created in the everyday world as it is lived. Consciousness is bound by our historical, technological, economic,

social, material existence. The women's work and the library ideological codes are rooted in and rise out of a capitalist mode of production. Within capitalist relations women's reproductive labour—childbearing and childrearing—is prioritized because of capitalism's endless drive to generate profit and thus the need for labour power. As a feminized profession, academic librarians' labour is accepted under conditions that necessarily privilege their reproductive capacities.

Furthermore, academic librarians' work is not recognized as contributing to the creation of surplus value, and ultimately profit. University professors are hired on the basis of their disciplinary expertise. Students pay to acquire this expertise so that they can exchange their labour on the waged market of capitalist relations. Librarians are hired on the basis of their ability to do the work, not their disciplinary expertise; and thus their work, ideologically confined to the cost centre that is the library, appears to take place outside of the labour capital relation. The academic librarians' lesser status is the ideal at Canadian universities because 1) as a feminized profession their work is automatically deprioritized in favour of their reproductive capacities, and 2) their work is perceived to occur outside of the circuitry of capitalist relations.

Chapter 11

Conclusion

This study is informed by the epistemological and ontological assumptions of institutional ethnography: an empirically based approach to inquiry developed by the Canadian sociologist, Dorothy Smith. Institutional ethnography's empirical commitment to research is based in the historical dialectical materialism of Karl Marx and his argument that ideas and concepts cannot be separated from the everyday material world (the experiences and actions of people) as a basis for understanding reality. These ideas and concepts do not just appear but are rooted in, and dialectically related to, our history, context, and social life.

Smith's institutional ethnography is a critical response to established ways of knowing the social that begin with idealist assumptions that divorce concepts from the activities of people: We often investigate social reality that "is brought into being through human consciousness" rather than everyday experiences (Carpenter & Mojab, 2017, p. 58). Smith argued that concepts such as "cultural norms" are floating blobologies: linguistic devices that are given agency and assumed to exist independent of people (Smith, 2005). The library has such agency. It is a construct from which people have disappeared. Our understanding of the library is based on things that are in it rather than the actualities and experiences of people. The issue for Smith is not that we talk about these concepts as if they have agency, but that we do not problematize how they come about. We collect data without questioning how it became observable to us. We then take that data, stuff it into a priori framework to make sense of it, and transfer our findings to the concept(s). The knowledge that is created is self-referential and objectifying.

Institutional ethnography rejects all theoretical orientations as they necessarily "subordinate the knowing subject to objectified forms of knowledge of society" (Smith, 2005, p.

10) and mask the actuality of what is really happening. Within institutional ethnography the emphasis is on discovery, not on the testing of priori frameworks, assumptions, or hypothesis. The standpoint of the researcher and the subject is thus critical to exploring the actual. The institutional ethnographer is situated within the local experiences of the subject; however, the subject is not the focus of the inquiry, but rather their experience is a window into institutionalized power structures. The job of the institutional ethnographer is to make the connection between the subject and the social processes that influence, shape, and potentially subjugate.

Social Relations

The ontological and analytical basis for an institutional ethnography is “the social as the concerting of people’s activities” (DeValult & McCoy, 2006, pp. 16-17). Smith builds on Marx’s ontology of how the social exists by introducing the idea of social relations. Social relations are not relationships, but sequences of actions that extend into and through our everyday, local lives. They are “people’s doings in particular local settings as articulated to sequences of actions that hook them up to what others are or have been doing elsewhere and elsewhere” (Smith, 2005, p. 228). As individuals we both knowingly and unknowingly, consciously and unconsciously participate in these relations. Smith points out that every activity in our daily lives, such as walking a dog or drinking a cup of coffee, is socially organized and socially determined. These sequences of actions and our experiences are shaped, coordinated, and systematized by the relations of ruling.

Ruling Relations

The relations of ruling are the media, the professions, administration, management, and the scientific, academic, cultural/social discourses that “intersect, interpenetrate, and coordinate the multiple sites of ruling” (Smith, 1993, p. 4). They are the activities of people located physically and temporally away from the local. The work of ruling relations is accomplished through texts: “the material in a form that enables replications (paper/print, film, electronic, and so on) of what is written, drawn, or otherwise reproduced” (Smith, 2005, p. 228). Texts and text-based discourses are a central feature of contemporary society and play a key role in institutional ethnography: They are the means by which relations of ruling organize, co-ordinate, and exert power at the local level.

The Investigation

Institutional ethnography is both “an approach to inquiry and a method of inquiry” (Carpenter & Mojab, 2008, p. 2). As a method, it is a way of explicating social reality. As an approach, institutional ethnography directs our analytical focus away from the individual and onto the institutional and to the examination of how everyday actualities come about for individuals as they do. An institutional ethnographic investigation progresses through layers. In this case, I begin from the standpoint of the academic librarian, and the problematic of the work experiences of university librarians as academic staff. The problematic should not be confused with a problem to be studied; rather, the problematic is a technical term—a tool—that helps to focus the study on the everyday, experiential world of the participants. The investigation necessarily moves from the librarian to the institutional and the examination of textual practices and ideological processes to reveal how power structures external to the local setting shape and systematize the work of academic librarians, normalizing their status as less than.

Findings

I have shown how *the library* and *women's work* ideological codes infuse social consciousness with a particularizing schema that constitutes the work of librarians as less complex, deintellectualized, and preoccupied with the library. Librarians' academic status, thus standing within the university as academic staff, is a constant tug of war between the actualities of the work and ruling relations that structure and organize the work to serve organizational purposes and priorities. I have also shown how assumptions of librarians' work and librarians' work experiences are ultimately tied to broader social capitalist relations. It is important to note that while I have identified two ideological codes that shape librarians' practices and experiences, these codes are not the only shapers. Using the ideological code as an analytic lens has allowed us to understand how and why frustratingly stereotypical notions of about librarians and librarians' work continue to persist.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestion for Further Research

A notable limitation of this study is the omission of a particularly prominent social process—the legislative framework. Universities are creatures of statutes and firmly rooted in provincial legislation. Myers (2010) found evidence that “many of the decisions made at the university were directed by the highest levels of state government” including levels of funding, the appointments of most senior administrators, institutional mandates, and future directions (p. 131). Within the context of this study, the universities' legislative framework remains largely unexamined. Arguably texts indicative of the power and influence of relations of ruling could be indefinitely tracked and hooked into provincial level discourses and beyond. Realistically, the timeframe with which I hoped to complete this study was a key factor in determining its scope. Difficulty connecting with individuals in senior administrative positions was a compounding

matter. The intended participants for this study included librarians at all levels, as well as informants located elsewhere as revealed relevant to the inquiry. Realistically, the number of librarians in senior administrative positions was diminutive as they were drawn from three institutions, while access to senior university administrators and relevant others was prohibitive due to issue of timing, work schedules, and frankly, participants' disinterest in the study. A number of my emails remain unanswered. Yet, it is these individuals that would have the experiential knowledge of working with, and within, provincial legislative frameworks. The findings of this study should be read within the context of the significant that remains unexamined.

To the best of my knowledge, this is the only institutional ethnography focusing on the work experiences of academic librarians. To say that more could and should be done, is an understatement. This study did not consider demographic variables such as age or race. Indeed, to keep the focus on the institutional, I went to some length to suppress individuating data. However, an institutional ethnography focused on the problematic of the work experiences of male academic librarians would be of particular interest, especially when considering that the *women's work* ideological code figures prominently in ordering social consciousness about librarian's work. There were also countless of leads and potential sites of inquiry that I simply did not have the time to pursue including how librarians' physical working space is oriented towards work that is structured in a particularized way. Also left unexamined in this study is the structuring effect of the discipline of library and information studies, and the role of American Library Association accredited schools in shaping academic librarians' work experiences. Graduate studies generally, but programs and schools specifically, play a significant role in socializing students to the academic culture as well as the norms and practices of a particular

discipline or profession. Examining the connection between academic librarians' work experiences and graduate studies would be of interest not only to academic librarians and respective faculty, but also to informing an ongoing debate of whether a Master of Library and Information Studies degree should offer concentrated streams paralleling the profession: public librarianship; academic, special libraries and so on.

In discussing suggestion for further research and the limitations of this study, it is equally important to address scholarly critique of institutional ethnography (Tummons, 2017; Walby, 2007). As a method of inquiry, institutional ethnography has been criticized for not being entirely truthful in its rejection of theory. Walby (2007) maintains that all social scientific practice is theoretically driven, including institutional ethnography as institutional ethnography has a frame that conditions the researcher to pick out the discourses that satisfy what institutional ethnography conceives as real. Perhaps the issue here is one of semantics. Theory is a vague and diverse term, at times derisively applied, to mean everything from mere speculation, to the application of normative principles that guide action, explanatory principles that relate a phenomenon, to the broad use of theoretical frameworks that can hold and support theory/ies (Hammersley, 2004). Walby's conceptualization of the term is broad, so broad that we can swap "theoretically driven" with "ideologically driven" and still maintain the logic of the argument. Yet theory and ideology are not the same: the former revolves around principles, the latter around ideas. The "frame" that conditions the researcher what to pick out, as Walby maintains, is actually the orientation of where to look. Institutional ethnography's distinctive feature is the problematization of how the world becomes observable to us. Dismantling the frame means doing away with the "institutional" in institutional ethnography. However, to argue that the institutional ethnographer is completely without some priori explanatory commitment is

disingenuous. When the institutional ethnographer begins field work, they don't know what they will discover, but they do know what they are looking for. It is institutional ethnography's ontological and epistemological foundations that commits the researcher to a particular way of thinking about aspects of our everyday life. The institutional ethnographer wants to establish "an account that explicates *the social relations* of the setting" (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 90). Institutional ethnography's ontological commitment is not synonymous with importing in, or generating out, a set of principles as way of making sense of the data.

The lack of attention institutional ethnography gives to issues of qualitative data collection and analysis is another concern raised by Walby who chastises the institutional ethnographer for not acknowledging "the way that data analysis produces, rather than preserves, the subject" (p. 1024). Walby's critique implies that the potential exists for the institutional ethnographer to produce out of the data the subject as ruled when their experience may be otherwise. Preserving or producing the subject as ruled is not a matter for data analysis: The subject as ruled is institutional ethnography's ontological premise. Institutional ethnography's social ontology necessitates relations in which we all participate. The point of data analysis is to highlight the social processes (that are always present but may remain latent or unseen and which we are all responsible for constituting) that shape everyday actualities. The data analysis is not concerned with the subject. The subject's experience as social is always the in-situ reality. Data analysis is concerned with the institutional, with making visible the social processes that extend into and beyond the subject's local.

Implication of Study Findings

As human beings we have a need to understand what is happening in our lives. This research is significant for helping to satisfy that need. Specifically, for helping university

librarians understand how their experiences as academics come about as they do. This study reveals how language—the language of the profession—is implicit in our own subjugation. By framing our work as a function of the library, we de-intellectualize the nature of it. Worse, we erase the presence of the student. The concepts and categories used to describe our work, however objectifying and reductionist, are organizationally purposeful: They lend themselves to the quantifiable and demonstrative of library value. This research demonstrates how the librarian and the library are so thoroughly fused that our accomplishments are not our own. How we cannot escape historically rooted conceptualizations of gender roles and skill complexity and the devaluation of our work because that work is regarded as women’s work. How texts that articulate academic rights and responsibilities, also align librarians as employees and the library as a hierarchical organization rather than an academic unit. How accreditation bodies and the professions co-ordinate the local through disciplinary privilege and resource prioritization. These practices endure because they are organizationally meaningful.

Institutional ethnography is an analysis of an organization in action. That analysis is possible because organizations use texts. I was able to draw out the generalizing effect of institutional texts. The findings of this study are not representative, but they are transferable. At another institution these texts might be found to work the same way because ideological processes do not discriminate. What we know of academic librarians’ work and how we come to know it, is shaped and infused with the ideological code of *the library* and the ideological code of *women’s work*. Within the social material ontology that grounds this research, an ideology is not a system of ideas, but practices that divorce what we know and how we come to know it from the activities of people: Our understanding of academic librarians’ work is not rooted in what librarians do but stems from projected concepts, categories, and the artificial separation of

the librarian from the university's social processes of productive labour. The findings of this study are based in the actualities of librarians' work. They are not speculative. They are concretized in textual discourse that map the connections between the local and the extra-local.

Institutional ethnography is an empowering and emancipatory approach which helps to explain why things are the way they are. By providing insight into academic librarians' work experiences and revealing how those experiences are shaped by the activities of people located temporally and geographically elsewhere—activities in which librarians as individuals are bound up—the findings of this study can build an understanding of how to engage with institutional processes, and make work experiences accountable to academic librarians rather than ruling apparatus. Institutional ethnography's activist orientation obliges participants to “think out” change. By grasping the ruling effect, participants are able to contemplate how their own actions perpetuate ruling. The new institutional ethnographic knowledge should raise academic librarians' consciousness, as well as that of relevant others, to institutional practices that subordinate. Challenging processes and practices that undermine librarians' role as academics is important. When the academic librarian's *academic* potential is fully actualized, a critical praxis of librarianship can intensively examine, theorize, and advance information fluencies; the social, political, cultural, and economic dimensions of information environments; as well as the role of libraries; technology, and processes of knowledge creation, management, mobilization, and dissemination. This study makes visible the institutional discourses and ideologies that shape academic librarians' work experiences as academic staff and that relegate a feminized profession to an inferior status—the subaltern—that becomes the ideal at Canadian universities.

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Appendix A

October 6, 2017

[REDACTED]

Re: The *Status of Academic Status: Librarians' Dilemma* – Doctoral Study

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing to you about an opportunity for yourself as well as the academic librarians working at [REDACTED] to participate in a research study about Canadian librarians' experiences of academic status. This study is being conducted by me, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational Policy Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta.

Background and Purpose of Study

Despite librarians' nearly forty-year history of academic status, fundamental rights such as collegial governance, professional autonomy and academic freedom remain poorly understood, and persist as illusive concepts, for many librarians. As a seasoned academic librarian at MacEwan University, this reality drives my interest in a doctoral study that examines how librarians' experience of academic status is shaped by the institution. In this case, the institution is understood to be the broader university but also the associated policy and legislative framework. It is hoped that my research will provide insight into Canadian academic librarians' work experiences, and more broadly, into women's work experiences within the context of feminized professions and academia.

My research is informed by the theoretical and methodological assumptions of institutional ethnography (IE). Institutional ethnography is the study of how everyday life is socially organized. An IE research approach demands various data collection methods such as in-depth interviews, participant-observation, and textual analysis.

Study Procedures

I have selected three universities across Canada as my research sites. [REDACTED] was selected because of its focus on dynamic learning, community engagement and success in being one of Canada's top diversity employers. I welcome an opportunity to visit [REDACTED] Libraries sometime this fall semester and to meet with you and available academic librarians to discuss my research and answer any questions about it that potential participants may have.

Ideally, I would like to conduct both interviews and participant observation. It is anticipated the interview will take between 1 – 1.5 hours. Questions that will guide the interview and pre-interview activities are listed below. I will be making a digital copy of the pre-interview activities and audio recording the interview to aid with data analysis. Each participant will have an opportunity to review the transcript of the interview as well as delete, modify or elaborate on any of their responses. Participants may be contacted for a brief follow up interview for clarification purposes.

One of the key goals of institutional ethnography is to reveal how people's everyday lives are influenced by power structures external to the local setting. It is with the goal of finding "the institutional in the local" (Diamond, 2006, p. 6) that I hope to engage in participant observation. I would, for example, be

interested in attending library or university events such as public presentations or lectures conducted by librarians. I would be relying on your guidance and that of potential librarian participants to help me identify events that may be of interest to this study. I will not be audio or video recording events. I will rely on field notes and perhaps a photograph of the surroundings to aid with data recall. Requests not to observe a particular event will always be respected.

Although individual narratives from academic librarians are critical to the inquiry, IE necessitates a shifting of focus from people to the examination of texts and institutional processes that shape the experience for people. In IE documents such as policies, forms, job descriptions, collective agreements and so on are recognized as key to the controlling and coordinating of people's activities. Many of the documents that I am interested in reviewing are publicly accessible, however some may only be available via institutional intranets. I would again be relying on your guidance and that of potential librarian participants in helping me identify documents that may be of interest to this study, as well as seeking permission to review documents that are not publicly available. I will not be seeking access to confidential documents such as evaluations, nor will I be filing FOIP requests to access documents that are not readily available to university faculty and staff.

As the senior most library administrator with knowledge of institutional culture, processes, and the rights and responsibilities of library staff, your counsel and support is valued and respected. I hope you will consider participating in an interview to discuss the academic rights and responsibilities of librarians at [REDACTED]. Your assistance in organizing a meeting with academic librarians to explain my research and advice in how to best recruit potential participants is greatly appreciated. Your guidance regarding institutional processes is likewise most appreciated.

Data Storage, Confidentiality and Anonymity

Data will be stored on a password protected laptop and regularly backed up to an external hard drive. Laptop files will be deleted. Data on the external hard drive will be stored for five years. Only the researcher will have access to the data. Interview data will be held in strict confidence. A preliminary report of findings will be shared with participants. All participants and concerned institutions will be anonymized. Participation in the study is voluntary and participants have the right to leave the study at any time and/or withdraw their material prior to final write up.

Risk

In the dissemination of results, which is the final doctoral dissertation but may also include presentations and journal publications, I may need to refer to the text of a specific policy or to a unique process. It is therefore possible that readers may recognize a policy or process and hence the institution; as such, anonymity cannot be absolutely guaranteed.

Benefits

Institutional ethnography is an approach that challenges essentialism and illuminates that what is often ignored or invisible. IE is concerned with revealing *how* things work; as such, it is an empowering and emancipatory approach which helps to explain why things are the way they are. Participants of institutional ethnographies can develop a greater understanding of broader institutional and legislative processes that shape their daily experience thus combating potential feelings of helplessness or frustration, as well as developing an understanding of how to engage with institutional power structures. Further, benefits to the participants may include contributing to the understanding of librarians' experiences of academic status including associated challenges and benefits, having the opportunity to reflect and share important experiences and expertise, as well as having the opportunity to do something interesting and perhaps different.

Participants who are less seasoned researchers stand to gain greater understanding of the research process including participant bias, the limitations and complexities associated with the interview and observation research methods, as well as the process of informed consent.

Ethics

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Please consider this letter of initial contact as an invitation to further discuss the research.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Revitt".

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Appendix B

Pre-interview Activities

Purpose of the interview:

My research interest is in exploring how the institution shapes librarians' experience of academic status. In our interview, I hope to learn something about how you as an academic librarian experiences your daily work.

Please **complete two or more** of the following visual representation activities and bring them to our interview. Please use pens, pencils and preferably colored markers on blank paper. We will begin our interview by having you show me and tell me about the ones you completed.

1. Draw a diagram or picture or map **of a place that is important** to you at work and use keywords to indicate the parts and perhaps what happens in those parts.
2. Imagine that someone is making a movie of your professional life. Draw or describe 5 key scenes that would **be pivotal moments** in the movie.
3. Think of **an important event that changed things in your professional life**: Make two drawings to show what things were like for you **before and after** the event happened. Feel free to use thought or speech bubbles.
4. Looking back over **the time you have been at University X**, make a **timeline** showing key events or ideas that changed the way you experience being a librarian here.
5. Make a list of 20 important words that come to mind for you when you think **about the idea of academic librarianship**. Review the list and divide the list into two categories or groups in a way that makes sense to you. Please bring both the original list and the two smaller groups of words to the interview.
6. **Draw a schedule for your current week** (day or year) and use colours to indicate how time is spent. Make a legend to explain the colours.

Guiding Interview Questions

Factual background information

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Graduate degree(s) in addition to MLIS (if applicable):

Academic rank (if applicable):

Job title:

How many years have you worked as an academic librarian?

Of those years, how long have you worked at this university?

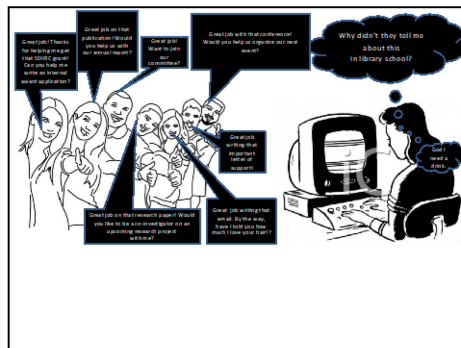
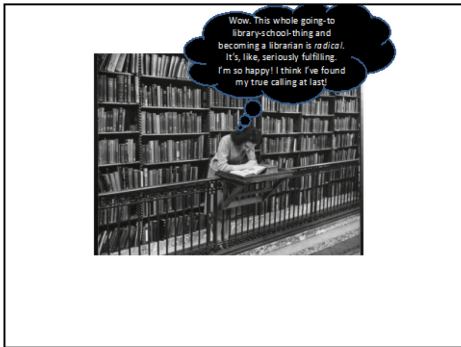
Questions to guide the interview

- 1) How would you describe your position and how you attained it?
- 2) Can you describe your typical day?
- 3) What aspects of your work do you find frustrating or challenging? Why?
- 4) What aspects of your work do you find gratifying or rewarding? Why?
- 5) How relevant is scholarly activity to your work?
- 6) How relevant is academic freedom to your work?
- 7) How relevant are collegial decision-making processes to your work?
- 8) How would you describe your relationship with other academics on campus?
- 9) When applying for academic rank or promotion what was that experience like? (if applicable)
- 10) Describe your involvement with committee work (service contributions) at the university level.

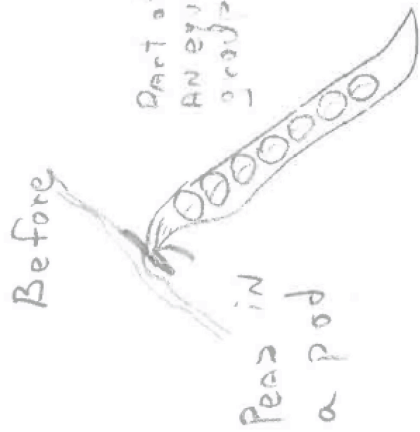
Closing questions

- 1) Who would you recommend that I interview and why?
- 2) Are there questions you think I should be asking?
- 3) Do you have any questions of me?
- 4) Anything else that I might have missed?

Appendix C



An important event that changed things in my professional life



Part of an eye or a graph

