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There have been several calls for a more rigorous theoretical foundation for library and information studies (LIS) over the years. Scholars continue to lament the lack of theory in the discipline even today (Buschman 6). By focusing on concepts from the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, I will demonstrate the role theory can play in the ethical practice of librarianship.

The value of philosophy can be due to its capacity to analyse assumptions that are made in LIS. LIS often makes assumptions about the world in general, about human beings, about language, cognition, and research (Hjørland 6-7). Philosophy could make a contribution to LIS by uncovering these assumptions. Yet, another hope for philosophy is that it could open “the inquirer to possibilities instead of barricading avenues” (Budd 304). John Budd’s choice for an epistemological foundation in LIS, for example, is in part due to its capacity to “help in the quest for meaningful questions” (304). In this sense, philosophy could not only be used to interrogate existing suppositions in LIS but also to open new avenues for action.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the purpose of philosophy cannot be to search for a static representation of the world or to theorise an ideal foundation for all knowledge. Instead, in *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari define philosophy as the creation of concepts where the emphasis is placed upon creation. The purpose of philosophy is not to provide a description or representation of the world or to produce concepts or images that mirror our “true” reality. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the purpose of philosophy is not to obtain knowledge of universals and eternal truths: “Philosophy does not consist in knowing and is not inspired by truth. Rather, it is categories like Interesting, Remarkable, Important that determine success or failure” (Deleuze and Guattari 82). The purpose of philosophy is not simply to create any concepts because some concepts are better than others (Deleuze and Guattari 28). According to Deleuze and Guattari, we should create new concepts in order to bring about new and better forms of social organisation that responds to contemporary problems.

What happens when we introduce new concepts into the library? The paper I am proposing is an experiment. If we not only interrogate existing proposition in the LIS but introduce new concepts, what will happen to the library? I propose the introduction of “critical freedom” and “thought” and examine how these concepts are at work in the library.

In LIS, there has long been a presumption that a direct increase in access to information will grant the public more freedom, power and capacity to act. Furthermore, information access and freedom of expression are normally considered necessary for us

to be able to engage in rational inquiry, arrive at truth and build consensus in order to govern society. The connection between information and a healthy democratic society has been well articulated and theoretically defended in LIS (see for example Kranich, Buschman). Deleuze and Guattari's concepts, though, permit us to rethink this customary notion of freedom and its connection to information access. In the model of freedom that is generally employed in LIS, freedom is defined as autonomy from external forces that prevent self-determination. Self-determination is in fact a form of determination since an individual is limited to realizing only that which she or he already is. What Deleuze and Guattari are proposing instead is a form of critical freedom. "Critical freedom... concerns those moments in a life after which one is no longer the same person. It is the freedom to transgress the limits of what one is presently capable of being or doing, rather than just the freedom to be or do those things" (Patton 85). Further, Deleuze and Guattari distinguished between thought (creation of concepts and the determination of problems) and knowledge (the recognition of truth and the solution of problems). The elements of thought are not truth and falsity. The purpose of genuine thought is to resist opinion and common sense. Thought is revolutionary; it is a form of resistance. I will examine the implications of this "thought" for the ethical practice of librarianship.

Works Cited

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