

Chapter 8

WHO KILLED THE WORLD? WHITE MASCULINITY AND THE TECHNOCRATIC LIBRARY OF THE FUTURE

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There's the People Eater himself. Coming to count the cost.

—*Capable, Mad Max: Fury Road*

The representation of libraries and librarians has historically been contested terrain. In the early twentieth century, librarians were understood to be performing the work “of a parent or teacher.”¹ Like missionaries or Lady Bountiful,² librarians participated in “civilizing” and assimilating the tired, huddled masses into American democracy (as long as they could potentially become white). However, as we have argued previously,³ as information technology became more central to librarianship in the

1. Mary Niles Maack, “Gender, Culture, and the Transformation of American Librarianship, 1890-1920,” *Libraries & Culture* 33, no. 1 (1998): 53.

2. Gina Schlesselman-Tarango, “The Legacy of Lady Bountiful: White Women in the Library,” *Library Trends* 64, no. 4 (2016): 667-86, doi: 10.1353/lib.2016.0015.

3. Maura Seale and Rafia Mirza, “Watchers, Punks, and Dashing Heroes: Representations of Male Librarians in Generation-X Mass Culture,” in *Generation X Perspectives on Librarianship*, eds. Martin K. Wallace, Erik Sean Estep, and Rebecca Tolley-Stokes (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010), 135-46.

1990s and 2000s, it incited a continuing existential crisis within the field, and librarians were increasingly represented as white men in mass culture. In the age of what Evgeny Morozov calls internet-centrism,⁴ the figure of the white female librarian, simultaneously “civilizing” and serving patrons, has been replaced by the prophets of Silicon Valley, whose technological solutions will free us all to pursue life, liberty, and happiness.

The focus on technology as the solution to complex social problems (which Morozov refers to as *solutionism*) is central to technocratic ideology. Technocratic ideology is also characterized by its stance of impartial, apolitical rationality; technocrats are interested in efficiency, not politics, and believe technological fixes can be applied universally.⁵ The ability to claim a position outside of politics, to claim rationality, has historically been the domain of white men. White masculinity is an unmarked identity and so can function as the universal norm.⁶ Technocratic ideology, then, with its reliance on rationality and universality, and rejection of politics, is inextricably bound up in white supremacy and patriarchy.

As David Theo Goldberg has argued in *Racist Culture*,⁷ notions of objectivity, rationality, and Enlightenment are at their foundation racialized, and since the eighteenth century have been consistently associated with and solely attributed to white, Western men.⁸

Technocratic ideology is inescapably bound up with white masculinity; it can only claim a position of neutrality and objectivity because

4. Evgeny Morozov, *To Save Everything, Click Here* (New York: Public Affairs, 2013).

5. Morozov, *To Save Everything, Click Here*.

6. When we say “white masculinity,” we are referring to the social formation, not individual white men. White masculinity, as a social formation of dominance, recruits other forms of dominance and unmarkedness as well - Westernness, heterosexuality, cis-genderedness, and middle-classness.

7. David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993).

8. nina de jesus, “Locating the Library in Institutional Oppression,” *In the Library with the Lead Pipe* (September, 2014), <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2014/locating-the-library-in-institutional-oppression/>.

whiteness functions, as Richard Dyer notes, as the “human norm,”⁹ and masculinity is similarly unmarked.¹⁰ Dyer goes on to argue: “There is no more powerful position than that of being ‘just’ human. The claim to power is the claim to speak for the commonality of humanity.”¹¹ Speaking from the position of unmarked, purportedly apolitical white masculinity, the unacknowledged ground of technocratic ideology, acts to uphold white supremacy and patriarchy.

Technocratic ideology and solutionism pervades discussions and representations of the future of libraries and librarians. Librarianship itself is and has historically been invested in whiteness¹² and notions of neutrality, objectivity, and rationality,¹³ which is perhaps why tech-

9. Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997), 1.

10. Todd W. Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory: An Introduction* (Chichester, England: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

11. Dyer, *White*, 2.

12. Angela Galvan, “Soliciting Performance, Hiding Bias: Whiteness and Librarianship,” *In the Library with the Lead Pipe* (June 2015), <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2015/soliciting-performance-hiding-bias-whiteness-and-librarianship/>; Jennifer Vinopal, “The Quest for Diversity in Library Staffing: From Awareness to Action,” *In the Library with the Lead Pipe* (January 2016), <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2016/quest-for-diversity/>; April Hathcock, “White Librarianship in Blackface: Diversity Initiatives in LIS,” *In the Library with the Lead Pipe* (October 2015), <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2015/lis-diversity/>; Freeda Brook, Dave Ellenwood, and Althea Eannace Lazzaro, “In Pursuit of Antiracist Social Justice: Denaturalizing Whiteness in the Academic Library,” *Library Trends* 64, no. 2 (2015), 246-284, doi: 10.1353/lib.2015.0048; Todd Honma, “Trippin’ Over the Color Line: The Invisibility of Race in Library and Information Studies,” *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies*, 1, no. 2 (2005), 1-26, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/4nj0w1mp>; Gina Schlesselman-Tarango, “Critical Whiteness Studies for Academic Librarianship: Problems and Possibilities” (presentation, Canadian Association of Professional Librarians [CAPAL], Ottawa, May 31, 2015), <http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/library-publications/27>.

13. Chris Bourg, “Never Neutral: Libraries, Technology, and Inclusion,” *Feral Librarian* (blog), January 29, 2015, <https://chrisbourg.wordpress.com/2015/01/28/never-neutral-libraries-technology-and-inclusions>; de Jesus, “Locating the Library in Institutional Oppression”; Barbara Fister, “Admitting Our Agendas,” *Library Babel Fish* (blog), August 29, 2013, <https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/library-babel-fish/admitting-our-agendas>; Nicole Pagowsky and Niamh Wallace, “Black Lives Matter! Shedding Library Neutrality Rhetoric for Social Justice,” *College & Research Libraries News* 76, no. 4 (2015), 196-214, <http://crln.acrl.org/content/76/4/196>; Jessica Critten,

nocratic ideology and solutionism has resonated so strongly within librarianship, particularly within discussions of the future of libraries and librarians. This connection with technocratic ideology and white masculinity is exemplified in the American Library Association's (ALA) recently launched initiative, Libraries Transform, and specifically with the Trend Library produced by the Center for the Future of Libraries. The Trend Library offers simplistic solutions to the complex problem of the future of libraries and librarians. It offers solutions that ahistorically insist on their universal applicability; obscure race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, and other axes of difference; reify technology, social change, and the future; and actively hide the inequities of the social world. In short, the Trend Library offers technocratic solutions embedded in white masculinity. Moreover, the technological fixes promoted by the Trend Library reinforce existing neoliberal tendencies within librarianship.¹⁴

The Future of Libraries

In May 2014, the ALA officially launched the Center for the Future of Libraries, which has three main tasks: "Identify emerging trends relevant to libraries and the communities they serve; Promote futuring and innovation techniques to help librarians and library professionals shape their future; Build connections with experts and innovative thinkers

"The One Language That Has Eaten All Others': Evidence-based Practice in the Neoliberal Library," (presentation, Critical Librarianship and Pedagogy Symposium, Tucson, February 25, 2016); Maura Seale, "Compliant Trust: The Public Good and Democracy in the ALA's 'Core Values of Librarianship,'" *Library Trends* 64 no. 3 (2016), 585–603, doi: 10.1353/lib.2016.0003.

14. For discussion of neoliberalism within libraries, see Nathaniel F. Enright, "The Violence of Information Literacy: Neoliberalism and the Human as Capital" in *Information Literacy and Social Justice: Radical Professional Praxis*, eds. Lua Gregory and Shana Higgins (Sacramento: Library Juice Press, 2013): 15–38; Karen Nicholson, "The McDonaldization of Academic Libraries and the Values of Transformational Change," *College & Research Libraries* 76, no. 3 (2015): 328–38, doi: 10.5860/crl.76.3.328. See also the work of John Buschman, for example, *Libraries, Classrooms, and the Interests of Democracy: Marking the Limits of Neoliberalism*. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012). For a theorization of neoliberalism as ideology, see Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015).

to help libraries address emerging issues.”¹⁵ The largest section of the website is the Trend Library, which was officially introduced in a February 2015 *American Libraries* article.¹⁶ The webpage explains, “the Center for the Future of Libraries works to identify trends relevant to libraries and librarianship. This collection is available to help libraries and librarians understand how trends are developing and why they matter. Each trend is updated as new reports and articles are made available. New trends will be added as they are developed.”¹⁷ The twenty-one trends are classified and color coded into the following categories: society, technology, education, environment, politics and government, economics, and demographics. Each trend includes a bibliography, primarily consisting of stories from news and technology websites. Because the Center for the Future of Libraries was created by the ALA, it can be understood as an official view; its Trend Library, combined with the broader ALA initiative, Libraries Transform,¹⁸ is probably the most thorough articulation of the dominant vision of the future of libraries.

The Libraries Transform initiative, the Center for the Future of Libraries, and the Trend Library participate in what Morozov has called “internet-centrism,” which is characterized by “epochalism” or “the firm conviction that we are living through unique, revolutionary times, in which the previous truths no longer hold, everything is undergoing profound change, and the need to ‘fix things’ runs as high as ever,” and “[u]nfolding trends are perceived to be so monumental and inevitable that all resistance seems futile.”¹⁹ At the same time “internet-centrism” views technology as “fixed and permanent, perhaps even ontological—the

15. “Center for the Future of Libraries,” *American Library Association*, last accessed May 28, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future>.

16. Miguel Figueroa, “Forecasting the Future of Libraries 2015,” *American Libraries Magazine*, February 26, 2015, <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2015/02/26/forecasting-the-future-of-libraries-2015/>.

17. “Trends | Libraries Transform,” *American Library Association*, last accessed May 15, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends>.

18. “Libraries Transform,” *American Library Association*, last accessed May 16, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/>.

19. Morozov, *To Save Everything, Click Here*, 15-16, 36.

Internet' just is and it always will be."²⁰ It "is believed to possess an inherent nature, a logic, a teleology, and that nature is rapidly unfolding in front of us."²¹ It possesses agency, is inevitable, fundamentally disconnected from the past, and exists outside of history. This logic pervades the Trend Library, in which technologies are frequently described as engaging in action and having agency.²² Changes "will" occur, and the present is consistently depicted in terms of rupture, disruption, innovation, and progress.

Internet-centrism undergirds technological solutionism, which recasts "all complex social situations either as neatly defined problems with definite, computable solutions or as transparent and self-evident processes that can be easily optimized."²³ The Trend Library of the Center for the Future of Libraries thus casts the uncertain future of libraries as something that can be solved by studying and individually responding to the various trends it has collected. The complexity of and differences between libraries are dissolved by summoning technology and the future. The Trend Library presents solutions without articulating the problems that these solutions purportedly address. This forecloses discussion of what these problems might be, what solutions might be

20. Ibid., 21-22. Other recent critics of solutionism/technological determinism include Kentaro Toyama, *Geek Heresy: Rescuing Social Change from the Cult of Technology* (New York: Public Affairs, 2015); Jaron Lanier, *Who Owns the Future?* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013), and David Golumbia, *The Cultural Logic of Computation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

21. Morozov, *To Save Everything, Click Here*, 24.

22. For example, technologies "have fundamentally changed young people," "have introduced new conveniences," "require the supply of more and more personal information," "displace or eliminate many middle-class jobs," drive "new categories of work," and provide "limitless opportunities." "Digital Natives," *American Library Association*, last accessed May 16, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/digitalnatives>; "Privacy Shifting," *American Library Association*, last accessed May 16, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/privacy>; "Income Inequality," *American Library Association*, last accessed May 16, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/incomeinequality>; "Connected Learning," *American Library Association*, last accessed May 16, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/connectedlearning>.

23. Morozov, *To Save Everything, Click Here*, 5.

most appropriate, and indeed, what the future of libraries should or could be. The website instead declares what the future will be, because technological change is inevitable.

One of the main dangers of solutionism is that “the quick fixes it peddles do not exist in a political vacuum. In promising almost immediate and much cheaper results, they can easily undermine support for more ambitious, more intellectually stimulating, but also more demanding reform projects.”²⁴ It is embedded in technocratic ideology, which assumes that it is objective and neutral. The Trend Library might claim to be dispassionately predicting the future, but it does indeed have an ideology. It embraces an apolitical, ahistorical, technocratic perspective that sees technology as the solution to complex social, political, and economic problems.²⁵ Indeed, while the Trend Library gestures towards the importance of politics and government in its trend classification system, no trends are actually designated as belonging to that category. Morozov explicitly connects technocratic ideology and solutionism to the Enlightenment and the scientism that followed.

Invisible Labor

This unspoken investment in white masculinity is emphasized in the Trend Library’s treatment of labor. In the Trend Library, only certain types of labor are understood to be important. For example, the language describing the Maker Movement is unremittingly positive: “Makers take advantage of the availability of new technology and traditional craft tools, improved communication between community members, and new pathways to the marketplace” and “see opportunities to develop important new skills, including design, programming, media creation, website development, and entrepreneurship.”²⁶ Making not only involves

24. Ibid., 9.

25. Ibid., 136-37.

26. “Maker Movement,” *American Library Association*, last accessed July 3, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/makers>.

quantitative and digital skills, but also entrepreneurship and innovation, all of which are seen as positive forces within solutionism. The individual, entrepreneurial worker is the default within the Trend Library. This worker moves to the city in order to find “more opportunities for employment and pathways to higher personal success.”²⁷ As robots inevitably enter the workplace, these are the workers that “will be free to focus on higher level and creative tasks.”²⁸ They will innovate, monetize, and leverage. They are the individualistic entrepreneurs of Silicon Valley, disproportionately male and disproportionately white.²⁹

The types of work valued in the Trend Library are the types of technology and information work disproportionately performed by white men. Emotion and care work, reproductive labor, service, maintenance work, and manual labor are disproportionately seen as feminized labor and “non-skilled” service labor. This type of “non-skilled” labor, often associated with people whose identities have less social capital due to the intersections of oppression around gender and racial identities, is not seen as relevant to the future of libraries.³⁰ Nor is the type of

27. “Urbanization,” *American Library Association*, last accessed November 1, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/urbanization>.

28. “Robots,” *American Library Association*, last accessed November 1, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/robots>.

29. Lauren Britton, “Power, Access, Status: The Discourse of Race, Gender, and Class in the Maker Movement,” *Technology & Social Change Group*, March 18, 2015, <http://tascha.uw.edu/2015/03/power-access-status-the-discourse-of-race-gender-and-class-in-the-maker-movement/>; Hope A. Jahren, “She Wanted to Do Her Research. He Wanted to Talk ‘Feelings,’” *New York Times*, March 4, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/06/opinion/sunday/she-wanted-to-do-her-research-he-wanted-to-talk-feelings.html>; Nitasha Tiku, “This Is Why There Aren’t Enough Women In Tech,” *Valleywag*, August 29, 2013, <http://valleywag.gawker.com/this-is-why-there-arent-enough-women-in-tech-1221929631>; Melissa Villa-Nicholas, “The Invisible Information Worker: Latinas in Telecommunications,” in *The Intersectional Internet: Race, Sex, Class and Culture Online*, eds. Safiya Umoja Noble and Brendesha M. Tynes (New York: Peter Lang, 2016), 195-214.

30. Andrew Russell and Lee Vinsel, “Innovation Is Overvalued. Maintenance Often Matters More,” *Aeon*, accessed April 7, 2016, <https://aeon.co/essays/innovation-is-overvalued-maintenance-often-matters-more>; Debbie Chachra, “Why I Am Not a Maker,” *The Atlantic*, January 23, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/01/why-i-am-not-a-maker/384767/>.

low-wage and often precarious work done in fast casual restaurants or the so-called sharing economy, both of which are cataloged in the Trend Library. Libraries, which share resources, are equated with Uber, which enriches (white male) shareholders while relying on precarious, low-wage work lacking legal protections.³¹ The Trend Library notes that sharing systems such as Uber rely “heavily on trust, which social technologies help advance through publicly shared feedback, reviews, comments, and connections,”³² but it fails to note that these systems incorporate the inequities of the social world, such as racial prejudice,³³ and that systems based on popularity tend to work against diversity and inclusion.³⁴ When this ideal worker enters a fast casual restaurant, it is as a consumer, not an employee. When this worker opens the Uber app, it is to arrange for a pickup, not the start of a long night of driving. This does not matter, however, as Uber or Lyft drivers are not included in this vision of the future “entrepreneurial” worker. The Trend Library

31. The “sharing economy” (at times more appropriately referred to as the “gig economy”) is a term which itself elides the labor that is occurring.

32. “Sharing Economy,” *American Library Association*, last accessed May 16, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/sharingeconomy>.

33. Nancy Leong, “The Sharing Economy Has a Race Problem,” *Salon*, November 2, 2014, http://www.salon.com/2014/11/02/the_sharing_economy_has_a_race_problem/; Shankar Vedantam, “#AirbnbWhileBlack: How Hidden Bias Shapes The Sharing Economy,” *NPR*, April 26, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/2016/04/26/475623339/-airbnbwhileblack-how-hidden-bias-shapes-the-sharing-economy>. See also Matthew Reidsma, “Algorithmic Bias in Library Discovery Systems,” *MatthewReidsma.com*, March 11, 2016, <https://matthew.reidsrow.com/articles/173>; Safiya Noble, “Google Search: Hyper-Visibility as a Means of Rendering Black Women and Girls Invisible,” *InVisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture*, no. 19 (2013), n.p. <http://ivc.lib.rochester.edu/google-search-hyper-visibility-as-a-means-of-rendering-black-women-and-girls-invisible/>; Lauren Kirchner, “When Discrimination Is Baked Into Algorithms,” *The Atlantic*, September 6, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/09/discrimination-algorithms-disparate-impact/403969/>; Michael Brennan, “Can Computers Be Racist? Big Data, Inequality, and Discrimination,” *Ford Foundation*, November 18, 2015, <http://www.fordfoundation.org/ideas/equals-change-blog/posts/can-computers-be-racist-big-data-inequality-and-discrimination/> for broader discussions of the racial and other biases embedded in algorithms.

34. Morozov, *To Save Everything, Click Here*, 178.

pays more attention to the potential labor of drones and robots than to workers of color, women workers, low-wage workers, the unemployed, and those who cannot work.

If the labor of white women and people of color³⁵ is not visible in the Trend Library, it is because the emphasis on technology actively obscures the labor behind that same technology. This includes the mining for metals used in computer components in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mongolia,³⁶ the assembly of computers and other devices in China,³⁷ the filtering of social media performed by workers in the Philippines,³⁸ the technical support provided by call center workers in

35. The phrase “women and people of color” can be problematic as it erases women of color from the category of women. We are using the phrasing “white women and people of color” throughout this paper to describe those groups that are often marginalized by white patriarchy, while acknowledging differences between those groups. See Yolanda Flores Niemann, “The Problem with the Phrases ‘Women and Minorities’ and ‘Women and People of Color,’” *University Press of Colorado & Utah State University Press*, September 22, 2015, <http://upcolorado.com/about-us/blog/item/2843-the-problem-with-the-phrases-women-and-minorities-and-women-and-people-of-color>.

36. Jay Greene, “Digging for Rare Earths: The Mines Where iPhones Are Born,” *CNET*, September 26, 2012, <http://www.cnet.com/news/digging-for-rare-earths-the-mines-where-iphones-are-born/>; Nick Heath, “How Conflict Minerals Funded a War That Killed Millions, and Why Tech Giants Are Finally Cleaning up Their Act,” *TechRepublic*, March 23 2014, <http://www.techrepublic.com/article/how-conflict-minerals-funded-a-war-that-killed-millions/>; “‘This Is What We Die For’: Human Rights Abuses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Power the Global Trade in Cobalt,” *Amnesty International*, January 19 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr62/3183/2016/en/>; Jennifer Brea, “Your Computer Is Killing the Congo,” *The Root*, May 28, 2009, http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2009/05/your_computer_is_killing_the_congo.html.

37. Joel Johnson, “1 Million Workers. 90 Million iPhones. 17 Suicides. Who’s to Blame?” *Wired*, February 28, 2011, http://www.wired.com/2011/02/ff_joelinchina; “Something’s Not Right Here: Poor Working Conditions Persist at Apple Supplier Pegatron,” *China Labor Watch*, October 22, 2015, <http://www.chinalaborwatch.org/report/109>; Aditya Chakraborty, “The Woman Who Nearly Died Making Your iPad,” *The Guardian*, August 5, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/aug/05/woman-nearly-died-making-ipad>.

38. Sarah T. Roberts, “Commercial Content Moderation: Digital Laborers’ Dirty Work” in *The Intersectional Internet: Race, Sex, Class and Culture Online*, eds. Safiya Umoja Noble and Brendesha M. Tynes (New York: Peter Lang, 2016) 147-60; Adrian Chen, “The Laborers Who Keep Dick Pics and Beheadings

India and the Philippines,³⁹ the disposal and recycling of technological equipment in China and Ghana,⁴⁰ and so on.⁴¹ Technology recycling is briefly mentioned in the Internet of Things trend, but not the men and women who perform it: “the manufacturing of new enabled devices means that older devices will be displaced and disposed of and, potentially worse, a whole host of devices will enter a technology upgrade cycle (planned obsolescence) to which they might never previously have belonged, further contributing to cycles of disposal.”⁴² Once again, technology acquires agency and inevitability and human actors disappear. The environmental consequences of digital technologies (e.g., electricity use, resource extraction, server farms⁴³) and the ways in which those contribute to climate change are summoned and then accepted as inevitable through the rhetorical construction of the future as known and unchanging.⁴⁴ Similarly, the environmental impact of making is

Out of Your Facebook Feed,” *Wired*, October 23, 2014, <http://www.wired.com/2014/10/content-moderation/>.

39. Vikas Bajaj, “A New Capital of Call Centers,” *New York Times*, November 25, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/26/business/philippines-over-takes-india-as-hub-of-call-centers.html>.

40. Jay Akbar, “Africa’s Electronic Graveyards Where the World’s ‘E-Waste’ Ends up,” *Daily Mail Online*, April 23, 2015, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3049457/Where-computer-goes-die-Shocking-pictures-toxic-electronic-graveyards-Africa-West-dumps-old-PCs-laptops-microwaves-fridges-phones.html>; Ivan Watson, “China: The Electronic Wastebasket of the World,” *CNN*, May 30, 2013, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/05/30/world/asia/china-electronic-waste-e-waste/>; Jacopo Ottaviani, “E-Waste Republic: Discarded Electronics and Ghana’s Environmental Conundrum,” *Spiegel Online*, April 11, 2016, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/tomorrow/electronic-waste-in-africa-recycling-methods-damage-health-and-the-environment-a-1086221.html>.

41. Christian Fuchs provides a Marxist analysis of most of these examples in *Digital Labour and Karl Marx* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

42. “Internet of Things,” *American Library Association*, last accessed July 3, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/IoT>.

43. Ingrid Burrington, “The Environmental Toll of a Netflix Binge,” *The Atlantic*, December 16, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/12/there-are-no-clean-clouds/420744/>.

44. Toyamo, *Geek Heresy*, 23.

completely avoided.⁴⁵ But the consequences of resource extraction and climate change will likely have a much more significant impact on groups that are already marginalized: the poor, politically disempowered, and systematically oppressed.⁴⁶

It is not expected that a website dealing with the future of libraries would speak to each of these issues, but it is also no accident that the labor generally performed by white men in the United States is valorized while other forms of labor—forms that are necessary and undergird the technology solutions advanced by the Trend Library, forms that are most often performed by people of color, women, and workers in non-Western countries—are invisible or erased. It is no accident that environmental issues around technology are made invisible, nor is it a mistake that none of the trends is connected to politics. The Trend Library adopts the universal stance of white masculinity, which is able to avoid the messiness of the social world and the perceived biases of politics, via the neutrality and objectivity of technocratic solutions.

The Trend Library is pervaded by the language of benefits, opportunity, innovation, and progress; it appears to be a truly a fortuitous time for libraries. But where are librarians? The Trend Library generally takes its subject to be libraries and only briefly mentions librarians, save for this prediction: “Library workers may increasingly seek opportunities to unplug, be reflective, or quietly focus on specific work activities—and this may be a challenge in a culture that does not provide opportunities for that type of work time.”⁴⁷ This frames reflective or quiet work

45. Lyndsey Gilpin, “The Dark Side of 3D Printing: 10 Things to Watch,” *TechRepublic*, March 5, 2014, <http://www.techrepublic.com/article/the-dark-side-of-3d-printing-10-things-to-watch/>.

46. There are several book-length treatments of the lifecycle and environmental impact of digital technologies and devices. See Elizabeth Grossman, *High Tech Trash: Digital Devices, Hidden Toxics, and Human Health* (Washington: Island Press, 2006); Jennifer Gabrys, *Digital Rubbish: A Natural History of Electronics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011); and Elizabeth Woyke, *The Smartphone: Anatomy of an Industry* (New York: The New Press, 2014).

47. “Unplugged,” *American Library Association Center for the Future of Libraries: Trends*, last accessed July 3, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/unplugged>.

as already inevitably gone, rather than as minimized and devalued by policies implemented by specific companies and organizations with particular ends in mind, such as fewer employees doing increasingly more work. This is reinforced in the Fast Casual trend; if libraries must emphasize their “affordability” and “value” to patrons,⁴⁸ if library workers are the functional equivalent of Chipotle employees,⁴⁹ what does this imply about library work, library workers’ salaries and benefits, and library workers’ skills, abilities, and knowledge? By ignoring librarians and library workers in favor of technology, the Trend Library valorizes the work of library administration and information technology, areas dominated by white men, while devaluing the service, care, maintenance, and manual labor that is at the core of libraries’ everyday functioning but is dominated by lower-earning white women and people of color.

Although the Trend Library is just one version—albeit an authoritative and influential one—of the future of libraries, its unacknowledged reliance on white masculinity pervades other discussions of libraries. Referring to libraries as “platforms” evokes the white masculinity of Silicon Valley and technocratic ideology, prioritizes monetization, and obscures library resources that are low- or non-technological.”⁵⁰ “Unbundling,” which is a core precept of the educational technology community,⁵¹ has also been pushed within librarianship. If what libraries need is a collection of skills, offered just-in-time at the lowest possible cost, then a disruptive or innovative solution might be something similar to either Amazon’s Mechanical Turk or Uber. Day-to-day service work can be performed by paraprofessional staff similar to workers

48. “Fast Casual,” *American Library Association Center for the Future of Libraries: Trends*, last accessed July 3, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends/fastcasual>.

49. Who should also be paid a living wage and receive benefits.

50. Shannon Mattern, “Library as Infrastructure,” *Places Journal*, June 9, 2014, <http://placesjournal.org/article/library-as-infrastructure/>.

51. Mara Sapon-Shevin, “Inclusive Education, High Stakes Testing and Capitalist Schooling,” *Monthly Review*, July 1, 2011, <http://monthlyreview.org/2011/07/01/inclusive-education-high-stakes-testing-and-capitalist-schooling/>.

employed in fast casual restaurants, while high-paying technological and administrative work can be performed by “full-stack librarians.” The idea of the “full-stack librarian,” which emerged from the notion of the “full-stack programmer,”⁵² “is a generalist who uses the full range of resources available *to position the library as an educational technology*.”⁵³ The technology work performed by the full-stack librarian is implicitly coded as white and male in contrast to the emotional labor of traditional (female) librarians.

The devaluation of librarianship by positioning it as “traditional” and ignoring it in discussions of the future of libraries is also tied to technocratic ideology and white masculinity. “Traditional” librarianship, which emphasizes service, emotional labor, and interpersonal interaction, is overdetermined as feminine and is devalued within technocratic ideology. In the future envisioned by the Trend Library, there are no reference services or instruction, for example. Reference is a key point of contact with patrons, but it is not innovative or efficient. The focus on efficiency, the rhetorical move from “reference librarians” to “access engineers,”⁵⁴ and the use of chatbots presuppose that reference is universally unnecessary.⁵⁵ The use of student or paraprofessional staff might be more cost efficient for the library, but it is also exploitative since those employees generally do not receive recognition or additional compensation.⁵⁶ Although library instruction has thus far avoided the standardization of K-12 education and indeed tends to be fairly cost efficient as it primarily consists of one-shot sessions, there is a continual

52. O'Reilly Media, “Developers Need to Broaden Their Range,” *Forbes*, April 11, 2014, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/oreillymedia/2014/04/11/full-stack-developer-is-a-tall-order-bordering-on-unicorn-territory/>.

53. Steven Bell, “What to Expect From a ‘Full Stack’ Librarian,” *EdSurge News*, December 16, 2015, <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2015-12-16-what-to-expect-from-a-full-stack-librarian>. Emphasis added.

54. David S. Nolen, “Reforming or Rejecting the Reference Desk: Conflict and Continuity in the Concept of Reference,” *Library Philosophy and Practice*, May 12, 2010, <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~mbolin/nolen.htm>.

55. Ibid.

56. Christopher Magee and Michael Perini, “The Blended Desk and Its Consequences on Collaboration,” *Collaborative Librarianship* 6, no. 3 (2014): 127.

push (in the Trend Library and elsewhere) for technological interventions to replace even that small amount of interaction between librarians and patrons: tutorials, library guides, badges, FAQs, flipped learning, connected learning, and gamification.⁵⁷ These are often framed as more convenient or appealing for patrons, but they embody technocratic ideology in their technological and universalizing solution to the complex social problem of education.

Despite various initiatives sponsored by the ALA, Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), and other professional organizations, the Master of Library Science (MLS) degree has begun to be seen as of limited utility—library science is of the past while information technology is the future. Academic libraries in particular hire individuals lacking the degree for librarian positions,⁵⁸ and the focus on “functional specialists” in recent discussions of liaison librarianship may reinforce this practice.⁵⁹ Again, the solution is cast as technological. “Functional specialist” generally refers to expertise in some sort of digital technology: digital humanities, digital scholarship, data, user experience, interface design, and so on. The degree is devalued through the adjunctification of academic librarians, the outsourcing of public librarians, the replacement of librarians with student or paraprofessional employees, and by erasing librarians from the future of libraries, as the Trend Library does. Each of these examples promotes technocratic ideology, and by replacing the emotional labor, everyday work, manual labor, and maintenance performed by white women and people of color with the new shininess of innovation, reiterates white masculinity.⁶⁰ Each of these examples also reinscribes neoliberal ideology through their unquestioning adoption of

57. Karen Nicholson, “Badging, Information Literacy, and Academic Capitalism” (presentation, Critical Librarianship and Pedagogy Symposium, Tucson, AZ, February 26, 2016); “Center for the Future of Libraries.”

58. Bell, “What to Expect From a ‘Full Stack’ Librarian.”

59. Janice M. Jaguszewski and Karen Williams, “New Roles for New Times: Transforming Liaison Roles in Research Libraries,” August 2013, <http://www.arl.org/publications-resources/2893-new-roles-for-new-times-transforming-liaison-roles-in-research-libraries>.

60. Russell and Vinsel, “Innovation Is Overvalued. Maintenance Often Matters More.”

ideas such as short-term results, the demands of the market, just-in-time services, return-on-investment (ROI), and efficiency.

The emotional labor of women and the physical labor of people of color are necessary to the smooth functioning of both society and libraries, but it is consistently ignored in discussions and representations of the future of libraries. Instead, these texts uncritically embrace technocratic ideology, white masculinity, and neoliberalism. As Miriam Posner notes, “when we choose not to invest in our own infrastructure, we choose not to articulate a different possible version of the world.”⁶¹ When we look to Silicon Valley to explain the future of libraries, we give up our ability to actively shape it ourselves.

Conclusion: The Green Place

Mad Max: Fury Road, the film from which this chapter’s epigraph is drawn, is a dystopic vision of a world following environmental catastrophe. In accounting for such destruction, it is revealed that the characters Immortan Joe, the People Eater, and the Bullet Farmer are “killing everyone and everything.” In our reading of the film, Immortan Joe embodies white patriarchy, and the Bullet Farmer, war. The People Eater, who is always counting the costs, symbolizes capitalism. In seeking to determine, as one character puts it, “who killed the world,” viewers are prompted to consider not only the destructive consequences of patriarchy, but also the ways in which emancipatory, resistant spaces might be carved out—indeed, one of the film’s protagonists, Furiosa, and a band of women attempt to escape to the Green Place, a land free from the destructive impact of patriarchy and environmental collapse. However, there is no escape from the destruction that white patriarchy causes and while the Vuvalini or Many Mothers can briefly live apart, their Green Place is also eventually contaminated. The Vuvalini, Furiosa,

61. We follow Russell and Vinsel and consider infrastructure to be the often invisible structures and labor that make “innovation” possible. Miriam Posner, “Money and Time,” *Miriam Posner’s Blog*, March 14, 2016, <http://miriamposner.com/blog/money-and-time/>.

and the Wives must reclaim the Citadel in order to survive. Calling upon this film, then, seemed a fitting way to frame our discussion of white masculinity and the future of librarianship, as well as the need to center a humanistic vision of our future, rather than a technocratic vision.⁶²

The ALA's Center for the Future of Libraries and its Trend Library propose objective, universal, technocratic solutions to the problem of the future of libraries, but those solutions are ultimately bound up with, rely on, and privilege white masculinity. Those solutions are also, perhaps unsurprisingly, embedded in neoliberalism—the dominant ideology of our political present. Technocratic visions of the future of libraries aspire to a world outside of politics and ideology, to the unmarked space of white masculinity, but such visions are embedded in multiple layers and axes of privilege. They elide the fact that technology is not benevolently impartial but is subject to the same inequities inherent to the social world. They hide the physical and emotional labor of the precariat, who are frequently gendered, racialized, or otherwise marginalized, behind discourses of freedom, progress, and the disruptive potential of the digital. It is not the irrationality of politics that foils these utopian projects, but rather the weight of history.

When librarians utilize this rhetoric uncritically we erase differences, ignore power, and legitimate the voices of the privileged. Shannon Mattern suggests that libraries can be “spaces of exception” as well as the spaces for the entrepreneurship demanded by neoliberal policies, but in order for this to happen, “the library needs to know how to read itself as a social-technical-intellectual infrastructure.”⁶³ There are no ideologically pure positions, just as it turns out that there is no Green Place untouched by ecological disaster in *Mad Max: Fury Road*. But acknowledging that we are all embedded in systems of power and inequality allows for the possibility of critically analyzing and changing those systems. We are not arguing for an ideal version of librarianship that once existed

62. *Mad Max: Fury Road*, directed by George Miller. (2015; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2015), DVD.

63. Mattern, “Library as Infrastructure.” Emphasis in original.

and to which we must return, but rather for an historical and situated understanding of librarianship and technology, and the ways in which they intersect with dominant conceptions of white masculinity.

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