

# Critical Library Practice and Higher Education

## Locating Spaces of Agency and Resistance

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Slides: [tinyurl.com/CAPALclp](http://tinyurl.com/CAPALclp)

# Territorial Acknowledgment

“Moving beyond territorial acknowledgments means asking hard questions about what needs to be done once we’re ‘aware of Indigenous presence’. It requires that we remain uncomfortable, and it means making concrete, disruptive change.”

Vowel, Chelsea. (2016, September 23). “Beyond Territorial Acknowledgements.” *âpihtawikosisân*. [apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/#\\_ftn10](http://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/#_ftn10).

# Overview

1. Programming and displays
2. Collection development
3. Reference services

Two questions for think-pair-share

Time for Q&A

# Our approaches

Theory into action

Understanding these activities as pedagogy

1. How do we undertake social justice work as academic librarians while striking a balance among the competing priorities of faculty, administrators, students, and other librarians?
2. How do we begin to trouble the foundations of libraries and academe while also recognizing the need to keep our jobs?
3. Where do we draw inspiration from for critical library practice?

# Programming and Displays

Sofia

**Library work *is* social justice work.**

# Critical Race Theory (CRT)

“Racism is ordinary and occurs everyday.”

That ordinariness “is difficult to address because it is not acknowledged.”

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical Race Theory: An introduction* (3rd ed.). New York: New York University Press.

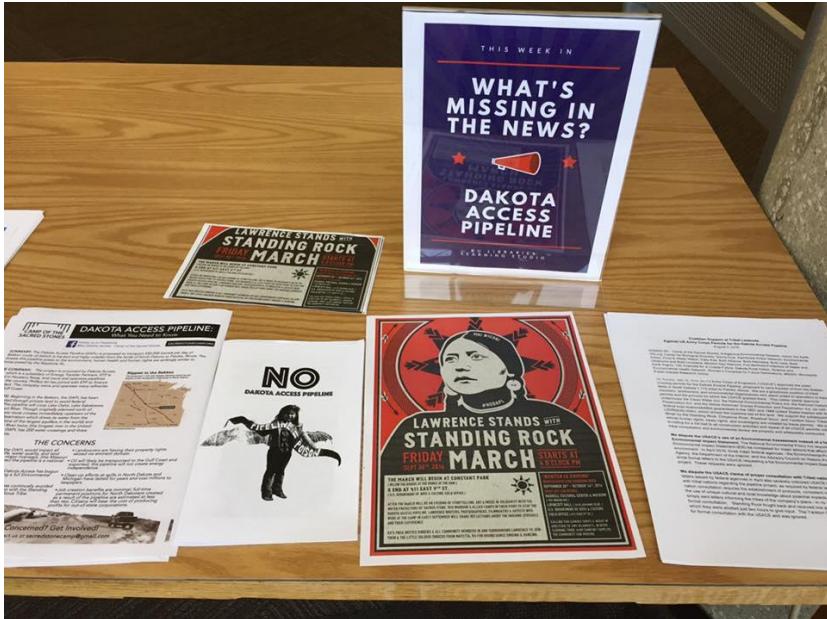
# Critical Race Theory (CRT)

*Interest convergence:*

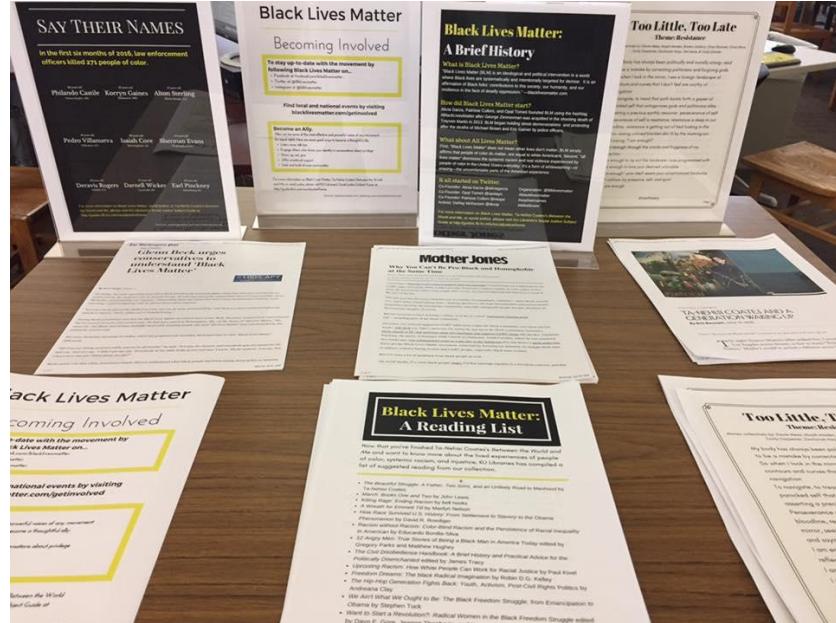
White supremacy benefits white people, “both psychically and materially,” which makes it difficult for white people to want to get rid of it.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2017). *Critical Race Theory: An introduction* (3rd ed.). New York: New York University Press.

# Open a window into ignored or alternate realities.



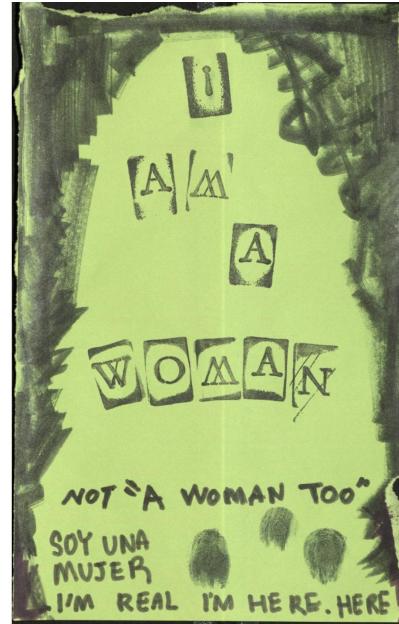
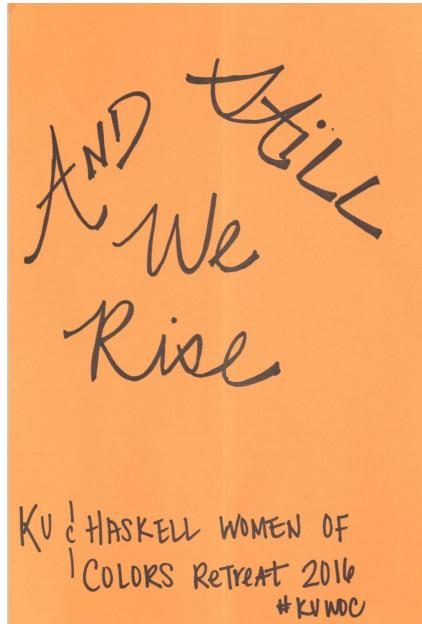
# Open a window into ignored or alternate realities.



# Counterstorytelling



# Counterstorytelling



If we don't trouble the foundations of  
libraries and academia, which were built  
on racist systems of oppression, then  
*what are we doing?*

# Collection Development

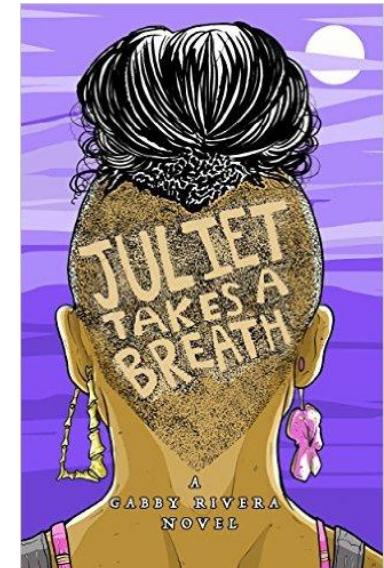
Vani

# unpacking the collection

What is here? How and why did it get here?

Where is the “here”? Who can access the collection, and how can they access it?

Willful Subjects  
Sara Ahmed



# unpacking the collection

What materials are here? How and why did these materials get here?

Where is the “here”? Who can access the collection, and how can they access it?



# unpacking the collection

The foundation of the disciplines in settler colonial violence, as “not simply a way of organizing systems of knowledge but also as a way of organizing people or bodies.”

Tuhiwai Smith, Linda. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed.

Citation practices as key to discipline formation: “I would describe citation as a rather successful reproductive technology, a way of reproducing the world around certain bodies. These citational structures can form what we call disciplines.”

Ahmed, Sara. (2013, September 11). “Making Feminist Points.” *Feministkilljoys*. [feministkilljoys.com/2013/09/11/making-feminist-points/](http://feministkilljoys.com/2013/09/11/making-feminist-points/)

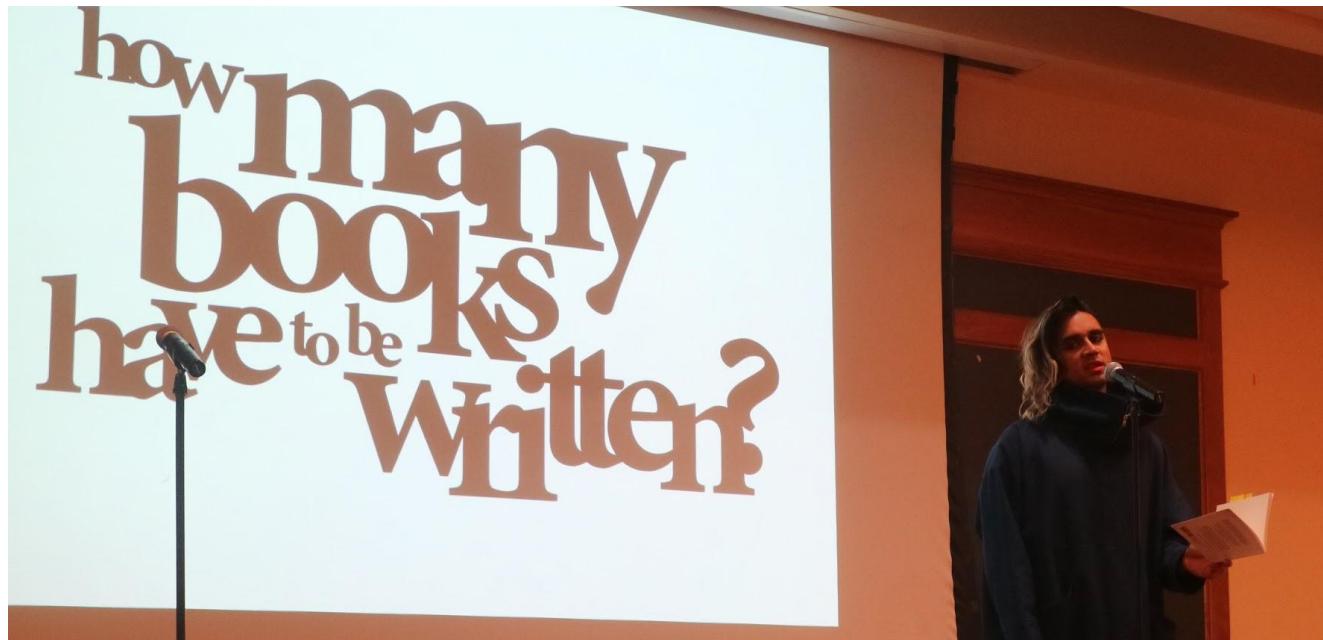
# (re)imagining the collection

What collections have we not yet seen, that we might imagine?

What would it mean to center solidarity with Black and Indigenous communities, communities of color, queer, trans, and gender nonbinary people, people with disabilities, elders, youth, and immigrants in academic library collection building practices?

What could it mean to “practice refusal” (following Harsha Walia’s suggestion) in collection development (and what kinds of refusal?)

even this page is white



# Reference Services

Eamon

# Reference and power

Power asymmetries inherent in reference interactions

# Reference and power

Power asymmetries inherent in reference interactions:

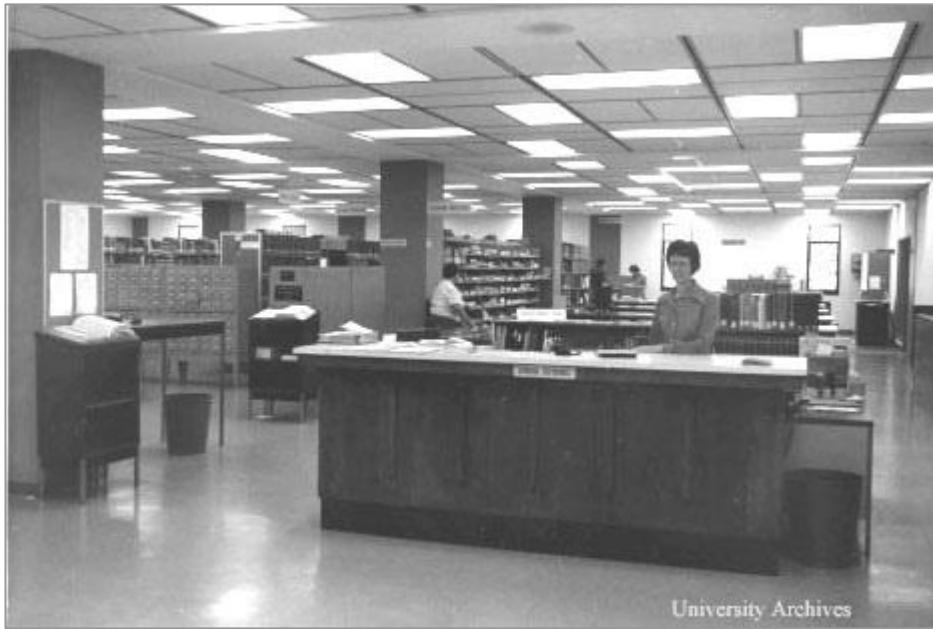
The reference librarian

# Reference and power

Power asymmetries inherent in reference interactions:

The reference librarian

The library's ways of knowing



University Archives



## Ask a Librarian



### Questions?

#### Contact a librarian:

- [online question form](#)
- phone: 800-847-3000, ext. 2222
- email: [librarian@esc.edu](mailto:librarian@esc.edu)

### Hours

Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sunday, 1 p.m.-9 p.m.

# The language of reference

Banking model mindset

# The language of reference

Banking model mindset:

Interview

# The language of reference

Banking model mindset:

Interview

Transaction

# Guidelines & Professional Resources

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## Welcome!

The Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) is pleased to provide tools to help you in your job. The resources provided in the links to your left were developed by your peers and their predecessors in the reference and user services profession.

“If the structure does not permit dialogue  
the structure must be changed.”

Freire, Paulo. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York:  
Continuum Press.

# Alternatives and possibilities

Consciousness raising

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Co-design services with students

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Consciousness raising

Co-design services with students

Creating space for care

1. What about other areas of practice? Where do you see opportunities and challenges to critical practice in your work?
2. Where do you draw inspiration from for critical library practice?

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**Thank you!**

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