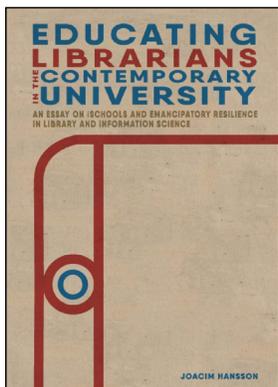


Joacim Hansson. *Educating Librarians in the Contemporary University: An Essay on iSchools and Emancipatory Resilience in Library and Information Science.* Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2019. 208p. Paper, \$22.00 (ISBN 978-1-63400-058-1). LC 2019006528.



We can cut straight to the chase at the outset. Every academic library (and most public libraries) should acquire this book. An important note is necessary; the subtitle of the book is more telling of the content than is the main title. This phenomenon actually reflects the expansive treatment that Hansson offers in his critical assessment both of librarianship and of Library and Information Science (LIS) today. Hansson begins his examination by quoting from the piece by Panos Mourdoukoutas, “Amazon Should Replace Local Libraries to Save Taxpayers Money,” which was published in 2018 in *Forbes* but was almost immediately removed from the magazine’s website due to the intense controversy of the remarks. Fortunately, the article is preserved at www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/AmazonShouldReplaceLocalLibrariestoSaveMoney.pdf. The argument was that Amazon provides something better, without tax fees. As Hansson aptly notes, the absence of taxes is replaced by product charges that a large portion of the population cannot pay.

Hansson makes the very cogent point that publicly funded libraries avoid the commercial logic according to which for-profit entities operate. On the contrary, libraries are emancipatory institutions that enable informing and learning for all. In the case of academic libraries, learning, scholarship, and research are fostered for all within the college or university. In fact, as he writes, “By the end of this book, I will have suggested a position for library research and education that sees librarianship as the very epicenter of a Library and Information Science that is based on emancipatory premises” (6). He more than fulfills that promise by critiquing the present state of higher education and the enabling power of libraries, even in the face of a potentially threatening LIS environment. It should be noted that a number of the examples Hansson invokes exist in a European (particularly Swedish) context, but his analyses and conclusions are universal and are lessons for the United States as well.

He engages in a substantive examination of what he refers to as the “entrepreneurial” university, one that is increasingly adopting commercial logic as a way of being and of organizing. Especially, he sees this entrepreneurial university as a danger to replace the emancipatory institution, both of education and of librarianship. The New Public Management, which has been written about extensively (for example, by John Buschman in our field), has insinuated itself into higher education and has carried neoliberalism with it into the reasoning underlying universities. Within LIS, the Panda Syndrome, written about more than two decades ago by Nancy Van House and Stuart Sutton, anticipates and supports the entrepreneurial spirit and the New Public Management. Arguing for a neoliberal replacement of the notion of libraries as a public good, they state that for-profit information environments are likely to become the rule. Hansson recognizes that such rhetoric has not disappeared; it has only morphed into pervasive, though perhaps more subtle, discourse. He does cite some, such as Brenda Dervin, as voices that are contrary to the logic of neoliberalism. He observes, “Just as important is that institutions, not least political ones, are crumbling under the pressure of a marketplace which simply moves much faster than is possible for democratic structures to handle” (49). Enter the entrepreneurial university. As he says, for a number of reasons, not least of which

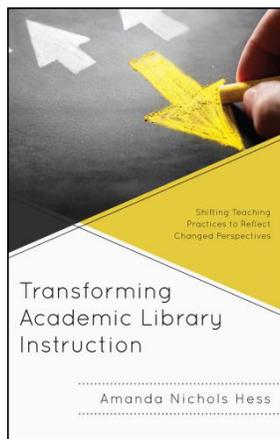
is vast alteration in funding models for higher education, the corporate university has been a mainstay in the United States for many years. In the 1960s, Clark Kerr of the University of California system was a powerful advocate for the neoliberal educational structure.

Within our profession, LIS has, according to Hansson, been engaged in a progressive revisioning for some time. This alteration has had effects on traditional (and emancipatory) librarianship as well. He points out, among other ideas, the “cognitive viewpoint” in LIS as emblematic of the revisioning. He hastens to add that, “To have [ongoing] conflict in a discipline such as Library and Information Science is not unusual or even unproductive. But it does challenge our views on how to understand and make use of the scholarly platform for librarianship” (109–10). The technical-normative elements of LIS can be opposed to the decidedly complex social and humanistic elements of librarianship. Within the altering LIS framework exist the “iSchool Movement,” which offers a quite different epistemological existence for the field. Hansson cites the mission statement as exemplary of the epistemological and structural transformation (see <https://ischools.org>). Hansson emphasizes that the mission is limited to the member schools. In assessing the iSchools, he notices that “they are not talking about political revolutionaries, but entrepreneurial ones” (136).

Hansson’s analysis is sweeping; he cites and quotes sources from librarianship and LIS, but also from higher education and politics. His arguments are extremely well considered and supported; to reiterate, his examination is a serious *critique*, not merely a curmudgeonly criticism. A principal reward for readers in, indeed, the expanse of his critique and the sources from which he draws.

He concludes with the suggestion that there are at least four ways in which educators may deal with ethics in programs of Library and Information Science: (1) by showing how to create a direction when ethical dilemmas appear; (2) by learning how to question and counteract interests of the institution and of professional practice that are not benevolent—be they political, economic, technological, or managerial; (3) by building a sense of meaningfulness; (4) by analyzing and debating relevant legislation framing the institutional aspects of libraries (179–80). In summary, this is an extremely timely and valuable book. I cannot recommend it highly enough.—*John M. Budd, University of Missouri*

Amanda Nichols Hess. *Transforming Academic Library Instruction: Shifting Teaching Practices to Reflect Changed Perspectives*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018. 195p. Paper, \$41.00 (ISBN 978-1-5381-1053-9). LCCN 2018-018795.



The academic librarian’s evolving teaching identity is the subject of exploration in *Transforming Academic Library Instruction: Shifting Teaching Practices to Reflect Changed Perspectives*. As a librarian and instructional design expert who also recently served as chair of ACRL’s Information Literacy Frameworks and Standards Committee, Dr. Nichols Hess has a uniquely broad view of the ways in which our expectations of academic librarian instruction are changing as long-held standards are rejected in favor of frameworks and the rigors of traditional standards and practices are exchanged in favor of more fluid information literacy-based learning objectives.

She asks us to consider the impact that shifting our teaching perspectives to fit the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher