

ALA Editions features two special reports written by Tracey Overbey and Amanda L. Folk. Studies such as these help to fill knowledge gaps in the academic literature and center the narratives of Black and African American experiences in American libraries and various learning spaces from K–12 to higher education. The authors have stimulated a meaningful dialogue that is, quite frankly, long overdue in addressing several critical issues within the LIS profession. Both reports speak to topics such as systemic racism and white supremacy, confronting whiteness in American libraries, and instilling and promoting antiracist principles and values within our work environments. This review examines both of Overbey and Folk’s reports, and supplies the reader with pertinent information and valuable resources for further consideration and exploration.

In the introduction to Narratives of (Dis)Enfranchisement, the authors explain the purpose of the publication. They acknowledge that they do not aim to provide a comprehensive nor authoritative account but a means to help the library community reckon with its racist past to achieve a more equitable and antiracist future. Chapter 1 includes sections on the overwhelming whiteness of librarianship in the United States, confronting whiteness in libraries, race, and racism within the United States, concluding with a summary of what lies ahead. The second chapter provides historical context regarding the African roots of education and librarianship. Overbey and Folk explain that African and African Americans’ contributions to libraries and education have been largely ignored and rarely taught. Moreover, chapter 3 discusses how Black and African Americans have been denied access to public libraries or have been provided separate and unequal resources and facilities. This history illustrates that these public spaces have not always been free and open to everyone. School libraries, educational disparities, and segregation are the focus of chapter 4. Chapter 5 covers academic libraries and the historical exclusion of Black and African Americans within institutions of higher learning. Using critical race theory and theories of whiteness, chapter 6 examines how racialized experiences in libraries contribute to discrimination and marginalization. A discussion of librarians’ involvement in equity-minded, race-centered assessment, evaluation, and research concludes the report.

The second report, Narratives of (Dis)Engagement, differs from Narratives of (Dis)Enfranchisement because it focuses on Folk and Overbey’s research, which examines Black and African American students’ library experiences before entering college and while attending the Ohio State University. Chapter 1 introduces the authors, discusses race and the LIS profession, and provides an overview of the research described in greater detail in chapter 2. The second chapter includes detailed information about the study, its participants, research methods, and
the data collection and analysis process. Chapters 3 and 4 explores the study participants’ experiences with public and school libraries. Chapter 5 looks at how Black and African American students in this study used the Ohio State University Libraries. Chapter 6 explores the role of race and whiteness in students’ library experiences from a critical race theory and whiteness theories lens. Furthermore, chapter 7 discusses the research findings, antiracist practices to support white librarians, and resources in different formats to continue the learning journey. Folk and Overbey’s research provides LIS professionals with tools and resources to enhance equity-centered work. I highly recommend both reports. I also strongly recommend that this research be included as a part of the LIS curriculum to educate the next generation of librarians, and that it be used as a professional development resource for current librarians and administrators. These reports offer the LIS community an opportunity to engage in thoughtful conversations about the state of our profession and to learn from the experiences of Black and African American library users, who have been historically excluded from our institutions, and often underserved.

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Not long before I sat down to write this review, Baker & Taylor, a leading content distributor to academic, public, and school libraries, fell victim to a ransomware attack. Though Baker & Taylor remedied the issue within weeks, the incident left those using the service at a standstill. The attack left Baker & Taylor’s clients fearful of interacting with the distributor online and unsure if any customer data was compromised. With security breaches seemingly becoming more commonplace, Kristin Briney and Becky Yoose’s Managing Data for Patron Privacy: Comprehensive Strategies for Libraries arrives at an all-too-important moment to inform library workers of their role in handling patron data. This extensive how-to guide, which spans ten chapters, explores relevant themes impacting library patrons, including the overall security of data, current risks in various library settings, and a given library’s current patron data management process. Rooted in their work in consultancy for research data management and extensive experience in library data in various library settings, Briney and Yoose signal to readers not only a sense of urgency but passion for discussing this critical topic.

Chapter 1, “The Value of Data and Privacy,” discusses the idea that “data has value” and often goes undersecured. Though data collection has seemingly become second nature to library workers, data management’s role is rarely scrutinized. The authors convincingly argue that librarians’ lackluster approach to data management costs patrons their integrity, stating, “When data is breached or leaked, patron privacy is lost” (5).

Before diving into the text, the authors introduce readers to two librarians—one a systems librarian at a public library, the other a science librarian at a university—who’s engagement with data makes the claims of the book concrete for readers. Following these librarians throughout this book is a delight as we see their decision-making process based on what was currently happening in their respective libraries and how past practices in data management