Respecting Privacy of Thought in DEI Training

Kristin Antelman

In the same way that libraries defend the privacy rights of library users so should they respect library workers' privacy of thought. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training, as it has been approached in recent years, impinges on privacy of thought and cognitive liberty. It is possible to see the profession's shift away from a privacy-defending approach to DEI training to a privacy-threatening approach through the concept of cultural competence, which is the subject of two American Library Association guidelines a decade apart. Because workplace trainings are an expression of an organization's philosophy of control, it is management's responsibility to foster privacy by design in the library. The right to freely choose the beliefs that comprise a library worker's worldview, and disclose them only as they choose, is freedom of thought. The right not to have one's beliefs interfered with without their consent is cognitive liberty. Each is a privacy right and must be defended in the library.

Introduction

The privacy of library users is a foundational library ethic and is reflected in libraries' professional practice across all library types.[1] Librarians also understand that remaining responsive to our communities means being culturally aware.[2] In recent years these two theoretically compatible priorities—upholding privacy and strengthening cultural competence—have, in practice, come into conflict due to DEI trainings' precepts, which embrace an approach to cultural competency that fails to respect library workers' privacy of thought.

The American Library Association (ALA) issued two guideline documents, a decade apart, to support library workers in the development of cultural competency skills: *Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries* ("Diversity Standards")[3] in 2012, and *Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity: A Framework* ("Cultural Proficiencies") in 2022.[4] Comparing the two documents demonstrates how academic library cultural competency training moved from being anchored in library values and services to engaging with contested social and political topics that probe—and challenge—the personal views and beliefs of individual library workers.

Managerial organizational control practices commonly seen in academic libraries can exacerbate threats to workers' privacy. When library administration respects the separation of public and private spheres it defends its library workers' privacy, upholds library values and principles, and enables the library to be effective in its mission.

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* *Kristin Antelman is former University Librarian at University of California Santa Barbara, email: kantelman@gmail.com.* *Note: Article originally submitted: June 22, 2023; Accepted during peer review: February 14, 2024; Published: May 2025.*

Privacy of Thought and Cognitive Liberty

Privacy of thought is an instinctively understood concept because everyone experiences it every day. Most would consider being forced to share private thoughts an invasion of privacy. In this way, the idea that privacy of thought should be considered a human right feels intuitively correct. How this intuition is reflected in society via laws and culture, however, is inseparable from the influence of Enlightenment ideas about how we understand individual liberty, as well as the realms in which society has an interest and those it does not.[5] These ideas originated in the West but they are not, of course, only Western ideas. They are universally accessible and are the foundation of international human rights law and advocacy. Freedom of thought and conscience were introduced as human rights in the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which declared in Article 18: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion," and in Article 19: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference."[6] Developed with the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt, the unifying, non-religious language of the UN Declaration has served as the conceptual and moral foundation for defending human rights ever since.[7]

Freedom of thought is an irreducible philosophical and moral proposition about the meaning of freedom itself. Boire writes:

> The right to control one's own consciousness is the quintessence of freedom. If freedom is to mean anything, it must mean that each person has an inviolable right to think for him or herself. It must mean, at a minimum, that each person is free to direct one's own consciousness; one's own underlying mental processes, and one's beliefs, opinions, and worldview.[8]

Freedom of thought (i.e., protecting the inner sphere), and freedom of speech (i.e., protecting the expression of thoughts), are complementary. As Bublitz writes, "In human rights theory, the freedom to hold opinions without interference is intimately tied to the freedom of their expression. Whereas freedom of speech and expression is restrictable on various grounds, the protection against interferences with opinions is considered absolute, i.e., it does not allow for exceptions."[9] Because privacy of thought precedes expression, it is, by definition, even more fundamental to democracy and a free society than is freedom of speech. In America, it is also linked to other essential freedoms, including freedom of, and from, religion. Where they exist, legal protections for freedom of thought and related freedoms give citizens the tools they need to defend their human rights. Richards writes of freedom of thought: "At the level of law, if there is any constitutional right that is absolute, it is this one, which is the precondition for all other political and religious rights guaranteed by the Western tradition."[10]

Collectively, these freedoms are linked by the concept of the right to privacy. While the word "privacy" does not appear in the US Constitution, the Supreme Court has long found implied protections for it since the "right to be let alone" was defined by Justices Warren and Brandeis in their 1890 article, "The Right to Privacy."[11] Privacy is an essential legal concept. In an open society the boundary dividing public from private must be widely understood, and accepted, both by the individual and the state, as "it relates to the balance of power between the state and the individual."[12] Boire elaborates the legal protections for freedom of thought by dividing them into three rights: the right to keep your thoughts and opinions private; the

right not to have your thoughts and opinions manipulated; and the right not to be penalized for your thoughts and opinions. These are all privacy rights. Violating any one of these three rights violates a person's freedom of thought as "[T]he right of each person to autonomy over his or her own mind and thought processes is central to First Amendment jurisprudence… people must be treated as ends not means."[13] Legal protections for privacy of thought are thus a bulwark against instrumentalism, that is, prioritizing social or political uses of people over their inherent self-determination.

Legal scholars have also elaborated the related concept of cognitive liberty. As defined by Farahany, "Cognitive liberty encompasses freedom of thought and rumination, the right to self-access and self-alteration and to consent to or refuse changes to our brains and our mental experiences."[14] More generally, "[c]ognitive liberty or a right to mental self-determination guarantees individuals sovereignty over their minds."[15] The goal of these scholars is to achieve enactment of a new international human right. Farahany writes, "Recognizing an international human right to cognitive liberty would make it a clear legal priority to protect our mental experiences as much as our other physical ones."[16] These goals are natural extensions of the elaboration of freedom of thought and conscience as human rights.[17]

The concepts of privacy of thought and cognitive liberty, and the boundary between public and private life that they define, serve as the conceptual foundation for human rights, but also for legal protections for employees in the public sphere of the workplace. For example, the contractual relationship between employer and employee does not extend to the employer having access to an employee's private thoughts and beliefs, nor to the right to attempt to manipulate or penalize the employee for them. Indeed, one of the fundamental goals of labor rights activism since the Industrial Revolution has been to defend the boundary between the public and private spheres and to protect the private sphere from encroachment by employers. It is a boundary that requires constant defense by workers even after having attained established precedence in law.[18]

DEI Trainings and Privacy of Thought

Over the past decade, and accelerating rapidly after 2020, academic libraries have implemented various diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, including staff training programs. The stated goals of all DEI trainings include, broadly speaking, increasing understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues with the objective of developing cultural competency skills to better serve the library's mission. While these are valid goals, the trainings' content and manner of delivery can cross the line from supporting the library's mission into violating workers' privacy of thought and cognitive liberty.

There is already considerable research showing how ineffective DEI-related trainings are,[19] and even that they are counterproductive, increasing feelings of racial animosity among co-workers.[20] However, efficacy and ethics are distinct, even if they are regularly intermingled. Akin to policy debates about state-sponsored torture, the argument that efficacy should be secondary to the question "is it the *right thing to do*" is a viable position to take on ethical grounds. Professional ethics, distinct from personal morality, defines the "right thing to do" in the workplace. DEI trainings risk violating privacy of thought when they mix and/or conflate efficacy, ethical behavior, and personal morality. For example, if a training presumes that an individual's personal beliefs are linked via unconscious bias to negative outcomes in the workplace and that it is therefore ethical for the employer to try to influence those beliefs; or

if a training presumes that a person's morality is so closely linked to reducing systemic racism that it justifies intervention in the workplace. Regardless of employer confidence in the idea that there is a link between personal morals or beliefs and bias or systemic racism, any training violates workers' privacy when it seeks to reveal, influence, or penalize someone for their morals or beliefs rather than their behavior at work.

Identity-based DEI training engages with amorphous and ideologically-laden topics such as the causes of racial inequalities and why "dismantling" white supremacy culture is required to eliminate them.[21] Abstract ideas such as these are examples of what Lifton calls "thought-terminating clichés;" that is, a proposition that is both unfalsifiable and "relies on disabling the recipients' critical faculties to cause itself to be replicated."[22] That DEI training materials are often accompanied by glossaries reflects a recognition that the words and concepts of the DEI lexicon, such as equity, inclusion, anti-racism, and white supremacy, carry specific meanings that are substantially different from their commonly understood meanings in the broader society. The language of DEI is both dogmatic and squishy. Redefining words is disorienting to people[23] and, in a training context, can cause sympathetic people to feel inadequate, a message that is reinforced by reading assignments and being told "educate yourself." As Bruckner said, "like any ideology, this discourse is at first presented in the register of the obvious."[24] These rhetorical techniques serve to create epistemic closure.[25] That is, they build a false consensus based on a set of propositions that are presented as facts, followed by goals emanating from those propositions, that people can then be "trained" on. This is what Redstone calls the "Settled Question Fallacy," meaning that "certain questions have definitive and clear answers when they, in fact, do not."[26] The ability of DEI trainers to keep up with ever-fluid linguistic norms and nuances also serves as a filter to identify library workers who do not devote the same energy to that purpose, or who lack the class- or education-based advantages to keep up. Getting someone to use words differently from what they believe they mean, or to repeat phrases that are not their own and that they do not really understand, is manipulative behavior and is a violation of that person's freedom of thought.

Some aspects of DEI trainings also pose specific legal and compliance challenges for library administrators. *Cultural Proficiencies* states, "Libraries … must remain committed to collecting demographic information about the workforce but must also adjust categories as constructs change with respect to racial/ethnic identity."[27] However, doing so may conflict with law-based policies against discriminatory treatment of workers, as well as their privacy rights. If active participation at a DEI training is required or effectively required, compelled speech is potentially legally relevant as well since the employer has material power over the employee. An example is the common practice of asking each person in a group training to state preferred pronouns, even if a participant does not agree with that practice. DEI trainings may also be legally vulnerable as "ideological content" or "captive audience" meetings. Labor law dictates that the employer may not "coerce workplace ideological listening."[28] Several states have enacted Worker Freedom Acts to protect employees against being forced to attend workplace captive audience meetings that engage in political or religious proselytization.[29]

Any training program that "ask[s] that you look within yourself and change your deeply held beliefs, or 'prejudices'"[30] is entering a worker's private mental space. The most common example is training on unconscious, or implicit, bias. Leaving aside the extensive—and at best inconclusive—research about what unconscious bias is, how it can be measured, and whether it predicts behavior,[31] an employee's "unconscious" beliefs are not an appropriate

concern for their employer. In the workplace, employees should not feel pressured to share, or "interrogate," anything about their inner selves or beliefs for the simple reason that those are private. The "21-day challenges" that some libraries and universities implemented in the summer of 2020 reflect the idea popularized by Robin DiAngelo that not thinking or talking sufficiently about racism was itself evidence of racism.[32] For example, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's 21-day challenge stated: "Until we learn to talk about race, even in a work environment, we are complicit in complacency and upholding oppression;" and the training included the prompt: "Reflect on a time in a work environment where you chose to avoid discussing race. What kept you from speaking—Anxiety? Fear? Frustration? Fatigue?"[33] Or perhaps privacy? This staff exercise also asked library workers about their reading choices. "What are the last five books you read? What is the racial mix of the authors?"[34] That is private information on which no employer, but especially a library, should be either explicitly or implicitly judging its employees. Another example is in a self-assessment component of a DEI training at the University of Virginia in which library staff were given a questionnaire that asked how often they demonstrate ninety-six DEI-related "competencies" on a scale from "Rarely" (in all cases this ranking would be interpreted as either ignorant or morally bad) to "Almost always" (educated or morally good). For example, one question read: "If a white colleague tries to shift the focus to one of their marginalized groups, I effectively acknowledge the dynamic and redirect the conversation back to race and racism." (Suggesting a redirection back to race and racism here implies that other marginalized groups are not appropriate DEI topics). Another question was: "I am aware of the racist biases, assumptions, and stereotypes that impact my thoughts, judgments, decisions, and actions"[35] (a statement that implies that prejudice exists whether acknowledged or not). Even if your employer does not see your responses, these ninety-six questions are presumptuous and invasive. Asking about a person's thoughts in this way violates privacy of thought, not to mention being an unhealthy mindset for employer and employee alike.[36] Respecting library workers' cognitive liberty means recognizing and respecting their privacy rights by not asking morally-loaded questions about personal reading, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes.

How the concept of identity is addressed in a DEI training is directly related to interference (or not) with workers' privacy. Identity-centric trainings essentialize identity by generalizing about broad and poorly defined categories (e.g., BIPOC) within which there is clearly such great diversity of opinion as to render any generalization a political argument rather than information, or insight. What a person thinks about their own identity is particular and complex and spans their private and public lives. What anyone chooses to share about their identity is a personal decision. Identity inheres in the individual, of course, but it is informed by personality, family, community, cultural or religious background, plus innumerable other factors.[37] While identity has meaning in society apart from what an individual may choose for themselves, it is presumptuous and instrumentalist to employ someone else's identity, as you happen to perceive it, in a workplace training.

Central to cognitive liberty is a person's right to hold their own worldview. A worldview encompasses core values, beliefs, and opinions that shape how you interpret the world.[38] A worldview frames how a person engages with new information and how they are predisposed to form new opinions on political or social issues.[39] A worldview is shaped by parents, family, friends, faith leaders, and social networks. Often a person's worldview is also shaped through education, as they learn more about the world and discover what they care about.[40] In

the context of the library as workplace, an employee's worldview may even conflict with the core values of librarianship. For example, a library worker may privately believe that certain books are so offensive that they should not be held even by a university library. However, as long as that employee does his job according to the library's policies and not according to his personal views, he should not be subject to criticism or "reeducation." A person's worldview is private; no library administrator should even know their employees' worldview, unless they choose to share it.

Identity-centric library DEI workplace trainings advance an unapologetically specific worldview, one that clearly represents a progressive left political perspective. That it is a comprehensive worldview is evident in its multipurpose use of a few common themes, which are presented as axiomatic in DEI trainings.[41] Among them are: the central importance of identity, almost exclusively race and gender identity; that truth can only ever be subjective and is an expression of power; that words can be harmful and so must be controlled; and that there is a unity of interests among oppressed groups against oppressor groups.[42] That it is a worldview is also evident in DEI training's explicit call to be an ongoing process of education and reeducation, and a "lens" through which libraries should view everything they do and how they do it.[43] The worldview is expressed in strikingly similar language related to libraries' social justice purpose across trainings, library mission statements,[44] the 2023 revision to core competencies for librarians,[45] and the 2021 addition to ALA's Code of Ethics.[46]

Identity-centric trainings are politically partisan, and therefore inappropriate for the library (or any workplace), not because they highlight race and racism as they might manifest in the library, university, or society but because they posit one specific worldview that makes claims about social issues only tenuously related to library jobs. For example, the DEI definition of "equity"[47] as provided in the *Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity: A Framework* includes specific institutional and public policy strategies to prioritize equal outcomes over equality of opportunity. That strategy is certainly legitimate to advocate for in the public sphere. It is also a radical political position in the American liberal tradition.[48] It is not a truth. It represents an argument about the best means to advance a social goal on which there is widespread consensus in society (i.e., reducing racial disparities across meaningful metrics related to human flourishing). The ways in which one might achieve that goal is a topic for the academic seminar, scholarship, journalism, and public policy debates. But when one correct or "true" path is asserted in a training framework, it is indoctrination.[49] This is contrary to library professional practice around inculcating critical thinking skills in students. It is not ethical to ask library workers to sit through training on topics that are politically charged, and that are not concretely related either to the work of the library or rules for workplace behavior. Just as library workers in a non-denominational library deserve a workplace free of religious activity, so all library workers deserve a workplace free of political activity.

Tolerance

Tolerance enables people to work productively side by side in a diverse society or workplace. Weissberg writes, "Tolerance, classically understood, permits the very possibility of civil society."[50] Tolerance means accepting that people have different beliefs, and worldviews, and choosing to be civil when encountering people whose views you dislike or find objectionable. While its boundaries are historically and socially informed, tolerance is ultimately a personal decision based on one's own conscience; it cannot be demanded. As Weissberg says, "Judg-

mentalism inheres in the concept.… The window of acceptability varies by person, by society and over time…. It is thus meaningless to speak of tolerance as an abstract, transcendent virtue or a personality trait."[51] To be tolerant does not mean you must remain silent—much less agree—in response to what you find objectionable. Doing so sacrifices your own right to moral judgment, your own cognitive liberty. Yet, DEI ideology, in positing "truths," *does* ask that you agree with what you might find objectionable. This is at the heart of why it violates privacy of thought.

As Gebert, Buengeler and Heinitz write: "The term [tolerance] has come to imply the demand to appreciate dissimilar values as positive and to endorse them."[52] This line of thinking suggests that, even after a DEI training participant is subjected to peer pressure to endorse views they might disagree with, "tolerance" will demand that they become an activist on behalf of those ideas and, "Anything short of such intrusive activism… does not constitute tolerance."[53] *Cultural Proficiencies* says: "each person, regardless of title or position, has the power to influence their community by modeling antiracist practices, advocating for BIPOC communities, and becoming actively involved in committee work, leadership, and governance of library associations."[54] Equating activism with tolerance is, in fact, the opposite of tolerance: in its most extreme case it is coercion, enforced by social norms or fear of losing one's job. As "the freedom not to listen arises from the freedom of thought,"[55] support for tolerance in a training situation should mean any individual could easily object or silently opt out without the presumption that they are intolerant or racist. This may not be true in typical DEI trainings, however. As Keizer notes of the culture of participation in DEI training: "exposure is always thought to be virtuous and privacy always implies having something nasty to hide."[56] Soft coercion in the name of tolerance, or "inclusion," is not simply disrespectful of the individual but damages the social fabric of the workplace because it can lead to negative consequences beyond the training.[57] If it is considered unacceptable to opt out, or to remain silent,[58] the reality of differences of beliefs between people, and tolerance of those differences, has the potential to become an impulse to remediate wrong-thinkers' "misguided" beliefs. As Gebert et al. write, "This transformation from the demand to bear to the demand to endorse increases the likelihood that people consider any non-endorsement of different values intolerant and socially sanction it."[59]

What the concept of tolerance can do is to serve as grounding for an ethical path to diversity training that respects privacy of thought. What Gebert et al. term the "tolerance-centered diversity model" "aims to protect social and personal identities from potential imposition that arise from some trainers' manifold dogmas."[60] Tolerance-centered diversity trainers abstain from making superiority claims, or using language that is emotionally manipulative; they exhibit epistemic humility with the goal to "seek to find out what people think" rather than "impress on them what they can think";[61] and they do not give greater moral weight to the opinions of people with some identities over others.[62] Most importantly, they communicate the need to "interpret one's own values as preliminary, socially constructed, and historically contingent rather than as definitive truth."[63] This model was characterized by Lukianoff and Haidt as a "common humanity" approach, as opposed to "common enemy."[64] As described by Montiel-Overall, common humanity training is concerned with actions and not personal thoughts. It does not draw workers into topics unrelated to the library. Instead, it unites workers behind their common purpose in doing the work of the library. In other words, it respects the library worker's cognitive liberty by design.[65] Tolerance-centered or common humanity

training does not violate privacy of thought because its starting point is the recognition that each person holds beliefs and values that are uniquely their own, that may or may not be predictable based on their visible identities, and that ultimately are not relevant to creating a well-functioning library.

Cultural Competence

The ideological transformation of DEI-related library training is evident when comparing the two documents ALA published a decade apart related to cultural competency skills development. ALA's Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) addressed application of the concept of cultural competency to library practice in its 2012 document, *Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries*.[66] Ten years later, in 2022, ACRL rescinded those standards in favor of a new document, which was developed by a joint ALA-Association of Research Libraries task force, *Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity: A Framework*.[67] The new framework, like its predecessor, is intended to serve as a resource for trainings and other cultural competency-related programming in academic libraries.

The term "cultural competency" emerged in the 1990s, largely supplanting the terms "multicultural competence," "cultural diversity," and "diversity awareness."[68] As defined by Mestre, "Cultural competency is a developmental process that evolves over an extended period and refers to an ability to understand the needs of diverse populations and to interact effectively with people from different cultures."[69] ACRL's Racial and Ethnic Diversity Committee, which authored the 2012 *Diversity Standards*, adopted the definition of cultural competence used by the National Association of Social Workers. The selection of this definition was apt, as it is well-aligned with library values and mission. The definition of cultural competence was:

> a congruent set of behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enable a person or group to work effectively in cross-cultural situations; the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each.[70]

Embedded in the cultural competency concept is, self-evidently, the concept of culture. Montiel-Overall, in writing about cultural competency, defines culture as "acts and activities shared by groups of people and expressed in social engagements that occur in their daily activities."[71] *Diversity Standards* (2012) defines culture as "customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; a set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization."[72] These definitions use clear language that show library trainers and workers why the development of cultural competency skills is important for improving library practice and services. The definitions also point to the need for sensitivity regarding privacy (e.g., "respectfully," "protects and preserves the dignity of each").

Montiel-Overall characterizes the three domains in which library workers develop cultural competencies: the cognitive (i.e., insights into and sensitivity to cultural differences); the interpersonal (i.e., desire to know, interact, communicate); and the environmental (i.e., language, transportation, housing).[73] Her framework, which is used in *Diversity Standards*,

identifies concrete goals reflecting cultural competence, such as responding to the information needs or service model expectations of non-English speakers, enabling physical access to libraries, and offering culturally-relevant programming. Because the overarching goal of developing cultural competency skills is to increase library use and improve library services,[74] she stresses that cognitive, interpersonal and environmental cultural competencies are most effectively developed not through training but through engagement, that is, through individual interactions and embeddedness. The conception of cultural competency skills development in Montiel-Overall and *Diversity Standards* is outward rather than inward facing, is grounded in library practice, and does not encroach on library workers' privacy of thought.

An acknowledged risk of applying the cultural competency concept is stereotyping (also known as the generalization fallacy), which attributes to individuals identified characteristics of the group(s) to which they belong or are presumed to belong, such as labeling a person as "marginalized" or "oppressed" if they are a member of a group that is characterized as such in some context. Leigh Wilton et al. write that, "[s]ocial psychological theory and research has long warned about the potential pitfalls of overemphasizing social identity, including racial identity, in interpersonal or intergroup contexts."[75] "Multicultural" training has been shown to lead to "increased belief in race essentialism," with participants "more likely to see outgroups as homogeneous."[76] Research has also found that "individuals who received a high prevalence of stereotyping message expressed more stereotypes than those who received a low prevalence stereotyping message."[77] One librarian interviewed for a study of cultural competency talked about how she mitigated the risk of stereotyping in her work: "The only way to really combat unconscious bias is to try not to make judgments about who you're looking at or what their background is."[78] Making generalizations based on a person's identity characteristics also violates the DEI "intersectionality" precept, "deny[ing] the intersections between the various cultural categories, such as age, gender, socioeconomic status and ethnicity."[79] In other words, it renders less visible the very differences to which cultural competency skills development aims to make library workers more sensitive.

Montiel-Overall also discusses ways in which the common humanity approach can enable a training program to resist stereotyping. For example, by "building cultural appreciation" and an "ethic of caring."[80] She explains how it remains possible to discuss issues of identity in the context of library services using an individualist rather than collectivist approach. No underlying theory is required because the goal is not to analyze or transform abstract systems and structures, but to build on workers' existing knowledge about how to better understand their library community.

Cultural competence training can be resistant to stereotyping if the trainers themselves practice cultural competence by respecting participants' own beliefs and privacy. *Diversity Standards* itself exhibits cultural competence as a guidance document. It is practical and concrete, written in clear, non-ideological language that is accessible not only to engaged ACRL members but to everyone. Any academic library today could readily adopt the 2012 *Diversity Standards* as a guide for trainings that respect workers' privacy of thought.

Diversity Standards' successor, *Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity: A Framework* (2022), as its title reflects, dramatically narrows the concept of cultural competency to an exclusive focus on race and racism.[81] The document's stated goal is to serve as a "guide for developing *personal*, organizational, institutional, and system-level knowledge and understanding of the nature of racism and its many manifestations.… to provide the grounding needed to effect

change in *thinking*, behavior and practice"[82] (emphasis added). The target audience is primarily the individual and their psychology (e.g., "Library workers must hold themselves accountable individually"[83]) not the library staff as a whole or library services. The language is explicitly fluid because "EDI-centered language is frequently evolving and rooted in identity."[84] Despite including a glossary that defines terms such as colonialism, imperialism, social justice, and whiteness, the document does not provide a definition for either "cultural proficiency" or "culture." The framework proposes a staff exercise to "research" other glossaries created by anti-racist organizations to "build consensus around those definitions."[85] Even if library employees were to undertake that exercise, the intended meaning of the DEI terminology may remain confusing to the average library worker because many of the words and phrases are defined differently from their everyday meanings.[86] Using this kind of abstract language with alternative definitions serves to separate the initiated from the uninitiated.[87] Public librarian Barkovich makes the point that "[a] spirit of elitism can be as toxic and corrupting to a public institution as racism and sexism."[88] Using terminology that is not your own has the potential to de-individualize you, or to encroach on your ability to think about these topics independently or critically. As Vaclav Havel points out, the ritualization of language leads to the ritualization of thought.[89]

The "methodologies of self-assessment" section in *Cultural Proficiencies,* like other DEI self-assessments, violates privacy of thought because it encourages (or requires) workers to provide private information unrelated to library jobs.[90] Staff are advised to take the Implicit Association Test (IAT), an instrument designed to measure stereotyping[91] because "individuals have been conditioned to practice implicit, internalized forms of racism that *we need to address*"[92] (emphasis added). The goal is not to prevent biased behavior, however. The document correctly notes that the IAT is not intended to predict behavior and, research shows, it does not.[93] Instead, the stated goal for library employees to take the IAT is "to identify power and privilege in the LIS profession."[94] To advance that goal, however, would be an undertaking well beyond the means of a staff training exercise.

Cultural Proficiencies introduces a set of broad historical topics for engagement within a training context; for example: imperialism and colonialism, mass incarceration, disparities in access to healthcare, the achievement gap in education, and disparate outcomes for "BIPOC populations."[95] None of these topics has more than an indirect link to library work. The four competencies to be developed through use of this framework, represented as a "competency continuum," do not make the framework's link to library work any clearer. The competencies are: awareness of racial identity; manifestations of racism; commitment to countering racism; and analysis of racialized outcomes.[96] Compare those to the competencies in *Diversity Standards*, all of which are related to library work: cultural awareness of self and others; cross-cultural knowledge and skills; organizational and professional values; development of collections, programs, and services; service delivery; language diversity; workforce diversity; organizational dynamics; cross-cultural leadership; professional education and continuous learning; and research.[97] In comparing the competencies proposed by the two documents it is hard not to conclude that ACRL discarded a practical and still-relevant guide for library administrators and workers in favor of a framework that engages—confusingly and ideologically—with topics tangential to the library as workplace, and that violate library workers' privacy of thought.[98] Cultural competency is a desirable workplace training goal when it is closely bound to the library objective of improving library services. *Diversity Standards* states:

"If libraries are to continue being indispensable organizations in their campus communities, they must reflect the communities they serve and provide quality services to their increasingly diverse constituencies."[99] *Diversity Standards* speaks the language of common humanity, in Appiah's words, the "identity that should bind us all."[100]

Managerialism

At all workplaces managers employ various types of organizational control. Examples include culture management, and concertive and normative control,[101] each of which will be considered in the context of DEI trainings. Library administrators carry the responsibility to ensure that the use of organizational control in their libraries adheres to professional ethics, including protecting library employees' privacy. Workplace training, as a visible expression of an organization's philosophy of organizational control, is one place to look to see how a library administration is respecting workers' privacy.

Fleming and Spicer analyze how organizations deploy one type of organizational control: "culture management" programs.[102] In so-called high-commitment organizations, culture management practices, such as expected demonstrations of loyalty to the employer, can impinge on private time, thoughts and beliefs. They write: "The widespread use of culture management practices in particular has been shown to encroach insidiously into the hitherto untapped areas of workers' private lives."[103] Citing Bendix's work, Kunda analyzes the "growing managerial interest in the psychological absorption of workers by organizations. This represent[s]…. a sort of creeping annexation of the workers' selves, an attempt to capture the norms of the workplace and embed control 'inside' members."[104] That annexation can take several forms. The first, and most obvious example, is time, such as a situation in which the employee is always on call or expected to work long hours. The second form is psychology, where the employee is expected to demonstrate psychologically based allegiance, as defined by the employer. DEI trainings, as part of a DEI-centric culture management program, may introduce time demands but certainly introduce psychological expectations. Both demands on the employee's private time and psychology blur the boundary between the public and private spheres. In the Industrial Revolution "[t]he development of the work/non-work boundary was …a reflection of the power relations that attempted to render labour more amenable to the production process."[105] Over the past two centuries in Western countries the public/private boundary was gradually negotiated in favor of employees through organized labor, pro-labor laws and regulation. Taking an employee's private time or prying into her mind are predatory practices on the part of an employer.[106]

When employers violate workers' privacy of thought it can be counterproductive to the interests of the employer as well as the employee. Unsurprisingly, eroding privacy boundaries can lead to burnout, withdrawal, and anxiety. Employees in organizations that have strong organizational control "report feeling intense pressure, an invasion of their private life by corporate requirements, and, in many cases, considerable personal suffering, manifested in burnout and associated forms of despair."[107] They can become cynical, or resort to self-protective dishonesty, as "a way of blocking the colonization of a pre-given self."[108] Cynicism disengages a worker from his job and colleagues from one other. But cynicism is also a sign that a worker is defending his cognitive liberty: "Cynicism is a way of escaping the encroaching logic of managerialism and provides an inner 'free space' for workers."[109] When DEI trainers encounter cynicism or disengagement, the cause may be weak content or delivery, but it may also be participants defending their own privacy of thought.

Even absent abusive practices, organizational control invites over-surveillance of workers because of the effort needed to enforce policy and compliance, and to assess performance. Tracking attendance at trainings is one new data point, especially where participation is required or assessed in performance reviews.[110] DEI action plans, rubrics, "temperature checks," climate surveys, equity audits, assessments of impacts, and so on, in aggregate contribute to shifting the library's culture away from the academic and toward the bureaucratic.[111] The message they send to the library workers is that their own independent thoughts and autonomy in their jobs is secondary to data-collection tasks.

One example of decentralized, bottom-up control is known in the organizational management literature as "concertive control." Under concertive control, organizations employ cross-functional and self-organizing teams.[112] Library DEI trainings, while potentially administratively sponsored, are often delegated to a team that is responsible for their content and that may also conduct the trainings. Library administrators will naturally delegate DEI training to those who are motivated and well-versed in the ideas. These trainings, and the teams that lead them, are a mechanism for non-hierarchical, concertive control over employees. Teams that do not have authority over library policy may be given wide latitude to develop trainings, especially when they can be based on profession-wide guidelines such as *Cultural Proficiencies*.

Concertive control can exert more power over workers than hierarchical control.[113] The power of peer pressure grows under concertive control and can quickly lead to codification of what began as informal norms. In the training context, this could manifest as expectations for attendance, ground rules (e.g., "brave space" agreements[114]), explicit learning goals, and active participation. Barker describes the tendency to codify and then enforce team expectations: "Team members rewarded themselves for compliance and punished themselves for noncompliance. They had invested their human dignity in the system of their own control… The team members directed and monitored each other's actions."[115] The comment of a librarian interviewed in a study of cultural competence reflects how concertive control feels: "'I've never been told that I have to go to X, Y or Z workshop, but when you're strongly encouraged, it's kind of like you're 'voluntold'."[116]

The dynamic of concertive control is thus a lever of managerial power over employees even if it is not enacted by means of a hierarchical structure. When peer pressure leads to violations of workers' privacy of thought, it is a management and ethical challenge for library administrators. And, just as with culture management programs, excessive concertive control also makes the organization less effective. No library staff can effectively realize their shared goals when there is an internal dynamic pitting some against others, or where there exists a culture of fear and intimidation, even if low-level.[117] The repeatedly demonstrated result of mixing concertive control with DEI ideology is internal dysfunction and distraction from the organization's mission.[118]

Librarians' enthusiastic professions of commitment to DEI precepts have become a "presentational ritual." Such rituals are "mechanisms through which certain organizational members influence how other members are to think and feel—what they want, what they fear, what they should regard as proper and possible, and, ultimately, perhaps, who they are."[119] The presentation ritual serves the third type of organizational control, which is normative control. Normative control is "the attempt to elicit and direct the required efforts of members by controlling the underlying experiences, thoughts, and feelings that guide their actions."[120] Management advocacy of DEI training endorses the presumption that personal beliefs—even those a person

is not conscious of—influence behavior, which justifies library leadership embracing a moral concern for employees. Moral concern encompasses interest in other people's beliefs and behaviors and "an eagerness to improve both."[121] Moral concern also "begins with the conviction that the men and women about whom we are concerned are in a bad state …religiously, politically, ideologically incorrect."[122] Just as librarians understand that what someone reads does not dictate their actions, so we should understand that a worker's thoughts and beliefs do not dictate their behavior at work.[123] As Finn et al. point out, "We can (and do) distinguish between thought, feelings and behavior. Thought does not automatically translate into behavior."[124] Yet moral concern that leads to violation of privacy of thought goes beyond presuming a link between beliefs and behavior. Moral concern, such as it is reflected in *Cultural Proficiencies*, is justified by the presumption that thoughts, ideas, and their expressions are morally equivalent to behavior (i.e., words are harmful, or a form of violence). The moral concern mindset on the part of "therapeutic administrators"[125] takes an instrumentalist but also boundary-violating view of employees. It matters to workers that their employer respects their privacy of thought because it is a moral dimension on which everyone is equal outside the workplace.

The moral concern mindset may also incentivize a university or library administration to adopt a particular political stance. When a political narrative is endorsed by library administration, politics has entered the organization in a qualitatively different way than when colleagues have a conversation over lunch about the events of the day. When an employee perceives there is a "correct" political narrative that differs from their own, there is pressure either to endorse that narrative or keep quiet.[126] The officially endorsed worldview makes its way into the library through trainings, but also public statements on current events, exhibits and programming, and collection decisions (e.g., content warnings, diversity audits, "decolonizing"), among other ways. Once there is a "correct" narrative—especially when it is framed as morally correct—it then becomes harder for an individual to object and more acceptable, or even expected, for the administration to prioritize the narrative in the library.

Honoring separation of the public and private spheres fosters inclusion and enables cooperation across differences. It focuses energy on the common purpose. A library leader should assume that there is diversity of worldviews among employees and communicate that it is everyone's job to defend workers' privacy. Just as the ultimate check on government power is its inability to know everything about its citizens, the ultimate check on managerial overreach is the employer's inability to know the private thoughts of employees. And just as seeking to know, and control, citizens' private thoughts and beliefs is a clear mark of an authoritarian government, a clear mark of an unethical employer is seeking to know or control workers' private thoughts and beliefs.

Library Values

The core values and principles of librarianship guiding how we interact with our user communities should be the same values and principles that guide how we interact with our workplace colleagues. Respecting library workers' privacy of thought is a direct parallel to respecting privacy of reading. Privacy is a value system. Those values, as expressed for American libraries through the ALA's *Library Bill of Rights*, *Code of Ethics*, and *Freedom to Read Statement*, show not only library users but also library workers that the library will safeguard their freedom of thought, belief, and conscience. After all, "Privacy is about respect for persons, not just protection of data."[127] As institutions, libraries are a bulwark against the encroachment of

surveillance in society and are advocates for strengthening privacy culture. In "Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights," ALA "affirms that rights of privacy are necessary for intellectual freedom and are fundamental to the ethical practice of librarianship," stating that "[p]rivacy is the foundation upon which our libraries were built and the reason libraries are such a trusted part of every community."[128] The *Code of Ethics* explicitly addresses library workers. Principle 5 says: "We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions."[129] One of the rights we safeguard is our employees' privacy.

We defend the privacy of thought of everyone in the library, reader and worker, as if they are human rights, which suggests that we believe that they are. In the end, our commitment to the foundational values of librarianship can only be met if we are equally guided by those same values in how we treat the people who work in our libraries. Librarianship's ethic of privacy, just like the inherent moral autonomy of the individual, is a leveling idea; it stands independent of the power of any one individual and is equally deserved by all. Among those who work in the library, the ethical imperative to respect workers' privacy is greater for library managers because an employee has less ability than a library user to defend their own privacy of thought without regard for the personal consequences. Our collective responsibility is to support our libraries in providing ethical library service, which cannot be done without treating library workers ethically.

Conclusion

The core goals of universities—creating and sharing knowledge—are simple but lofty goals and doing them well is essential for building a better society. The university cannot allow itself to become a politically partisan institution; if it does, it betrays its core mission. Academia has lately rediscovered the wisdom articulated in the 1967 University of Chicago Kalven Report: "To perform its mission in the society, a university must sustain an extraordinary environment of freedom of inquiry and maintain an independence from political fashions, passions, and pressures."[130] Like the university, the library is a community with "limited and distinctive purposes," which "cannot insist that all of its members favor a given view of social policy."[131] Both universities and their libraries are long-lasting institutions that have evolved substantially in how they advance their missions. Yet no institution can be long-lasting if the mission itself is co-optable by the people who work there at any given time. Social justice-based DEI trainings adopt a framework that argues that there is "one true way to understand race and racism in America."[132] In the library there is never one true way to understand any complex social and historical topic.

The library is an emergent space. Librarians do not tell library users—or workers—what to think. On the contrary, they are invited to use the library to figure out what they think and then to share it publicly, or not. The library opens its doors to all and does not seek to undertake their moral education.[133] Library workers walk through those same doors every day and should be accorded the same respect. Many people choose to work in libraries to participate in the mission of learning, exploration, thinking, and creating. Library workers are not only participants in the ethos of the library but are charged with persisting over time. In exchange for that important work, they have earned respect for their privacy of thought to the same degree we defend it for all users of our libraries.

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95. ALA, ACRL, ALA, & PLA, "Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity: A Framework," sec. 1.1 and 1.5.
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97. ACRL, "Diversity Standards."
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99. Malenfant, "Proficiencies for Assessment."
100. Appiah, *The Lies That Bind*, 219.
101. See Peter Fleming and AndrÈ Spicer, "'You Can Checkout Anytime, but You Can Never Leave': Spatial Boundaries in a High Commitment Organization," *Human Relations* 57, no. 1 (January 1, 2004): 75–94, https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726704042715; Gideon Kunda, *Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Corporation* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2006).
102. Fleming and Spicer, "'You Can Checkout Anytime,'" 77.
103. Fleming and Spicer, "'You Can Checkout Anytime,'" 79.
104. Kunda, *Engineering Culture*, 12.
105. Fleming and Spicer, "'You Can Checkout Anytime,'" 78–79.
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107. Kunda, *Engineering Culture*, 223.
108. Peter Fleming and Andre Spicer, "Working at a Cynical Distance: Implications for Power, Subjectivity and Resistance," *Organization* 10 no. 1 (February 2003): 157, https://doi.org/10.1177/135050840301000137
109. Fleming and Spicer, "Working at a Cynical Distance," 160.
110. Ely, "Exploring Cultural Competence," 407.
111. ALA, ACRL, ALA, & PLA, "Cultural Proficiencies for Racial Equity: A Framework," sec. 2.2 and 4.1. Some example guidelines and rubrics are gathered here: "C4DISC: Resources" (Coalition for Diversity and Inclusion in Scholarly Communications, August 25, 2021), https://c4disc.pubpub.org/pub/3i691h9o/release/1.
112. James R. Barker, "Tightening the Iron Cage: Concertive Control in Self-Managing Teams," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 38 (1993): 411–12, https://doi.org/10.2307/2393374.
113. Barker, "Tightening the Iron Cage."
114. Twanna Hodge and Courtney McAllister, "The Future of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Librarianship," *The Serials Librarian* 82, no. 1–4 (May 2022): 3–12, https://doi.org/10.1080/0361526X.2022.2018231.
115. Barker, "Tightening the Iron Cage," 425–27, 432.
116. Ely, "Exploring Cultural Competence," 407.
117. "It comes to feel oppressive. I'm not the only one who's uncomfortable. People are terified to speak. People are very afraid." Former University of Virginia Library staff member Michelle Vermillion, as quoted in Bacon, "How Not to Create a Diverse, Welcoming Workplace."
118. See Grim, "Elephant in the Zoom," June 13, 2022, Substack, https://ryangrim.substack.com/p/elephant-in-the-zoom, and Grim, "Meltdowns Have Brought Progressive Advocacy Groups to a Standstill at a Critical

Moment in World History" November 4, 2020, The Intercept, https://theintercept.com/2022/06/13/progressive-organizing-infighting-callout-culture/ for discussion of the tendency of DEI activism to turn an organization inward and away from is mission.

119. Kunda, *Engineering Culture*, 93.

120. Kunda, *Engineering Culture,* 11.

121. Michael Walzer, "On Moral Concern," *Liberties - A Journal of Culture and Politics* 3, no. 2 (Winter 2023): 81, https://libertiesjournal.com/articles/on-moral-concern/.

122. Walzer, "On Moral Concern," 83.

123. The "attitudinal fallacy" is assuming a link between what people think, and say, and what they do. See Colin Jerolmack and Shamus Khan, "Talk Is Cheap: Ethnography and the Attitudinal Fallacy," *Sociological Methods & Research* 43, no. 2 (May 1, 2014): 178–209, https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124114523396.

124. Finn, Wright, and Friedewald, "Seven Types of Privacy," 9.

125. Gutkin, "'An Elaborate New Decorum Has Crept In' David Bromwich on Politics, Manners, and the Therapeutics of Identity."

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