

# When Business Meets Critical Pedagogy:

## Confronting Library Entanglements with Capital through Library Instruction

**Kate Adler**

Director of Library Services,  
Metropolitan College of New York

**Kae Bara Kratcha**

Entrepreneurship & Social Science  
Librarian, Columbia University

**Eamon Tewell**

Head of Research Support &  
Outreach, Columbia University

LOEX 2021 Conference | May 14, 2021 | #LOEX2021

# Today's Session

**01**

**Framing**

**02**

**Institutional Context**

**03**

**Instruction Case Studies**

**04**

**Attendee Activity**

**05**

**Question & Answer**

# About Us

**Kate  
Adler**

Director of Library  
Services, Metropolitan  
College of New York

**Kae Bara  
Kratcha**

Entrepreneurship & Social  
Science Librarian,  
Columbia University

**Eamon  
Tewell**

Head of Research Support  
& Outreach, Columbia  
University

# Land Acknowledgment

We are settlers on the traditional homelands of the Leni Lenape and Canarsee people. New York City, and all of the United States, was founded on the overtaking of land through the attempted genocide of Indigenous people.

Native land underpins everything about life in the United States. Our homes, schools, recreation, agriculture, and businesses are all made possible because Native people were displaced from their ancestral lands.

Learn more and donate:

- First Nations COVID-19 Response Fund: [firstnations.org/covid-19-emergency-response-fund](https://firstnations.org/covid-19-emergency-response-fund)
- Manna-hatta Fund: [mannahattafund.org](https://mannahattafund.org)



01

Framing



## Academic Capitalism

- Defined as “market and market-like behaviors on the part of universities and faculty” (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997)
- “Students have become consumers, colleges have turned into vendors, and research is being commercialized in applied fields marking a new era in higher education as an entrepreneurial institution” (Chait, 2002)
- Encompasses some aspects of neoliberalism, which is the extension of free-market logic (including privatization, deregulation, and eliminating spending on public goods) to all areas of life
- Useful for understanding academic libraries as not functioning separately from or automatically in opposition to the capitalist system, but within and largely in service to it



# Critical Library Pedagogy

- Aims to understand how libraries participate in systems of oppression and find ways for librarians and students to act upon these systems
- Applies critical theory and most often the ideas of critical pedagogy to libraries
- More than just instruction; a way of thinking about our work as a whole, from libraries' educational activities to info lit frameworks to labor
- “Takes into consideration the social, political, economic, and corporate systems that have power and influence over information production, dissemination, access, and consumption” (Lua Gregory and Shana Higgins, *Information Literacy and Social Justice: Radical Professional Praxis*, 2013)

A photograph showing the entrance of an Amazon store. Several people are seen from behind, walking into the store. The store's interior is visible through the glass doors, showing shelves and displays. The text "The Library/Business 'Relationship'" is overlaid on the image in a white serif font.

The Library/Business  
"Relationship"



**Panos Mourdoukoutas**

@PMourdoukoutas

Amazon should  
replace local  
libraries to save  
taxpayers money



**Institutional  
Context**

**02**



**Metropolitan College  
of New York**



**Columbia University**

03

**Instruction  
Case Studies**



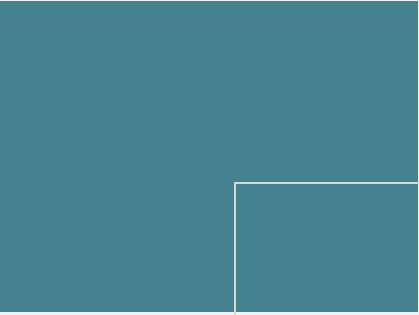
- *Big Questions for Startups Series*

- Challenges

- Future opportunities



# Workshops

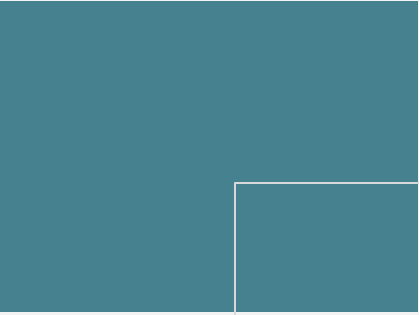


- Monthly roundtable discussions with a reading, a brief presentation, and a facilitated conversation

- Opportunity to discuss economic justice: topics included black wealth, reparations, and the cooperative economy



## Critical Conversations: Library Roundtables



- Another opportunity to insert critical information literacy into business librarianship

- Useful setting to engage in “critical reference dialog”



# Consultations

04

*Attendee  
Activity*



# Activity Instructions

1. Visit the following Padlet link:

[tinyurl.com/CriticalLibraryPadlet](https://tinyurl.com/CriticalLibraryPadlet)

2. Consider:

What are some potential instructional approaches you can (or already) take to interrupt library entanglements with capitalism?

3. Add your thoughts and ideas

Question &  
Answer

05

# Recommended Reading and Slide Credits

- Dave Ellenwood, “[‘Information Has Value’: The Political Economy of Information Capitalism](#),” *In the Library with the Lead Pipe* (2020).
- Karen P. Nicholson, “[‘Taking Back’ Information Literacy: Time and the One-Shot in the Neoliberal University](#),” *Critical Library Pedagogy Handbook Volume 1*, eds. Kelly McElroy and Nicole Pagowsky (Chicago: ACRL Press, 2016), 25-39.
- Ilana Stonebraker, Caitlan Maxwell, Kenny Garcia, and Jessica Jerrit, “[Realizing Critical Business Information Literacy: Opportunities, Definitions, and Best Practices](#),” *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship* 22, no. 2 (2017), 135-148.

# Contact Us

**Kate Adler:** [kadler@mcny.edu](mailto:kadler@mcny.edu)

**Kae Bara Kratcha:** [kk3344@columbia.edu](mailto:kk3344@columbia.edu)

**Eamon Tewell:** [ect2160@columbia.edu](mailto:ect2160@columbia.edu), [@eamontewell](https://twitter.com/eamontewell)

**Presentation slides:** [tinyurl.com/CriticalLibraryBusiness](https://tinyurl.com/CriticalLibraryBusiness)

LOEX 2021 Conference | May 14, 2021 | #LOEX2021