

SPACE INVASION IN THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY: A POSTSTRUCTURAL  
ANALYSIS USING DISCOURSE, POWER/KNOWLEDGE, AND BIOPOWER

A Dissertation  
by  
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Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
at Appalachian State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 2021  
Educational Leadership Doctoral Program  
Reich College of Education

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## **Abstract**

### **SPACE INVASION IN THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY: A POSTSTRUCTURAL ANALYSIS USING DISCOURSE, POWER/KNOWLEDGE, AND BIOPOWER**

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This dissertation is a poststructural analysis of the trend of space utilization and design in academic libraries. Using post qualitative inquiry and a method of plugging in, this study offers a critique of the library science literature on space, identifying binary relationships and power circulating in both library patrons and library staff. Poststructural concepts of discourse, deconstruction, power/knowledge, and biopower, in connection with the library science literature, work to identify these binary relationships and power relations that alter subjectivities and practices of patrons and library staff. One central finding is that numerous discourses are working to renovate spaces based on a consumerist approach focused on technology and social gathering, as well as a perceived obsolescence that administrators experience in future planning. In addition to calling for leadership that follows poststructural methods, this dissertation analyzes how power and power relations have the potential to rearrange how patrons and librarians situate themselves in library

spaces. Finally, in studying the dominant discourse of space, the analysis also examines how library spaces operate as a site of biopower. Transitioning to Foucault's notion of biopower uncovers how the library population of faculty, students, and community members, as well as library employees, become controlled and regulated through the normalization of discourses on space. Because space changes to libraries are developed through discourse and power, and poststructuralism interprets language as being socially constructed, there is a need to deconstruct the "truths" that have gained traction making library space part of a dominant set of binaries.

## **Acknowledgments**

For the past six years I have received much support from loved ones and friends. I would like to thank my family for their love and patience while I worked towards this accomplishment. I especially thank my amazing wife, Stacy, who offered her love, support, and encouragement. The long Tuesday nights were a challenge, but one that was worth it. I thank my two wonderful daughters, Myra and Clara, for their understanding and the constant joy and laughter they bring to my life. Remember to always strive for those hard-to-reach goals and you will realize they can easily be grasped with diligence and patience. I am very fortunate to have benefited from the strong support of my parents and late grandmother, Dr. Betty Brumback. Dr. Betty never let me forget how important it was to pursue education and to instill the value of learning in my children. My mother and father, Joyce and Tommy, also showed me how important it is to work hard and slow down occasionally. I am most grateful to Mom for her love, friendship, kindness, and support. She is my North Star, unwavering and bright, always offering words of encouragement and love.

I would like to thank many important family and friends who also had a profound influence on my life including Ralph McAllister, Barbara Hoffman, Brad Hoffman, Carol Goldrick, Cyle Goldrick, Beau and Christen Reyenga; Mark Litchford, Derrick Wolfe, Annie and Richard Combs; Chris Gant; Ben Beecher, Nathan Logan, Sally Goodman and the CCCC Library; Garrison Libby; Josh Hodges; Dr. Zach Marshall; Beverly Tetterton; Dr. Jamie and Molly Russell; Niel and Melissa Brooks; Professor John Abbott; Professor Kelly

Rhodes; John Wiswell; Kelly and Daniel McCallister; Mary Jordan; Steve and Mandy Sloan; and Dr. Alex Tse.

To Dr. Alecia Jackson, thank you for your suggestions and dedication to teaching poststructuralism and post-qualitative inquiry. Learning how to incorporate theory into my work has opened many doors and I look forward to exploring new ideas and philosophies for many years. I also want to thank Dr. Kim Becnel and Dr. Mira Waits who brought their thoughtful perspectives to the Committee. They provided me with excellent ideas as well as challenged me to think differently about parts of the dissertation. Having a supportive Committee through the pandemic was very helpful and I appreciate the time and effort each member gave.

Thank you to Dr. Rick Elmore, who offered several insights on Derrida and Foucault's philosophies in addition to the dissertation experience in general. I would also like to express my gratitude to library colleagues who offered support, especially Professor Allan Scherlen, who helped me push boundaries and challenge discourses. I offer my appreciation to the faculty who were part of the Educational Leadership Ed.D. program at Appalachian State University for their commitment to leadership and instruction.

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Sherrill Martin from UNCW for her support and encouragement when I embarked on a path of finding myself years ago. She believed in me and because of this I was able to find much success. I also appreciate Dr. Julie Hubbert, Dr. Peter Hoyt, and Christopher Berg for their previous instruction and guidance.

Finally, I want to congratulate my doctoral program co-hort members (Cohort 24) for their hard work and the many class hours we shared together including Dr. Chris Gilbert, Dr.

Elaine Gray, and Dr. Sarah Sexton. I also wish soon-to-be Dr. Kelly McCallister the best of luck as she works through the dissertation process.



## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to two loved ones I said goodbye to in 2019: my grandmother, Dr. Elisabeth M. Brumback, M.D., who always supported my educational endeavors, and my oldest brother, Thomas Wayne McAllister, J.D., who taught me the importance of travel and laughter.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Academic libraries have historically been storage houses of knowledge carrying the mission of providing access to information for all. New technological and scientific advances, as well as reduced funding for humanities, have fueled emerging trends that are reshaping this intellectual and social institution. Some of these trends include additions of technology-based programs such as makerspaces (Davis, 2018) and technology laboratories (Enis, 2019); removing print book stacks to make room for collaborative learning spaces (Haapanen et al., 2015); and an inundation of electronic resources including ebooks (Rogers, 2018). The main focus of renovating library spaces is bringing about swift change to academic libraries. Many library leaders feel obligated to alter library spaces to pursue emerging trends, with some arguing that these age-old institutions (i.e., libraries) could become obsolete in the digital age unless adaptation occurs (Herring, 2014). The assertion that libraries must stay ahead of the technology curve to survive has altered the original mission of providing curriculum and research needs to university faculty and students, especially in humanities disciplines but also in other areas. Money spent on space renovation projects results in potential reductions to both print and digital resources (i.e., journal packages, ebooks, databases) that all disciplinary areas rely on. Various power dynamics have also been created where a select few, usually library administrators, determine the modern-day library mission, space, collections and services (Scherlen & McAllister, 2019).

The cultural shift, which invades all spaces of the library, manifests itself in many research areas from library leadership to collections, allowing for multiple binary oppositions to emerge. Binary oppositions, such as print/electronic materials and furniture/collections funding, are ways in which language contributes to the production of discourse and power relations. These binaries function to create and reinforce an unequal relationship dominated by one side that benefits from the prevailing discourse. Sarup (1993) writes, “Derrida suggests that we should try to break down the oppositions by which we are accustomed to think ...” (p. 38). Whether we are thinking about inside/outside, writing/speech, or strong/weak, Derrida explains there is a tendency in binary oppositions for one term to become superior to the other, thus creating a hierarchy. For example, the either/or (binary) scenario translates to many libraries weeding their print collections to build new seating space for students, resulting in a privileging of discourse, which then produces certain subject positions and practices of patrons and library employees. The emerging binary opposition of privileging seats (and furniture) over print books (and stacks) poses a problem, especially for researchers who rely on humanities materials. There is also a binary opposition of print/electronic books as e-book technology continues to evolve and become more prevalent. Without print books, many humanists find themselves restricted as they must either wait for research materials to arrive at their libraries via interlibrary loan, or face a disadvantage to serendipitously discover materials that would have otherwise been on the shelf near items they were seeking (Woolwine, 2014). However, this print/e-book binary points to the ways in which binary oppositions are not fixed and can fall apart at any time.

Technology does work as an asset for collections in multiple ways such as providing remote access to journal articles, ebooks, and fast keyword searching of texts, yet despite the

belief that most students want more collaborative spaces and technology, recent research suggests that students actually prefer print books for conducting classwork (Baron et al., 2017; Mizrachi et al., 2018). Still, librarians mainly concentrate on trends when planning library spaces and services oftentimes ignoring the few examples from library science literature that provide counter ideologies to those dominant discourses on redesigning library spaces based on technological and group study needs.

Thus, a problem is created in academic libraries where certain library practices and subjectivities of patrons are privileged based on discourses that reshape the library spaces, collections, and overall mission. Patrons who thrive on using technology, who prefer to study in collaborative spaces, or whose disciplines call for more collaborative work benefit from these changes whereas patrons who work best in solo, quiet areas, and those who rely on print books, become disadvantaged as changes take place to physical spaces. The funding required to renovate spaces also has potential effects on overall collection budgets needed to provide research support to faculty and students. In these scenarios, we discover competing discourses that expose the instability of binary oppositions as well as ways in which power circulates to keep multiple discourses in play. In order to discover a multiplicity of meanings and the potential to critically analyze issues of space, collections, and technology, it is important to consider the educational issues in the context of a dynamic framework that opens up new ways of thinking. Poststructuralism allows one to theorize these types of problems that are typically interpreted as either/or situations confusing the academic library mission, producing power relations, and creating political struggles. It is important to locate where multiplicity is closed down rather than opened to discover new ideas that would otherwise be limited in a more positivistic or other traditional research approach.

By critically analyzing which dominant discourses are working in a relationship of binary, oppositional thought, I hope to expose new ideas about how we think about space and connected trends that affect academic libraries as well as how these trends extend to library patrons. These unchallenged dominant discourses in library science pose a great danger to society given the nature of the library as an important social institution for democracy. In light of studies that approximate most librarians as introverted individuals (Milford & Wisotzke, 2011), and my having witnessed firsthand the power of a dominant discourse at national library conferences, it is necessary to question and critique individuals and groups who state, with confidence, their knowledge as fact as they argue for a vision of the future library based on collaborative spaces, reduced print collections, and new spaces such as makerspaces. Because I have witnessed these power dynamics and binary relationships at play, I will analyze library trends using theories of Michel Foucault. The work of other theorists such as Henri Lefebvre and Jacques Derrida will also inform my analysis as I deconstruct the library science literature and consider issues of space. In poststructuralism, language is never a constant; words are defined differently by the individual speaking or writing them as well as by the person who is reading or hearing the language. Sarup (1993) cites Eagleton who said, "It is an illusion for me to believe that I can ever be fully present to you in what I say or write, because to use signs at all entails my meaning being always somehow dispersed, divided and never quite at one with itself" (p. 34). So it is important to consider meaning as contextual and unstable in order to question and reevaluate research that offers formal conclusions. The purpose of this analysis is to use poststructural theory to identify binary, oppositional relationships at work in the area of space, and to produce a deep analysis of related trends in order to release multiple meanings and new ideas on the way

librarians approach the planning and delivery of library collections, services, and the overall mission.

### **Research Questions**

The works of Foucault will be instrumental in this study as his research and writings on power and truth in discourse are unmatched. Through rigorous genealogies of prisons, sexuality, institutions and more, Foucault managed to develop a unique approach to studying problems through a lens of how power functioned in discourse throughout history:

The important thing here, I believe, is that truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power: contrary to a myth whose history and functions would repay further study, truth isn't the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true...

(Foucault, 1980, p. 131)

Thus using Foucauldian analysis to observe what "truths" exist in dominant library discourses will be useful as part of a framework, and one which has seldom been employed in the field of library science. These "regular effects" of power which become accepted are noticed throughout the library science literature producing "multiple forms of constraint" as they expand and multiply. In order to critique some of the important library science discourses, I use Foucauldian analysis, which, along with Derrida's deconstruction, reveal unstable conditions and dominant discourses. The use of poststructural methods, such as



these, creates new strategies and discourses for approaching problems academic libraries face. My research questions for this dissertation include the following:

1. What are the dominating discourses surrounding academic library trends and how do these discourses vie for the material landscape of libraries today? By the word “material,” I mean the physical and digital areas of libraries in addition to metaphysical areas and discursive practices—those phenomena that interact with the tangible such as collections and space.
2. How does biopower function in the 21st-century library? More specifically, how are subjects made and populations controlled through the deployment of biopower?
3. How do power/knowledge and biopower dynamics function to produce and constrain what a modern library should look like, what purpose it should serve, and who should be involved in the planning of the library as an institution?

These questions serve as a starting point for many additional topics about relationships of power/knowledge and biopower that will arise throughout my pursuit to critique the dominant discourses in academic library trends of space design. In the next section, I will discuss how major theoretical areas and concepts will inform the research project.

My dissertation uses a poststructural framework, which is based on the critique of binary oppositions that are created within a structure. Poststructuralism allows one to critically analyze how a material object, such as a text, comes to be produced by certain systems that count as knowledge. The types of knowledge that are produced, and often accepted, through discourses become analyzed using a post qualitative framework which does not rely on traditional methods of data collection and interpretation. Rather, my approach incorporates a constant crossover of reading and writing based on theoretical and

library science literature on the topics of space and collections. The theoretical framework consists of Foucauldian analysis, deconstruction, and plugging in (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) the literature that reveals certain trends based on binary relationships and discourse. All of these theoretical elements, including Foucault's power/knowledge and biopower, will be discussed in the next chapter.

Several trends in the field of library science are quickly reshaping the academic library from a quiet place for research to a bustling, collaborative venue featuring coffee shops, makerspaces, and commons areas. Another trend that encompasses all of the new additions to library spaces is to focus on the future (Hines & Crowe, 2017; Latimer, 2018; O'Donnell et al., 2017). Fear of obsolescence causes administrators to take risks, oftentimes based on the literature being published or presented at conferences. While these trends may bring about benefits to some patrons, it also has the potential to negatively affect those who rely on the library for independent study and use of scholarly materials. This is because multiple discourses form around the popular trends that are characterized in a positive manner, while the other side of these binary relationships becomes described with verbiage that further causes suppression. Examples of growing discourses can be found in works that describe books as simply taking up space (Latimer, 2018), or the importance of creating library spaces based on a merchandising or consumerist approach (Mathews & Soistmann, 2016). Because changes to library space connects to all areas of the library, the possibility exists for patrons and library employees to be affected in different ways. As subjectivities are shaped based on the evolving space changes to libraries, the potential to privilege certain discourses over others arises. This study is necessary to critique the discourses of space and how they produce not only dominant practices in the academic library but also the

subjectivities of patrons and library employees. Analyzing the trend of space utilization through a poststructural framework, which is seldom used in library science, offers new ways to imagine problems as well as ways to challenge dominant discourses. Rather than conduct a more common qualitative or quantitative approach to the issue of space and academic libraries, my choice to pursue an emerging theoretical framework and methodology provides an opportunity to analyze discourse at a structural level by plugging in the theory of Foucault and library science literature. In utilizing this unique approach, with an emphasis on theory, I do need to situate my work within my own experience and subjectivity which requires explanation.

I currently work as the Coordinator of Collection Management at Appalachian State University. For six years leading up to this position, I served as Humanities Librarian working with many departments including English, history, art, and theatre and dance. My research during those years led me to become aware of some patterns taking place across academic libraries. Although many libraries were continuing to weed their print collections, I did not fully realize the amount of mass weeding occurring at such a high rate. Undergoing a similar project to other academic libraries across the country to remove books and add new spaces such as a makerspace and new furniture and seating areas for collaboration, I became curious about why these rapid changes were taking place. I began to notice multiple layers of power that were present in projects to reshape academic library spaces. Much of the reasoning for changing library spaces was based on discourse and power relations. Several relational dynamics were at play including those between librarians/patrons, library administrators/librarians, and more. While working towards my Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership, I was fortunate to take a class focusing on Michel Foucault and his

writings on discourse and power. The intersection of my work and doctoral studies led me to begin looking more critically at the issues that were causing confusion both inside and outside of the academic library.

By conducting this poststructural study of space renovation and the effects it has on areas such as collections and other services, I believe an important contribution will be made to the field of library science. My hope is that more librarians will develop post qualitative approaches in conducting library science research. The benefits of incorporating theory with the literature allows for numerous possibilities that may not have otherwise been discovered following traditional library science studies. Because there is a lack of theoretical discussion that takes place within the field of library science, research studies tend to be both insular and supportive of dominant discourses. Although my poststructural approach uses post qualitative inquiry, which will be further described later, this often requires the researcher to accept a degree of uncomfortableness by challenging a dominant discourse. In many ways, it is similar to traveling to an unfamiliar place, not knowing what to expect or what may happen, but carrying with you the feeling of hope and excitement.

### **Overview of Dissertation**

The dissertation includes six chapters including two main analytical chapters using Foucault's theories of discourse, power/knowledge, and biopower to think through the library science issue of space and its effects on both individual services and patrons, as well as library workers, and populations including the university community who rely on the library for academic study.

This chapter has provided an introduction to the dissertation and the issue of space in academic libraries in addition to elaborating on the research questions that connect to the

theories of discourse, power/knowledge, and biopower. What follows in Chapter 2 is information on the major theoretical and conceptual areas used in the study. This includes a discussion of poststructuralism as well as important theoretical concepts incorporated throughout the paper such as deconstruction and Foucauldian analysis using his theories of discourse, power/knowledge, biopower, and space. In addition, I discuss select library science literature in tandem with the theoretical concepts to provide a literature review that works to identify and analyze issues of space simultaneously. Chapter 3 transitions to the methodology section explaining how post qualitative inquiry, an emerging research approach, allowed me to capture a work experience and rethink it using theory and analysis to open up new meaning. I discuss how a mass weeding project at my own library produced questions and sparked interest in helping me develop this dissertation topic of library space, fueled by reading and writing alongside the theories of Foucault.

The two analytic chapters are 4 and 5. In Chapter 4, I analyze how power operates on individuals and through discourse to reshape library spaces. Reflecting on the effects of discourse and power/knowledge that produce both subjectivities as well as socially produced spaces, I critique library science literature with Foucault's theory of space (heterotopia) to reveal binaries such as current/outdated and seating/collections among others to question how these trends are affecting the material landscape of academic libraries. Chapter 5 is an analysis of biopower, Foucault's term for understanding how a population becomes a managed resource by the institution or state it serves. This chapter transitions the reader from power residing in the individual to power that has a normalizing effect on the entire population, in this case being the library patrons made up of university faculty and students in addition to all employees and administrators of the library. The literature reveals a

regularization of academic libraries moving to renovate spaces based on consumerism, group seating areas, and technology. In thinking through Foucault's concept of biopower, it becomes important to question why and how these changes are occurring.

In Chapter 6, the conclusion of the dissertation, I connect the poststructural study to important issues in educational leadership. Given that leadership in socially produced spaces has the ability to open up or close off meaning, and also considering how spaces of leadership can produce certain subjectivities by arranging and rearranging the way in which a population uses or works in the library, allows for a new discussion based on educational leadership. In addition, I give suggestions for future inquiry in this final chapter.

## Chapter Two

### **A Poststructural Framework: Major Theoretical and Conceptual Areas**

This chapter combines both the theoretical and conceptual framework to summarize important theoretical concepts and to begin analyzing how these concepts interact with the literature. Thus, the literature review on academic libraries is constructed throughout this chapter as part of the theoretical explanatory process. In thinking about my research questions using a number of poststructural theories to both identify and critique trends of space, I provide an overview of several poststructural theories including the following: deconstruction, différance, power/knowledge, discourse, biopower, and space. As I outline thematic issues connected with the trends of space in academic libraries, I do so through the lens of the aforementioned theoretical concepts. This allows me to introduce a web of ideas to examine multiple areas of the library as well as all populations who use and work in the library. The significance of this study is outlined at the end of the chapter where I discuss how the research questions help guide my poststructural inquiry.

Poststructuralism is a movement in philosophy that developed in counter to and around the same time as structural linguistics during the mid-twentieth century. Many associate poststructuralism with the 20th-century French philosophers, and as a term that the Yale school attributed to Derrida and others' works. Cristina Neesham (2018) explains that poststructuralists seek to critique the “dominant (positivist) approaches to ‘scientific’ knowledge production ... interrogating taken-for-granted assumptions about the ways in which people write and read science” (p. 51, 2018). The word “science” in this case is used in a traditional sense meaning the production of knowledge as truth (Agger, 1991; Alvesson

& Deetz, 2006). Sarup explains that there are some similarities between poststructuralism and structuralism including the desire to dissolve the subject, critique historicism, critique meaning, and critique philosophy (1993, pp. 2-3). Yet we see a profound difference in structuralism and poststructuralism, which is located in how we interpret meaning and language.

### **Language in Poststructuralism**

Swiss linguist and semiotician Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) is credited for the development of structuralism because of his theories on language. In his *Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure explains, “A language is a system in which all the elements fit together, and in which the value of any one element depends on the simultaneous coexistence of all the others” (2013, p. 134). Saussure’s linguistic theory claims there is a signifier (sound or written image) and something that is signified (meaning). These two elements form a predictable understanding of language as a unit known as the sign. In addition, each sign derives its meaning from its difference from all of the other signs in the structure, i.e., the language system. The word “book” thus derives meaning from its relationship to other words in the language system such as “computer” or “magazine.” One can see how meaning and the way in which language is employed can be brought into question as words become interpreted differently. Saussure’s stable theory of the sign differs from Jacques Lacan’s language theory where discourse becomes more important. “In a Lacanian view of language a signifier always signifies another signifier; no word is free from metaphoricity (a metaphor is one signifier in place of another)” (Sarup, 1993, p. 10-11).

Poststructuralists use these new approaches to language to examine the notion that words have no real intrinsic meaning and language is socially constructed, as well as a site of



political struggle. Language develops in various contexts from the time it is conceived to the time it is received by others. This does not mean that language cannot be interpreted by people who perceive a similar meaning, but that language does not exist in a closed system of structure where there is no room for interpretation. This will become clearer as I discuss Derrida's contributions to language. It is important to consider the notion that language does not always simply refer to a concept, but is deferred to other words and ideas that have been socially constructed and passed along from generation to generation. As Sarup (1993) explains: "While structuralism sees truth as being 'behind' or 'within' a text, post-structuralism stresses the interaction of reader and text as a productivity. In other words, reading has lost its status as a passive consumption of a product to become performance" (p.3). Derrida took language theory further by explaining his belief that no relationship exists between the signifier and signified. Thus the idea of Saussure's sign as a unit breaks down under Derrida and meaning is never completely fixed.

### **Différance**

In his lecture delivered to the Société Française de Philosophie in 1968, Derrida introduces his notion of *différance*, a word he invented to break away from the word "difference." He develops *différance* as he is critiquing language as a structure. For Derrida, it is important to not only critique the structure, but to also assume that it does not function properly. The word *différance*, for example, derives from the Latin *differre* and takes on two different meanings: to defer and to differ. Derrida created this word to illustrate a number of points, one being that speech has often been privileged over writing, yet when pronouncing the word "différance," one would hear no audible distinction from the common word "difference." Derrida's (1972) word *différance* is used to defer to something else, taking on a

“temporizing mediation” (p. 8). In the sense of using the word to differ, or to be distinctly different from something else, the spatial rises to importance. But the word *différance* seeks to do more than serve these two relationships of time and space. Derrida (1968) explains:

*Différance* is the systematic play of differences, of the traces of differences, of the *spacing* by means of which elements are related to each other. This spacing is simultaneously active and passive (the *a* of *différance* indicates this indecision as concerns activity and passivity, that which cannot be governed by or distributed between the terms of this opposition) production of the intervals without which the “full” terms would not signify, would not function. (p. 27)

Multiple meanings and relationships can be formed from the word as we reach beyond the normal limitations of language as a structure. Sarup (1993) has an excellent metaphor to put this into perspective asking us to consider the manner in which children ask questions, or when we look up words in dictionaries. Sarup explains: “Indeed, there is no fixed distinction between signifiers and signified. If one answers a child’s question or consults a dictionary, one soon finds that one sign leads to another and so on, indefinitely” (p. 33).

Connecting these language theories to the library science literature of space can illustrate how librarians sometimes falls into the trap of binary thinking. Considering Derrida’s concept of *différance* while reading Watson’s (2017) article “Space in the Academic Library of the 21st Century: Trends and Ideas” reveals where language and meaning can become closed. In discussing a shift in the way libraries contribute to learning, Watson (2017) claims:

With this shift comes a second most important change of perspective—consumers in the modern library become producers. As Dempsey (2010) suggests the outside-in

library of the past, that collects resources in a place for users to use, needs to become the inside-out library that enables users to become producers within the library making their products available beyond the confines of the building—development of the library ‘collection’ then becomes both acquisition and production. (Section 3)

Watson has reinforced a binary, which appears in the work of Dempsey, where the library has traditionally been understood as a place that collects resources for users’ needs as opposed to a useful “modern library” that allows patrons to produce work. The binary opposition becomes producer/consumer, and within this tight construction, the producer is positive and active, while the consumer is referred to in a negative, passive manner. The production of knowledge, he assumes, has been limited because library patrons only have the option to consume information inside a library. It is not clear how Dempsey or Watson arrive at this understanding given that libraries have offered electronic resources and used a system to check *out* materials for decades. Watson’s article focuses on the need for open spaces as he elaborates on the importance of social learning and the need for collaborative space in libraries. The main point is that the language exercised can be interpreted in many different ways and an endless number of connections to other language could lead to multiple interpretations.

The above example also highlights Derrida’s idea of the simultaneous “active and passive” play of differences. Watson’s passive assertion that libraries should become more producer than consumer fails to acknowledge that patrons need materials to consume in order to produce. With a lack of research materials or even technological equipment, students would be limited in their abilities to produce. This example reveals space has become such a

dominant trend that authors can often conceal their calls for new collaborative spaces, technology labs, and reduced collections through their closed language.

In returning to my research questions, one can see that a dominating discourse that privileges space and technology over other library resources such as collections has emerged to change the material landscape of libraries. The use of language also reveals how power/knowledge dynamics function in an attempt to define the “modern” library and its purpose. In addition, the passive consumption of library science literature surrounding these trends weakens part of the population (library patrons), which depends on libraries for consumption of information such as scholarly resources. By privileging technology and collaborative spaces, multiple problems have been created that have an impact on patrons who rely on academic library collections, services, and more.

These ideas which arrived from language theory connect well to Foucault, who also considers language in history, agency, and the institution being studied. In the next section I will consider Foucault’s theories of discourse, power/knowledge, and biopower. Foucault dedicated much of his life to researching various institutions such as the evolution of punishment and prisons as well as psychology and the concept of madness. Using his theories to inform my analysis will allow me to identify dominant discourses of trends in the library science literature, reveal how power/ knowledge is working in these discourses, and uncover how biopower functions in the 21st-century library.

### **Foucauldian Analysis**

Foucault was interested in how power functioned and what effects it had on the body as well as what subjects it produced. Rather than performing what historians might understand as a genealogical study tracing historical events, he attempted to cross disciplines

and research power relations, which subjected or produced forces in the individual body and population. “That is to say, there may be a ‘knowledge’ of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning, and a mastery of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them: this knowledge and this mastery constituted what might be called the political technology of the body,” Foucault said (1995, p. 26). In considering the approach of understanding power relations from *Discipline & Punish*, we can begin to see how it would be useful to incorporate a similar approach to researching complex institutions at a deeper level rather than focusing on “grand teleological narratives” that summarize and generalize (Gutting, 2005, p. 46).

When thinking about libraries as an institution, one may wonder what use it would be to think of libraries in relation to grand teleological narratives. There is a great difference between the mission that academic libraries offer and how this mission becomes determined. If the mainstream objective of libraries is to offer designer learning spaces and technology, what does this mean for libraries that do not necessarily have a strong focus on scientific, technology-based curricula? For example, Georgia Tech University or North Carolina State University may have strengths in science, technology, and engineering, whereas liberal arts schools may hold a different set of strengths. Furthermore, public libraries who serve entire communities would have a different mission from academic libraries, which are mostly dedicated to faculty and student research. Thus if all academic libraries fall into the trappings of trying to pursue similar trends in light of grand teleological narratives, it could be detrimental to a particular university’s research and teaching strength that may lie outside of STEM-related programs. Many of the changes that take place in academic libraries are supported by literature and various discourses about space and technology. One of the key

concepts Foucault writes about is discourse and how it operates. In the next section, I will discuss how Foucault defines discourse and the manner in which they apply the term as part of their respective theoretical approaches.

### **Discourse**

“Discourse” is a term used frequently in the work of Foucault. Considering how discourse of spoken and written language critically relates to its subject, as well as how it possesses the potential to assume or reject a type of “responsibility” seems to be well-aligned with how Foucault thinks about discourse in his work *Power/Knowledge* (1980). Discursive practices go beyond the language that is used by individuals, even constraining, stopping, or enabling what is said. This study of power relations and how subjects are discursively produced over time is an influential work in critical discourse. “Foucauldians refer to these systems of ‘discourses,’ emphasizing that they are not merely bodies of ideas, ideologies, or other symbolic formulations but also working attitudes, modes of address, terms of reference, and courses of action suffused into social practices” Holstein (2018) explains (p. 398). Because Foucault understands discourse to mean more than just the spoken or written word, it is important to look at the “social practices” and other happenings in all spectrums of a field such as academic libraries. One may consider the library science literature, personal experiences working in a library, or presentations at a library science conference to name just a few pieces of the discursive body.

Foucault’s notion of discourse leads us to two important theories he developed, power/knowledge and biopower. These are two approaches to poststructuralism that I employ in addressing some important issues of space and their effects on academic libraries,

in addition to moving my research towards a level of thinking about discourse at the level of social practices, which Holstein suggests.

### **Power/Knowledge**

Foucault studied power relations and how power produced different types of knowledge through its construction. He contemplated which subjects created “knowledge” and which subjects were produced as a result of that knowledge. Throughout Foucault’s oeuvre, he developed an interest in how truth relates to knowledge, and what must occur in order for “truths” to be produced as a basis for fact. Furthermore, he connects these relations of truth and knowledge to the subject and power relations that are always occurring at the level of the individual (Foucault, 1972, pp.131-132). My research question connects to Foucault’s theory of power/knowledge, especially when considering the level of the individual where discourse and power are produced: *How does power/knowledge produce and constrain what a modern library should look like, what purpose it should serve, and who should be involved in the planning of the library as an institution?* One aspect of Foucault’s work explains how discourse is revealed at the level of the individual. Let us analyze an example of how knowledge is produced through a dominant discourse. An online search for “twenty first century libar\*” of the journal *Library Administration & Management* from 2016-2019 returned a number of results including an article titled “Measures of Change in Academic Library Behavior” (Lewis, 2017). Here is the abstract:

The article offers measures which can be used in ascertaining the organizational behavior in academic libraries, which will focus on collections and the staff manning them. The proposed measures are subsumed under the goals of retiring the legacy print collection and redevelop library space [sic], changing collection strategy,

supporting changes in the scholarly system, and emphasizing inside-out activities. (p. 1)

One might ask: how do power relations circulate to produce knowledge and sustain dominant discourses of library space? Individuals do not necessarily wield power to further an ideology, but power moves through individuals via their common language used as part of the discursive field. Administrators are one source of active participants in the discursive field. The earlier quotation from Watson's article on space in libraries puts forth the idea of an "inside out" library. In the above abstract by Lewis, we again see language being used to support the enhancement of library space, as well as other practices such as "the goal(s) of retiring the legacy print collection" (Lewis, 2017). The language becomes stronger throughout the article as Lewis claims: "Goal 1: Retire the legacy print collection and redevelop library space. This goal is important because it reflects on the use of one of the library's primary assets—its space. Space is the most valuable non-human resource on any campus" (p. 2).

Information resources consumed for thinking and creating new ideas were once regarded as the most valuable resource for students and faculty. The shifting discourse reveals power relations that have developed since the turn of the 21st century and gained momentum with each claim to knowledge. There are ongoing power struggles in library space that pit fundamental resources, such as print books in the humanities, against the desire to have innovative spaces to offer users a new experience (Dubicki, 2008). Furthermore, space could also be thought of beyond the practical definition of dimensions to move towards including expanded ideas related to time and the movement of people and data. Numerous articles, for example, focus on the number of library visitors and the number of seats in



libraries (Khoo et al., 2016; Loder, 2008; Oliveira, 2016; Torres & Paul, 2019). My first research question is, *What are the dominating discourses surrounding academic library trends and how do these discourses change the material landscape of libraries today?*

Considering my first research question, the dominant discourse changing libraries today is based on space redesign and technology. The counting of library visitors and planning of ways to fill spaces with more seats also hints at an empirical, numbers-driven approach to rethink the library mission.

Jackson and Mazzei (2012) cite Bové (1990) in explaining that:

...discourse provides a privileged entry into the poststructuralism mode of analysis precisely because it is the organized and regulated, as well as the regulating and constituting, functions of language that it studies: its aim is to describe the surface linkages between power, knowledge, institutions, intellectuals, the control of populations, and the modern state as these intersect in the functions of systems of thought. (p. 50)

The previous description explains a Foucauldian view of discourse and discursive fields where power and knowledge, discourse, and biopower have all contributed in reshaping how we design and develop libraries. Foucault's work on discourse during the 1960s surrounds various interactions between people and institutions and the power dynamics at play. He believed power could also produce a particular discourse about a subject (Foucault 1978; Foucault, 1980). Therefore, it is relevant to ponder what discourses in library trends are produced from power and how this both produces and constrains subjectivities of librarians, patrons, and the library population at large.

What is useful about Foucault for my research is his definition of power. Foucault, unlike Marx, did not believe in power as a possession, or something intentional. Nietzsche's work had an important influence on Foucault creating a deep interest in power relations. "He replaced a judicial, negative conception of power with a technical and strategic one," Sarup (1993) explains pointing to Foucault's important works of *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*. Rather than focus on power as a "right, a commodity, and something that is transferable," Foucault said power needed to be studied to see why its relations, processes, practices, effects, and subjects were made:

Let us not, therefore, ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviors, etc. (Foucault, 1980, p. 97)

The above quotation comes from a lecture Foucault delivered in 1976, later published in *Power/Knowledge*. In thinking about how power relations and discourse can shape academic libraries and the emerging trends that have developed, one discerns that subjugation and the production of docile bodies who fall prey to the governance and prevalence of discourse becomes concerning. The discursive dominance and multiplying effects of power on individuals evolves into something more, which Foucault defines as biopower.

### **Biopower**

Foucault developed the term biopower to explain how populations are controlled. He arrived at the idea of biopower, which is also referred to as biopolitics in either a similar or slightly different vein, following his studies on individuals and power as well as

power/knowledge. His earlier writings on disciplining the individual body through means of surveillance, punishment, and training, shifted to a multiplicity of effects that had consequences for the “global mass” (2003, p. 242).

Biopolitics’ other field of intervention will be a set of phenomena some of which are universal, and some of which are accidental but which can never be completely eradicated, even if they are accidental. They have similar effects in that they incapacitate individuals, put them out of the circuit or neutralize them. (p. 244)

In other words, the effects of biopower, or biopolitics, take place in a large enough number of individuals that entire populations can be rendered docile and oppressed. To reiterate one of my research questions: *How does biopower function in the 21st-century library? More specifically, how are subjects made and populations controlled through the deployment of biopower?* It is easy for one to interpret discourse being solely an ideology, but when one analyzes it at a deeper level, at the level of biopower being something that “...has been created by the population and therefore has effects on that population” one realizes that a dominant discourse is more than an issue—it is a problem of power affecting an entire population (p. 245).

In analyzing some of the library science literature through a Foucauldian approach, it becomes necessary to think about the manner in which language functions because dominant discourses create the possibility of producing docile bodies that further strengthen such discourses and eventually lead to biopolitics. In addition, truths that are presented as knowledge through discourses gain power as they move and reach individuals in the field. Many of these Foucauldian theories are in relation with Derrida, who like Foucault, opens up

additional space for developing poststructural ideas, especially when combined with deconstruction to address educational issues.

### **Foucault's Space**

Foucault developed his concept of space by breaking down the binary of utopia/dystopia finding that there are “other” types of spaces, known as heterotopias, that contradict the binary. He developed a set of complex principles to describe how heterotopias are defined and function in society as “counter-sites” that “are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (Foucault, 1986, p. 3). I use Foucault’s interpretation of heterotopic principles to think through libraries as “other” spaces that are being transformed by discourse and the power/knowledge relationship. I also consider how library spaces are produced based on these relationships of power/knowledge, discourse, and heterotopia. In chapter 4, I further articulate these principles, thinking with Foucault’s theory of space and the library science literature to deconstruct many of the changes taking place through dominant discourses.

### **Deconstruction**

My research interests with deconstruction will allow me to use poststructuralism to explain that the “passive consumption of a product” Sarup (1993) alludes to does indeed become performed over and over. Leading library science journals, for example, often feature similar publications on trends of space and technology because it is en vogue to write about these topics. Furthermore, administrators may feel a need to publish on such similar ideas to obtain gainful employment. Thus, dominant discursive practices calling for more technology, fewer collections, and new collaborative spaces are continually strengthened and expanded upon as various discourses become recurrent. Derrida’s use of deconstruction to break down these binaries challenges the deployment of passive consumption in a number of

ways that will be helpful to address dominant structures in library science. For example, a survey of the literature on weeding print books in academic libraries yields several discourses that focus on trends and issues of the changing academic library. Discourses associated with space renovation and technology call for librarians to follow a neoliberal “more business-like model” and are based on arguments that library patrons have evolved into more technological beings, and collection budgets must be appropriated carefully to prevent the library, as an institution, from becoming irrelevant (Jantz, 2012; Royal, 2015).

With such a focus on emerging trends, what is left behind or neglected in its place? In returning to our example of the print book, it is necessary to question whether or not library patrons, especially those who work in the disciplines of the humanities, are ready to move away from print books. It is also necessary to question whether or not technology, such as e-books, is an adequate substitution. A recent study of more than 400 students found that four out of five prefer to work with print books over digital (Baron et al., 2017). Another study surveying more than 10,000 tertiary students worldwide, and various demographics of readers with different socioeconomic, cultural, and educational backgrounds (first-year undergraduate to doctoral level), found that print was the preferred format based on the student’s ability to focus as well as retain the information (Mizrachi et al., 2018). These types of studies can become lost, however, in an abundance of literature spotlighting emerging trends and administrator-driven changes that dominate both the written and oral discursive platforms.

In deconstructing the language associated with these trends, we see how meaning is produced through dual strategies of difference and deferral. As discussed earlier, Derrida’s development of *différance* and language theory explains that there are no fixed signifieds

(concepts) or signifiers and everything is subject to an endless process of deferral.

Furthermore, our language is always located in a discursive context perpetually open to challenge, redefinition, and constant rereading and reinterpretation. So while modern libraries are being defined by emerging trends based on science and technology, it is the discursive context that allows us to challenge these ideas, as well as ponder the power being enacted through discourse.

When deconstructing a text, it is also important to consider that the goal is not to win an argument, or that there is even an end to an issue. The book *Deconstruction in a Nutshell* (1997) features a conversation that took place between Jacques Derrida and faculty at Villanova University at the opening of its philosophy department. Derrida explains that rather than defeating an existing structure, it is more important to seek new meaning. He also explains that considering differences and the “other” allows us to move in new directions. Without this “other” we would be unable to relate in an alternative way and would suffer under totalities. Derrida’s idea of the “other” was influenced by German philosopher Martin Heidegger who developed the idea of *Versammlung*, or gathering. Derrida, in opposition to Heidegger, believed that: “Once you grant some privilege to gathering and not to dissociating, then you leave no room for the other, for the radical otherness of the other, for the radical singularity of the other” (Derrida, 1997, p.14).

Returning to Watson’s (2017) article on 21st-century libraries, we realize that he seeks to reinforce a dominant discourse affecting libraries, which is one that claims libraries must evolve to technological, productive centers based on space and creative technological tools. The belief is that this shift will allow librarians to meet the needs of those who are

creating more than just logocentric works. Watson emphasizes the notion of experience as a guiding principle for libraries to focus on as he cites Pine and Gilmore's work:

Writing about the "Experience Economy" Pine and Gilmore (1999) describe a progression of customer needs from commodities to goods then services and ultimately experiences. Providing excellent library experiences should be one of the primary aims of any library and learning space development. How users experience the library is dependent on the quality of the space, how it is organised and the services provided within the space. Where space and services are designed and managed to fit perfectly with expectations, and change over time as expectations change, excellent experiences will be the outcome. (Watson, 2017, Section 5)

Whereas libraries previously were thought of as the storehouses of knowledge, Watson, in alignment with Pine and Gilmore's publication from the *Harvard Business School Press*, are calling for a shift in focus that defines libraries as important space and service hubs. In other words, privilege has been granted to this alternate mission of libraries and the dominant discourse continues to gather more frequently than disassociate. It is now more important, Watson argues, to focus on how one experiences a library, rather than what information resources are made available to construct a logocentric work. Watson bases his arguments on others' arguments who agree with the shift in the academic library mission. In examining the language used in articles such as Watson's, one must remember that Derrida cautions not to emphasize the meaning over the word, and vice versa, which he believed was a central fault in Lacan's linguistic theory. Derrida explains that in structuralist thinking, the structure holds a center, or place of origin, in which "play" becomes restricted (Derrida, 1978). Deconstruction allows one to move both outside and inside of the possibilities of a structure.

“Thinking with Derrida’s theory...produces the possibility of an irruptive moment that will serve to point us to that which resides outside/within the significant chunk of the data that has previously been left out, ignored, not counted,” Jackson and Mazzei (2012) wrote (p. 34). Or as Sarup (1993) elaborates in connecting deconstruction to writing: “The advent of the concept of writing, then, is a challenge to the very idea of structure; for a structure always presumes a centre, a fixed principle, a hierarchy of meaning and a solid foundation; and it is just these notions which the endless differing and deferring of writing throws into question” (p. 44). Derrida analyzed language, including writing, as one structure that could be deconstructed.

There are a few different ways in which Derrida deploys deconstruction. The use of deferral creates a notion of identity that is to be determined. It is not fixed, nor is it singular. Another approach Derrida uses is political deployment where he draws attention to ahistorical aporias. Poststructuralists seek a departure from the fixation on the present using information from the past as well as foreshadowing. One additional way Derrida, but more so Foucault, deploys deconstruction is through genealogical studies and identification of the history of an institution, or phenomena. Following the initial burst of linguistic studies attached to poststructuralists, Foucault expanded the realm of possibility by focusing on power. Similar to Derrida’s consideration of the sovereign, Foucault “shifted from linguistic determination to the view that individuals are constituted by power relations, power being the ultimate principle of social reality” (Sarup, 1993, p. 73).

In thinking together Derridean concepts and Foucault’s analysis of power relations, multiple ways of analyzing a particular educational issue become possible. To study some of the practices, effects, and subjects taking place from this discursive field in the discipline of



library institutions will enable me to explain how power has moved not only through individuals, but through the text that Derrida finds so influential. As libraries continue to shift to technology-centered spaces, it is necessary to consider what discourses are being developed to constitute this truth of a need to reconfigure the mission of an academic library. In the next section, I will evaluate how these theoretical ideas connect to the library trends of space and technology and how these areas affect library collections.

### **Connecting Theory to Trends in Academic Libraries**

The interplay of collections, space, and technology trends in academic libraries creates a web of discursive relationships and power relations that push and pull against one another in an intricate manner. It's important to remember Foucault's words that "... power is not to be taken to be a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogenous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others..." but, "Power must be analysed as something which circulates" (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). The idea that power is never to be located in a person or central point makes the incorporation of power as part of my study interesting. Because collections have a longstanding view as the core component of a library, it becomes part of an opposing relationship dynamic with new trends of space and technology, which seek to find a stronger place in the mission of the library. In the next section, I will analyze additional library science literature on space to discover what effects these areas have on collections.

### **The Space, Technology, Collections Web in Academic Libraries**

Since the turn of the 21st century, the field of library science has seen an explosion of literature based around emerging trends of space and technology. Oliveira's (2016) mixed-method study on student spaces in the library captures approximately 100 (mostly recent)

articles about space. While these interesting areas of study have progressed at a rapid pace, the effects of such growth has changed the way people both think about and use library collections. It is important to critically analyze the discursive networks of space, technology, and collections in order to consider what changes are taking place in libraries and how these changes may affect library patrons. In reading and writing about the dominant discourses, it becomes apparent that the area of collections is oftentimes characterized as “traditional” by authors publishing on topics of space and technology. Associating library collections with the image of libraries of the past is a clear tactic in which Foucault would see power working.

In theorizing how power works to produce knowledge, Foucault outlines the relationship between power and knowledge which a refusal of “Knowledge is power,” or even, “Power creates knowledge.” This is because the two elements are not synonymous but produce each other in complex ways:

Perhaps we should abandon the belief that power makes mad and that, by the same token, the renunciation of power is one of the conditions of knowledge. We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. In short, it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge. (Foucault, 1980, pp. 27-28)

Returning to the belief that libraries must create social, collaborative learning environments, we can begin to see that a discourse has been formed. One in which the idea of library users is nearly separated from the idea of library learners. These definitions can confuse one when it is obvious that most library patrons who use the library would, of course, be there to learn. However, the authors of many space-related articles argue that librarians should take a more integrated approach to helping patrons learn and their answer is not in pedagogy per se, but in the spaces offered by the academic library. In terms of Foucault's comment above, we can see this entire realm of space and libraries has been constituted through substantial literature in the discipline. Foucault states that the "struggles that traverse" this body of knowledge are what create these opportunities of change.

There is a clear struggle in today's academic libraries involving the discourse of space and how it works with other important areas in the library such as collections, services, and more. I have witnessed the effects of the space discourse in my own library at Appalachian State University where committees have been created to assess and reimagine the spaces in the library. In considering how power plays with the discourse of space, one can begin to perceive that the once stable mission of an academic library focused on offering collections and a place to learn has been altered, partially because of the emerging trends for collaborative spaces and redesigning libraries.

*The Journal of Academic Librarianship* is a well-known journal in library science and recent literature reveals that space and technology are popular subjects for researchers in the field. A recent article (2019) by Allison et al., focuses on how learning commons' affect collections and other library services. In this article, the authors point to a division of faculty and librarians between those who value a scholarly resource-oriented library and those who

desire a collaborative, technological-oriented library. Faculty prefer academic libraries featuring stored and organized information available to patrons for learning, as opposed to those who value “libraries as spaces” for facilitation and learning (Allison et al., 2019, p. 306). Derrida would easily point out the binary stated at the outset and elaborated on throughout the article where the authors declare that there are “two opposing camps” (p. 306). Many librarians have published on this transformation from open shelves to various library services such as collaborative space (Davis, 2018; Montgomery, 2017; Wilders, 2017). And although the literature often seems inundated with articles focusing on space transformation and technology changes, it can be difficult to apply these abstract theories arguing for a new type of library based on their own “truths.”

One excellent research article questioning some of the assumptions authors have made about the need for space and technology changes in academic libraries comes from Oliveira (2016). In this article titled “Space Preference at James White Library: What Students Really Want,” Oliveira carefully sifts through an enormous amount of literature on student experiences and space preferences finding “It is an arduous task to design the actual spaces that will meet and satisfy students’ expectations when interests are so diversified...” (p. 356). Oliveira goes on to explain that many case studies in the United States and abroad have revealed that students actually prefer quiet, independent study spaces. More than a dozen excellent examples are provided by Oliveira and a number of others are highlighted as he explains that balance was called for by many researchers (p. 356). Yet many authors fail to focus on creating balance and push their agenda to change and reorganize library spaces as if this insatiable appetite for collaborative, technological spaces could not be filled.

The influx of learner-centered pedagogy was developed in the field of education and is now making its way into the discipline of library science where the benefits of collaboration are seen as an area of growing importance. Similarly, Turner et al. (2013) attribute the focus of changing library spaces to social constructivist theories as cited in a 2011 monograph by Matthews, Andrews, and Adams, who wrote that “the most significant learning takes place when individuals participate in social learning activities” (p. 12). Although there is research to show that social learning has benefits, there is also research that shows many students prefer quiet, solo study areas (Oliveira, 2016). These are the type of students who would possibly benefit from a robust print collection.

In the following section, a *College & Research Libraries* article reveals that one interpretation of a learner-centered paradigm includes reducing print book stacks for more collaborative learning spaces:

Digital technologies are eliminating many of the spatial and temporal barriers to obtaining information (articles, papers, and the like), thus creating space within libraries for the provision of ‘good public spaces’ alongside their existing information services. Such good public spaces should support learning in ways that are social and immersive in nature. In this paradigm, book stacks are becoming less visible, while spaces for learning and collaboration (tables, chairs, couches, nooks, and so on) are moving to the center (for instance, in the form of information commons and learning commons. (Khoo et al., 2016)

The justification for a learner-centered paradigm goes directly against all of the research shared by Oliveira which explains that contemplative, independent study space was most valued by students in several articles. Other articles on creating a learner-centered

environment in libraries argue that technology enhancements are important to create learning opportunities in library spaces. “Crafting a learner-centered learning space requires careful consideration for placement and orientation of interactive technologies in relationship to space use and pedagogies,” adding that “academic institutional spaces are used for a variety of class types, such as instructional sessions and lectures” (Baglier & Caswell, 2016, p. 20). The push for collaborative space redesign may have negative effects on students and faculty who prefer print materials when conducting research in the humanities; their collections are being reduced at an alarming rate (McAllister & Scherlen, 2017; Woolwine, 2014).

In *Encoding Space: Shaping Learning Environments that Unlock Human Potential*, the authors liken the experience of library space to that of shopping malls where each store presents a unique ambiance. “Happy customers have a higher probability of realizing their purchase goals and, therefore, feeling a sense of achievement,” Mathews and Soistmann said (2016, p. 37). The authors claim that this merchandising, or retail theory, can transfer to different domains, as they examine library space in various forms including community, design, and more. Another section of this work is titled “From User-centered to Learner-centered” and is one of the main foundational arguments for proponents of changing library spaces. “From our commons areas and collections to our outreach and instruction programs, the overarching objective is making libraries more user-friendly. But is that good enough? (2016)” the authors ask.

Yet Mathews and Soistmann caution librarians to be leery of creating a space that simply brings more visitors to the library. In a section titled “Build It and They Will Come - So What?” the authors explain that libraries must maintain their difference from student centers and computer labs across campus.

I'm concerned that if all we're doing is swapping out stacks of books for rows of computers, groups of tables, and soft seating that we're becoming vulnerable and remaining passive. Indeed, while libraries may be seeing high numbers of visitors, there is some danger of our effort becoming replicable elsewhere. Others can create reading lounges, collaboration rooms, and makerspaces too. (p. 118)

Mathews and Soistmann remind us of the impossibility of studying one set of students to gain an understanding of what an entire population wants, but much of their book fails to elaborate on the previously quoted paragraph. In addition, sketched plans for library spaces seem to depict only small library book collections in novel ways such as decorative spaces or below long tables of technology. "As the information seeking habits of students and faculty have changed, libraries are providing more space for patrons and less for stacks, becoming true learning centers..." Oliveira (2016) said citing other studies (p. 355). One need not look far to find similar examples labeling library collections as "traditional" and fueling the campaign to reduce print stacks to be replaced with modern furniture. The example may be what Foucault describes as an *ascending* analysis of power, which he suggests begins with "infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then see how these mechanisms of power have been—and continue to be—invested, colonised, utilised, involuted, transformed, displaced, extended etc., by ever more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination" (Foucault, 1980, p. 99). Language, and other tactics, continue to be utilized to transform the library mission from what many perceive as too "traditional."

Borrowing learner-centered theory from the field of education to argue for redesigning space in academic libraries may seem harmless to many. When thinking through

this trend, alongside Foucault, however, we begin to consider what possible discourses are taking shape and how power is working for certain discourses and against others. Language becomes extremely important as part of these forces of power. Describing print books and stacks as “traditional” is an intentional choice by authors, just as is using words like “future” and “modern” associated with “space” to purposefully characterize these ideas in a forward-looking, positive manner. Much of this research requires critical analysis through extensive reading and writing. By studying library science literature in-depth as well as theoretical frameworks of Foucault, a poststructural method can be used to rethink these important issues, and others, in academic library trends.

While libraries are being converted to more technological, collaborative centers as part of the growing trend, students and faculty are beginning to see the disadvantages from a loss of materials and solo study spaces. The majority of library patrons, however, are not aware of these changes and how they may affect their use of the library; they are part of a biopower, which encapsulates the library population in a controlled environment. As evidenced above, the literature calling for a reduction of print books to create new collaborative spaces is just one example of a dominant discourse worth studying as part of my first research question. If administrators are focused mainly on visitor counts, there is a real “danger” as Mathews and Soistmann have explained in the aforementioned quotation. Deconstructing how power and knowledge dynamics function in assessing libraries today will enable us to think about biopower and what type of library patrons, or subjects, are being produced through dominant discourses. It is important to continue deconstructing research in the field of library science to recognize where potential dominant discourses are occurring so we may accomplish what Derrida suggests—to move in new directions.



### Significance of Study

Although little poststructural research has been conducted in the field of library science, its inherent importance for creating new meaning, learning, and growth for individuals brings about considerable potential. Much of the library science literature is quantitative, or mixed-method inquiry, based on surveys and case studies about best practices such as weeding print books, building makerspaces, or redesigning library space. I will incorporate poststructuralism to break away from oppositional binaries that have created issues in the field: binaries such as print/e-book, solo/collaborative, or even traditional/modern produce unhelpful dichotomous dialogues. As I have explained, oftentimes such binaries can limit how one thinks about a problem, or even silence a different viewpoint. For instance, numerous researchers calling for collaborative space often fail to consider other opinions, such as why independent study spaces may be beneficial. My research questions, once again stated below, guide my inquiry and seek to contribute new meaning to these problems:

1. What are the dominating discourses surrounding academic library trends and how do these discourses vie for the material landscape of libraries today?
2. How does biopower function in the 21<sup>st</sup> century library? More specifically, how are subjects made and populations controlled through the deployment of biopower?
3. How do power/knowledge dynamics function to produce and constrain what a modern library should look like, what purpose it should serve, and who should be involved in the planning of the library as an institution?

The chapters for my dissertation create space for plugging in relevant theories to connect with library science literature in the following areas: space for print books/space for group study; student preference of materials; mass weeding of library print collections (an area I have published on and one that continues to evolve); the perceptions of student and faculty use of the library; and others. I connect these research topics to culture and how populations are affected by some of the trends like space and technology, which addresses one of my research questions. This idea harkens back to Foucault's concept of biopower, which is how he described modern nations controlling the population; he wrote, "They included all devices that were used to ensure the spatial distribution of individual bodies (their separation, their alignment, their serialization, and their surveillance) and the organization, around those individuals, of a whole field of visibility" (Foucault, 2003, p. 242). When thinking about space, one can observe similar developments taking place in what is understood by many as the most influential public place: the library. It is necessary to consider Foucault's theory of biopower incorporating a detailed analysis of power, surveillance, and control concerning these trends and discourses that dominate libraries.

Thus it was significant to contemplate ways in which my research in the field of library science could best be achieved using a poststructural framework of Foucauldian analysis, deconstruction, and plugging in, as a manner of inquiry. My research focus on common trends, especially of space, sweeping academic libraries today is diverse and multifaceted. It is well-known that there is a movement in libraries to mass weed, or deselect, print books from collections as academic libraries seek to incorporate new study spaces and room for technology (i.e. makerspaces and game rooms). A number of tactics are used to justify this movement, including the way language is employed to define reactions from

departmental faculty who protest the removal of print books (Agee, 2017). My research project will expand the spectrum of “knowledge” on library trends, the effects the trends have on patrons’ subjectivities, and how power/knowledge appears to function in the competing discourses of the academic library mission. Although research has been conducted in the various areas of trends on collections, space, and technology, very few have connected these ideas in a larger scholarly project that reveals how trends have been shaped and accepted over time. Furthermore, few have utilized the benefits that Foucauldian analysis offers in creating an analysis of deep structures that produce the common-sense, everyday practices in academic libraries. In using Foucault to examine these issues, I have worked to open up new ideas.

Next, in Chapter 3, I discuss the approach called post qualitative inquiry, which I use to make sense of the theoretical and conceptual themes outlined in this chapter. I provide the information collected for the study, an overview of the research design, and discuss the significance of the study.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Using Post Qualitative Inquiry: Reading and Writing Theory**

The previous chapters of this dissertation introduced the issue of library space and the need to produce new meaning using poststructuralism as a way to critique this site of political struggle. Because space changes to libraries are developed by dominant discourse and poststructuralism interprets language as socially constructed, there is a need to deconstruct the discourses that have gained traction making library space part of a dominant set of binaries (i.e. furniture/books; group study areas/solo study areas, etc.). The previous chapters also explained how thinking with poststructural theories such as deconstruction, power/knowledge, and biopower, in connection with the library science literature, work to identify binary relationships and power altering subjectivities and practices of how patrons use the library or library staff work in the institution.

This chapter introduces post qualitative inquiry and its relationship to poststructuralism in addition to the research design and process, which includes an explanation of the selection of research materials and why these sources are important to my analysis. I use a framework of post qualitative inquiry that emerged into a combination of Foucauldian analysis, deconstruction, and “plugging in,” as a manner of experimentation to seek something new. St. Pierre (2021) said that poststructuralists refuse “preexisting method and methodology” (p. 4). Instead, poststructural researchers seek to produce something new through studying philosophy. Whereas structuralism searches for truth, or an objective reality found in the structure of language, poststructuralism finds meaning to be fluid and language always open to multiplicity and contradiction. This is how poststructuralism relates

to St. Pierre's creation of post qualitative inquiry, which began while she worked on her dissertation and problematized the methodological structure that had been taught to her throughout her studies in education.<sup>1</sup> In studying numerous philosophers and theorists, especially poststructuralists such as Foucault and Derrida, St. Pierre noticed a pattern where these theorists all refused the idea of methodology. She cites Foucault (2003) who said:

I do not have a methodology that I apply in the same way to different domains. On the contrary, I would say that I try to isolate a single field of objects, a domain of objects, by using the instruments I can find or that I forge as I am actually doing my research, but without privileging the problem of methodology in any way. (St. Pierre, 2021, p. 4)

This quotation describes much about my research process, which was based on a variety of "instruments" that caused me to think differently about issues associated with library space. Similar to Foucault, I isolated numerous objects before bringing them together to think about what was occurring in academic libraries as a result of the trend to renovate space.

One principle of post qualitative inquiry is that pre-determined methodology, commonly used in social science research, does not exist and is rejected. Deciding on a method or methodology at the beginning of the research process "can only hinder the experimentation and creativity required for post qualitative research," St. Pierre (2019) said (p. 8). I had no attachment to a particular research methodology or method as I began to explore the topic of library space. My own work experience with collections and space renovations in the libraries at Appalachian State University produced different ways of

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<sup>1</sup> St. Pierre first noticed the problem of methodology and the need for something new while working on her dissertation in 1995. She continued to research the area until she determined a name for it in 2014. Her first conference paper on post qualitative inquiry was presented in 2010 (St. Pierre, 2021b, p. 163).

practicing librarianship that I noticed. I also began to see power relations working through individuals and in the library science literature. I studied these issues about the same time I read two of the main poststructural theorists, Derrida and Foucault. It was in the side-by-side reading and practice that ideas about this critique began to emerge.

Although a methodology section is suggested to be included in the “Description of the Research” as part of the dissertation requirements from the Appalachian State University Graduate School, my focus this chapter is to explain the non-methodological approach I have experienced in writing the dissertation. “Post qualitative inquiry has no pre-existing research designs, methods, processes, procedures, or practices because *it is not a methodology at all,*” St. Pierre explains (2021b, 163). Having written this chapter after all of the others affirms that I have followed a post qualitative inquiry, foregoing the pressure to produce a standard dissertation based on a more “valid” and normalized scientific approach in the form of quantitative, qualitative, or mixed method study. Instead of developing a standard framework based on a more common social sciences research methodology, my dissertation was organically formed and reshaped as I continued to read and write between philosophy and the library science literature.

St. Pierre (2011) explains that post qualitative inquiry begins with a real experience or problem one faces, rather than starting with the development of a research question based around structured methods such as coding, participant observation, or interviews. Instead of conducting surveys, pilot studies, or other subject-focused data gathering, post qualitative inquiry emphasizes the study of philosophy, theory, and literature associated with a phenomenon. While the study of philosophy does not represent reality, St. Pierre explains that it works to “reorient thought” in hope of finding something new, and it follows a path

that can be described as immanent (2019, p. 14). Post qualitative inquiry is “a philosophy of immanence (St. Pierre, 2019), concerned not with what *is* but what is *not yet, to come*,” St. Pierre said (2021b, p. 163). As I moved through the research process, I was not sure what I would find, but plugging in Foucault’s theories of power/knowledge, discourse, and biopower continued to allow me to think differently about the academic library issues I studied. My thought process was reoriented frequently as I discovered new concepts while reading Foucault, or when I came across an article that strongly connected to one of those concepts: such as a library science article that focused on the issue of mass weeding hundreds of thousands of books to renovate academic library spaces which engendered my thinking about the effects this would have on researchers who rely on a variety of materials or students who prefer independent study areas.

Much of my research and writing process is based on Jackson and Mazzei (2012), who seek a departure from traditional qualitative data research because they believe this type of “data interpretation and analysis does not happen via mechanistic coding, reducing data to themes, and writing up transparent narratives that do little to critique the complexities of social life” (p. vii). Instead, the authors work to identify theories that challenge normative ways of thinking to open up meaning about a phenomenon or subject, thus following in Derrida’s footsteps of “keep(ing) meaning on the move” (p. 7). In Jackson and Mazzei’s work, they use an approach called *plugging in*, where the authors were heavily influenced by Deleuze and Guattari.

Jackson and Mazzei (2012) work with different theoretical concepts to analyze data through various theories. Their approach of “plugging in” was derived from Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), which states: “When one writes, the only question is

which other machine the literary machine can be plugged into, *must* be plugged into in order to work” (p.1). Poststructural ideas echo and touch each other through the use of different terms. For example, Derrida’s use of the word “spectrality” also relates to the idea of the “haunting” structure, which is similar to the “absent present,” or what gets left out, forgotten, and overlooked when thinking about a topic.

Similarly, we can see linkages between Jackson and Mazzei’s idea of “thinking with theory” and St. Pierre’s “method of nomadic inquiry.” St. Pierre describes a similar approach of writing and thinking as a “method of nomadic inquiry” where she explains that “writing *is* indeed thinking, writing *is* analysis, writing *is* indeed a seductive and tangled *method* of discovery” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 967). Poststructuralism employs these techniques of writing, thinking, analyzing, and weaving a web of ideas to discover new possibilities; it entails working with an idea and creating something new in the process. This construct proliferates allowing me to be selective in choosing what tools I prefer to work with as I seek to study how various discourses, power, and biopower interact with space.

### **Information Collected for the Study**

I read and analyzed multiple library science texts, including literature published in leading library science journals. I searched the literature of *Library Leadership & Management*, a journal directed at managers and administrators of libraries, in order to see how discourse was working to influence those who are charged with planning and leading the library. Although power is something that moves through library administrators and librarians, many often feel a power imbalance and are thus subjected to follow whatever path the library administration pursues. If a new library dean insists on renovating the library to make it more technology-centered, certain subjectivities are enacted on all individuals who



work in the library as well as the patrons who visit. One example from this journal discussed in the previous chapter was Lewis (2017), where language was used to further strengthen a binary such as space as asset/legacy print collection. Framing space as an asset and print as legacy, or old, reinforces a dominant binary that diminishes the importance of print collections. *The Journal of Library Administration*, similarly to *Library Leadership & Management*, publishes scholarly research related to library management, providing additional examples of an administrative discourse I analyze in the following chapters.

I read across disciplines, including conducting searches on journals about management. In researching the future of libraries, a topic always on the minds of library administrators, I came across Latimer's "2050: A Library Space Odyssey. Planning the Future Library." This article was published in the journal *Legal Information Management* and is a good example of discourse highlighting a fear-of-obsolescence subjectivity many administrators develop based on the trend of space and technology. This pressure, which partially results from the STEM movement and binary relationship of science/humanities functions in a discourse that belittles libraries focused on independent, humanities-based research as it praises those who pursue collaborative space redesigns based on technology. Thinking through this example with Foucault's theory of power/knowledge resulted in new ideas about knowledge being used to produce future-focused librarians.

I also researched various materials and contributions to the literature, such as a newspaper articles, blogs, and a whitepaper presented at the 2017 Charleston Conference, keeping in mind that "the mission of the academy does not begin and end with intellectual discovery and fact-finding" (Fitzgerald & Primavera, 2013, p. 131). Instead, communities contribute to the development of space, or what Lefebvre dubbed the "social production of

space” (1974). The white paper (O'Donnell et al., 2017) I analyzed from the Charleston Conference, for example, was delivered at the biggest conference on academic library collections in North America. The authors were also marketed as the feature event being offered multiple speaking opportunities to a large audience. In witnessing the materiality of one of the presentations, and also examining the discursive tactics from the whitepaper, I was able to explain how space has become a major trend that has effects on collections and other areas of the academic library. Furthermore, in thinking this experience through with Foucault, I later realized that the presentation where few librarians questioned the material, including the diminishment of print books, were operating under a power relation based on administrative discourse. This was an example of Foucault's (1995) concept of docile bodies where discipline occurs in distributed spaces. The majority of attendees at the conference were alone in their individual spaces of thought as power circulated and “truth” revealed itself as the problem of old books needing to be solved.

Other non-scholarly sources became part of my analysis, and I decided to exclude both a number of scholarly articles and books, in addition to some of the non-scholarly material that was available on the topic of space. The literature I excluded was repetitive in nature, or the discursive context was not as easily connected to the theories I worked with. However, one non-scholarly source I decided to include featured architectural renderings of changes to space where I work: Appalachian State University's Belk Library. I found this example to be important given it was one that came from personal experience, one that allowed me to relate to the trend of space renovations in academic libraries and effects of these trends on specific populations and subjectivities. The space project that I experienced - - was in the middle of -- caused me to ask questions about why certain productions of space

were necessary, who was best served by the changes, and who was oppressed by these projects. In studying Foucault's theory of biopower, I realized that an entire population, such as library patrons or library employees, could be studied under a lens of power and its effects on the mass. Using the poststructural approach of deconstructing images from the project at my library in connection with Foucault's biopower opened a space for me to produce ideas about the normalization of libraries that occurs as a result of space renovations. I also discovered a regulation of patrons who find themselves limited by the dominance of space designed to fit a consumer-based mould based on collaboration and technology. As someone who thrives in quiet, independent study spaces, and admitting this subjectivity as one I own, I saw a need to explore biopower in the academic library.

Plugging these texts, and others, into Foucault's theories of space, power/knowledge, discourse, and biopower allow me to reveal where discourse is working on library patrons, employees, and administrators of libraries. It also allows me to highlight the effects these dominant discourses have on the subjectivities of the aforementioned groups. The research collected for my dissertation included both print and online resources focusing on the theoretical writings mainly from Foucault, but also Lefebvre, Derrida, Bachelard, and others to a lesser degree. I also acquired multiple resources on library science topics of space, collections, technology, and commons areas, in addition to others. I used databases from my academic library in addition to searches across the general Web, which resulted in everything from scholarly, peer-reviewed articles to newspaper reports and blogs. Constant reading of a variety of formats and topics related to library science discourse on space allowed me to develop new ideas about how to plug into these concepts using Foucault's theories.

I searched across many library science literature databases including Library Literature and Information Science Full Text, which indexes more than 360 journals covering libraries and librarianship, in addition to other formats such as conference proceedings and books; Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts with Full Text (LISTA), which includes the full text and indexes of more than 500 core journals; and others. In addition, I researched specific journals that focused on library administration and academic libraries. I also searched a list of keywords across journals publishing on collection-related issues because my main area of work is collection management. Finally, some of the works I analyze throughout the dissertation were gathered from attending conferences, through email listservs, or by word-of-mouth from colleagues who know my research interests.

Several monographs on the topic of poststructuralism, the works of Foucault, and other theorists, also guided my work. Reading across Foucault's oeuvre and the library science literature allowed me to generate new ideas, as well as question what discourses were being shaped through various tactics and practices taking place in the field of library science.

Following the approach that Jackson & Mazzei (2012) have developed, I *plug in* theories from Foucault as I closely analyze the language and discourses of the library science research gathered. This nonlinear approach involves immersive reading of theoretical works by Foucault, Lefebvre, and others as well as constant study of the library science literature on space and related trends. Continuous reading and writing occurred throughout the process as I read across theory and library literature and back and forth to conduct analysis of the texts. "Plugging in to produce something new is a constant, continuous process of making and unmaking," Jackson and Mazzei (2012) wrote (p.1). I sought to locate discursive connections in library trends such as collections, space, and technology, and expound upon

the web of ideas to formulate new interpretations that would bring important contributions to the field.

### **Overview of Research Design & Process**

As I continued to study Foucault's theory of discourse and power/knowledge alongside the trend of space in academic libraries, a couple of questions continued to develop in my mind. My first question sought to discover what dominant discourses of space were at play and how these discourses were changing the academic library landscape. From this question, I began to consider how power/knowledge dynamics were functioning to both produce and constrain the library. The more Foucault I read, the more ideas began to take shape including my third question on how biopower, or the control of library populations, was functioning. Thus my analytic questions organically formed through reading and writing philosophy and the library science literature. As my research questions continued to evolve, so too did my research design, which began by considering the unique experience I had during a library renovation project. The more I studied the space renovation that took place at my own library, I noticed similar examples taking place across the country. Researching the library science literature on space was useful, but plugging in Foucauldian concepts of discourse, power/knowledge, and biopower into these allowed me to analyze these selections based on the intersections of library discourses and poststructural theories.

As mentioned previously, the design of my research includes a poststructural approach combining both theory and scholarly literature from the field of library science as well as other media that highlight the discourse of academic libraries and space-related trends. Much of the design of this dissertation was organically created through reading and plugging in Foucault's theories of power/knowledge, discourse, heterotopias, and biopower

alongside the literature of library science. Foucault's research and theoretical writings on power and biopower caused me to reconsider the discursive contexts I witnessed and read in the field of library science. Power/knowledge allowed me to dig deeper into what might be taking place in academic libraries as a result of power dynamics and how "knowledge" was being generated and reproduced. Foucault (1980) offers many ideas on the power of dominant discourses:

I would say, then, that what has emerged in the course of the last ten or fifteen years is a sense of the increasing vulnerability to criticism of things, institutions, practices, discourses. A certain fragility has been discovered in the very bedrock of existence — even, and perhaps above all, in those aspects of it that are most familiar, most solid and most intimately related to our bodies and to our everyday behaviour. But together with this sense of instability and this amazing efficacy of discontinuous, particular and local criticism, one in fact also discovers something that perhaps was not initially foreseen, something one might describe as precisely the inhibiting effect of global, *totalitarian theories*. (p. 80)

The idea of individuals being made vulnerable in relation to criticizing different practices or discourses was something I found to occur in the workplace, but it is Foucault's idea of "totalitarian theories," which makes one reconsider power. Foucault states that believing these theories to be totalitarian hinder our research process (p. 81). He encourages us to focus instead on the "effects of the centralising powers" (p. 84) as we ask the questions. Where is power moving? How is power functioning in this discourse, or in this institution? What tactics are being employed to reinforce a dominant discourse? "Power never ceases its interrogation, its inquisition, its registration of truth: it institutionalises, professionalises and

rewards its pursuit” Foucault said (p. 91). When Foucault speaks about “truth” he is speaking about a subjugated truth, which he explains is developed through a discourse that is produced, accumulated, circulated, and functioning over time. These dominant discourses become the “norm” where several tactics are used to sustain the power relations.

In my research and experience of the academic library, I found power working at all levels. The presence of an administrative power, for example, was found throughout the library literature supporting space renovation, and this subjugated truth impacted the subjectivities of all involved. Researching the reasons administrators gave for redesigning spaces helped me think about how “Subjectivity is not stable, but is constructed in relationships with others and in everyday practices” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 53). When librarians redesign spaces based on collaboration, technology, or for the future, it does have effects on everyday practices. Patrons are forced to use the library in a different manner and based on the changes enacted. Library workers, many of whom work on specialized teams or areas, are forced to address these changes by conforming to the dominant discourse or challenging it from an underprivileged position.

As I researched the discourses and binary relationships using the lens of power, my process felt messy at times. I worked on my laptop and with printed resources including monographs, scholarly articles, and other non-scholarly sources. After spending much time scribbling notes in the margins of articles and theory books I read and thought about, I decided to record my notes using Google docs. I soon realized the benefit to quickly transferring my notes and ideas to the cloud so information could be accessed from any computer. I made it a routine process to quickly transfer written notes to digital format. Much of the theory was new so I let it “wash over me” as was suggested by my dissertation

chair. Eventually, after a couple more passes of plugging in these theories to the library science literature, the issues of space in terms of poststructural theories such as power/knowledge sparked and glowed, revealing something new.

An important principle of poststructuralism, and post qualitative inquiry, is that the researcher does not reject what is being deconstructed. “Rather, it overturns and displaces a structure to make room for something different,” St. Pierre (2021) said (p. 5). I do not make an outright claim that space renovations to libraries are wrong. Likewise, I would never claim that the library design of our past should be the one model for all to follow. Derrida reminds us that “iterability” has implications: “It implies of itself, which is also threatening, because the second ‘yes’ may be simply a parody, a record, or a mechanical repetition” (Derrida, 1997). My poststructural approach of deconstructing the trend of space in academic libraries questions repetition, not on the basis for overturning, but rather for offering an emergence of something different.

Foucault’s ideas about power/knowledge, discourse, and biopower are the tools I have selected to create new meaning alongside a selection of sources from the library science literature. I worked these resources back and forth in my process of reading and writing. Both theory and literature were crucial to the main chapters of my dissertation where research on the intersection of space and academic libraries becomes fused with these theoretical concepts in my analysis.

### **Chapter Organization**

My dissertation is organized into six chapters constructed around the research questions I have chosen to ask:



1. What are the dominating discourses surrounding academic library trends and how do these discourses vie for the material landscape of libraries today? By the word “material,” I mean the physical and digital areas of libraries in addition to metaphysical areas and discursive practices—those phenomena that interact with the tangible such as collections and space.
2. How does biopower function in the 21st-century library? More specifically, how are subjects made and populations controlled through the deployment of biopower?
3. How do power/knowledge and biopower dynamics function to produce and constrain what a modern library should look like, what purpose it should serve, and who should be involved in the planning of the library as an institution?

The two analytical chapters of this dissertation discuss power and biopower at the intersection of space in academic libraries while considering the research questions.

Chapter 4, *The Power of Space in the Academic Library*, presents dominant discourses on space in academic libraries as I seek to answer my first research question: *What are the dominating discourses surrounding academic library trends and how do these discourses vie for the material landscape of libraries today?* In keeping with Jackson and Mazzei’s theory of plugging in, I analyze the literature on space in academic libraries through the lens of Foucault’s concept of heterotopias. Foucault (1986) offers numerous principles of heterotopias, his term for describing these “other spaces” outside of the binary of utopia/dystopia. Working through these principles in reading and writing about library science literature on topics of space, I consider the effects discourse and power/knowledge have on librarians and libraries as the field seeks to situate itself in a position for success, but

based on often unchallenged discourses. The conclusion of this chapter connects with Chapter 5, where I discuss biopower in terms of space and the academic library.

In Chapter 5, I transition from Foucault's concept of power/knowledge and its effects on the individual to his development of biopower, where power multiplies and subjects become made and populations controlled through the employment of biopower. This chapter focuses on the research question, *How does biopower function in the 21st-century library? More specifically, how are subjects made and populations controlled through the deployment of biopower?* This chapter offers a review of how Foucault's theory of biopower developed, largely through his works on discipline before arriving at *The History of Sexuality*, where he discovers the discourse on sex and sexuality working in a manner to normalize a number of beliefs on the topic. I also incorporate visual material to analyze a biopower example that took place at my own library before moving to several discourses that project Foucault's two concerns of disciplining the bodies and regulating populations. The transition from power working on individuals to a type of biopower that regulates the library population of patrons and employees reveals a reshaping of the 21st century academic library based on dominant discourse and biopower.

For Chapter 6 and the conclusion of my dissertation, I return to my research question, *How do power/knowledge dynamics function to produce and constrain what a modern library should look like, what purpose it should serve, and who should be involved in the planning of the library as an institution?* This is a question that connected to the related topics throughout my dissertation.

The main analyses in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 include much critical research and plugging in library science literature and theory from the works of Foucault. As Jackson and

Mazzei (2012) suggest, this work is an ongoing process “of making and unmaking” where the two main chapters unfolded as I continued to research, revise and write in nomadic fashion. This poststructural process is quite different from performing a more quantitative or qualitative approach based on surveys, coding, and other methods that suggest positivistic solutions. The research questions I address in my chapters are never fully resolved and constantly evolve based on power/knowledge, discourse, and biopower. Yet the critical discussion and analysis move us into issues of power that would rarely be discovered using a more practical approach based on data collection and analysis.

### **Significance of the Study**

This inquiry is important because most of the library science literature focuses on practical research methods and traditional qualitative or mixed methods research where case studies and surveys are conducted. Using a poststructural perspective is a fairly new approach to the field of library science and less common. By following this approach, it allows me to critically analyze the various space discourses in the field of library science. Studying these discourses more closely through Foucault’s lens of power and biopower allows me to open up new ideas that would not have been possible using a preestablished methodology. I plugged in Foucault’s concepts of discourse, power/knowledge, and biopower to discover how binary relationships were working in libraries. Offering different perspectives that develop from critically analyzing dominant discourses in the field of library science, specifically the topic of space, sheds new light on the frequent changes taking place in academic libraries.

Anyone interested in the field of library science as well as faculty and patrons who rely on the library for research will find this study useful. It reveals what is behind the many

and fast changes taking place at libraries across the country. Librarians will be interested in this analysis as an example of how subjectivity comes into play for both the patron and library employee as major space renovations occur. Administrators will find this study useful to contemplate leadership issues around projects based on dominant discourse. In addition, educational leaders who rely on the library for research and teaching may find the study of interest. The use of post qualitative inquiry is unique to the field of library science and new to the discipline. Researchers will not be able to use this study as a guide for other post qualitative inquiries because all post qualitative studies produce *something new every time*. Still, the work should serve as an inspiration for others who seek experimentation and the opportunity to produce something completely new and different from the traditional social science methods, processes, and methodology found in the library science discipline. My research also creates a space for new discourses to develop—a discourse that encourages a multiplicity of approaches for facing challenges in the academic library rather than a closing off of binary relationships that only benefits one side.

In the next chapter, I provide the first of two analyses: a critique of the library science discourse on space using Foucauldian theories of power/knowledge and heterotopia, or “other” spaces, to consider how the academic library is ordered based on the dominant discourse of space redesign. I also plug in Lefebvre’s philosophy on socially produced spaces to deconstruct how the development of library space is both politically contested and influenced through consumerism. Combining these poststructural theories with post qualitative inquiry not only help me to deconstruct several binary relationships operating in terms of library space, but also make visible how subjectivities are altered.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Power of Space in the Academic Library**

#### **Prelude**

At the time of this writing, the world is suffering from a highly contagious coronavirus called COVID-19. More than 101 million people have contracted the virus and approximately 2,205,515 deaths have occurred (World Health Organization, 2021). The pathogen is not only difficult to contain because it is easily spread, but reveals itself with similar flu-like symptoms that can arise anywhere from five to 14 days after it has been contracted. Whole countries have been locked down and the United States government is taking extraordinary measures to slow the number of cases, which could cause an inundation of medical facilities leading to further deaths. In the midst of all of this, space is a major issue that has been discussed. People have been encouraged to practice “social distancing,” which requires that they interact with another individual from a distance of at least six feet. From spaces being closed down such as restaurants, sports facilities, and even libraries, to spaces being opened up in the virtual world from Zoom conference rooms and Google Hangouts to museums and zoos, it is nearly impossible to think about the events of today without considering space. Because schools, universities, and other institutions have closed their physical doors, virtual space is more important than ever. So too is our understanding of nature as space. With millions of people being asked to stay home and use social distancing, as well as avoiding crowds, there has been a turn towards appreciating our natural

spaces, which have the ability to soothe our mental space during these times of anxiety and uncertainty.

All of these spaces—physical, mental, spiritual, social, and natural—shape our day-to-day lives in such a way that can be easily overlooked in the new normal that requires so many to work from home, homeschool children, and balance multiple other tasks. The topic of space, therefore, is more relevant than it has ever been when considering how academic library spaces both affect people and become produced by humans who in turn are changing the natural spaces of our world.

### **Introduction**

*Now the phenomenon of the social body is the effect not of a consensus but of the materiality of power operating on the very bodies of individuals. (Foucault, 1980, p. 55)*

These words Foucault wrote in his work *Power/Knowledge* are important to remember when thinking about the discourse of space in libraries. Over the past decade, libraries have sought to redesign their material spaces to more common, open areas that focus on the social, technological, and collaborative aspects of learning. Although the trend of redesigning library spaces to include more technology and common areas is built from consensus, when studied more closely, one realizes that relational power is actually working in multiple ways to alter how people think about space. In addition, these power relations have the potential to arrange and rearrange how individuals use and situate themselves in library space, as well as how bodies of knowledge about library services, collections, and missions are defined. The changes to library spaces are a major trend being pursued by library leaders, reshaping the library as an institution. In critiquing how power/knowledge and dominating discourses of space function to reshape the library and how it is embodied, I

use the following research question to guide this chapter: *What are the dominating discourses of space surrounding academic library trends and how do these discourses vie for the material landscape of libraries today?* In critically analyzing space as a dominant discourse working in a binary relationship where the focus of library space becomes privileged over other library services (e.g., more seating/collections), I seek to reveal the effects these changes to space have on the academic library mission as well as how this trend affects library patrons. To reiterate, these unchallenged dominant discourses in library science pose a great danger to society given the nature of the library as an important social institution for democracy, so it will be necessary to observe the types of “truths” dominating library science discourses in order to see what effects of power are changing the library landscape. The analysis will also shed light on what areas of the field are being constrained and diminished through discursive and power relations.

There is a strong movement in the library science literature to discuss library spaces, and some of this literature reveals that library administrators are afraid to be labeled as outdated or traditional when the binary of current/outdated clearly favors the present-day movement (Nelson, 2014; Scherlen & McAllister, 2019). As Foucault reminds us: “In any case I believe that the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space...” (Foucault, 1986, p. 1). Academic and public libraries appear to be operating with the anxiety he speaks of, and there are numerous examples of public library spaces that are rapidly changing and being written about in popular media. For example, some public libraries are moving to become “bookless” and introduce cafes and lounges as they reinvent their spaces (Chappell, 2013). This is taking place despite showcases of public outrage such as when hundreds of protesters discovered the Fairfax County, Virginia public library system weeded 250,000

books in 2013 (Editorial Board of *The Washington Post*, 2013). Public library examples often carry over into the field of academic libraries despite the differences in population they serve. The anxiety around these rapid changes causes administrators and librarians to make quick decisions without fully considering the implications to patrons and other areas of library service such as collections. The movement also creates a stronger discourse in favor of space redesign that proliferates and impacts all areas of the library.

The number of articles on the subject of space in academic libraries has rapidly grown over the past few decades. This is evident from my surveying various library science journals and discovering articles focused on space connected to topics of services, information literacy, collections, technology, and more (Trembach et al., 2020; Castro et al., 2019; Adams et al., 2020). One common thread that some authors include at varying levels is the notion that physical collections simply take up space (Allison et al., 2019; Acadia, 2016; Allen, 2015)<sup>2</sup>. This is evident from the discursive approach and delivery of the literature where researchers argue that weeding collections will free up valuable space for other services. Meanwhile, little attention is paid to the question of “What might be lost after weeding thousands of books?” Collections are seen as a “traditional” and an almost outdated library focus by some. Print collections are labeled “legacy” and written about as a sort of afterthought or even nuisance administrative librarians must handle. And while some print collections or sets are no longer used for different reasons, the association of all print books as “legacy” items which impede progress falsely blurs how many faculty and students think about an entire format of scholarly resources. The point is that these truth claims create a

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<sup>2</sup> Although authors will not say outright "Books waste space..." the idea that print collections do waste space or that space becomes utilized in a way they see as worthwhile is something I recognized when reading the literature.



division where the dominating discourse of space seeks control of the material landscape of libraries.

As power acts on all levels from library science discourse to patrons studying in new spaces, various areas of the library and its services become constrained while others are opened up. There is a need to recognize the mission of providing a place of learning, especially for those in need of scholarly print resources or private study areas, as well as a place for collaborative group work. Before discussing these various discourses of space, however, it will be important to analyze how Foucault's notions of space connect to his theories of power/knowledge and discourse.

### **Foucault's Heterotopic Space**

Although Foucault offered no elaborate or complete theories on space, his few presentations on the subject and his concept of heterotopias have fueled numerous studies across a range of disciplines. The concept of space appears alongside the notion of discourse in his books *The Order of Things* and *Discipline and Punish*, where "spatialization is used to partition the space/object so that it can be analyzed more easily..." (Grbin, 2015, p. 306). Spatialization, as Grbin explains, refers to the classification and constitution of an object and its space, playing a part in defining how we come to understand and think about it. This is opposite of the poststructural interpretation of space that Foucault expands upon where space has no barriers and there is freedom to move to "other" spaces because of the intersections of power and discipline (Foucault, 1986). An example of this can be seen in his works on medicine and power in the 1970s. Foucault believes that "the question of the hospital at the end of the eighteenth century was fundamentally a question of space" (Crampton & Elden, 2007, p. 149). He analyzed various hospital organizations while connecting medical notions

to other disciplinary areas of interest such as the spatial distribution of soldiers and even schools of the seventeenth century. Venturing into new spaces allowed Foucault to critique how hospitals and their hierarchical order developed to include both a system of treating individuals and populations.

Foucault notes in an essay two main types of spaces: heterotopias and utopias, the latter being an unreal place where “society itself (is) in a perfected form” (1986, p. 3). He lists a number of principles, which describe heterotopias, or “other” spaces. These principles are immensely complex and diverse, “but they all refer in some way or another to a relational disruption in time and space” (Johnson, 2006, p. 78). Foucault (1986) believed that heterotopias exist in all societies where they work as “counter-sites” that “are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (p. 3). In many ways, libraries can be defined as heterotopic institutions that are sites of cultural and discursive spaces that withhold contradictory elements (e.g., libraries as social places/libraries as quiet study space) and can be viewed as “other” spaces. Each heterotopia holds certain characteristics creating linkages to each other in the way they function.

One principle of heterotopias, for example, which connects strongly to the topic of my dissertation research, claims that an established heterotopic function can change as history develops in a society. Foucault (1986) uses the example of a cemetery, which has evolved throughout time. During medieval times, tombs were placed inside or close to churches indicating the closeness to sacred space. Foucault notes that as more people became atheistic and modern society developed, tombs were moved to places outside of the city around the 19th century, indicating a shift from medieval immortality to the modern idea of a place of final rest. Similarly, libraries have been places of change where function

expands to include church, law, academic, public, and special libraries all serving a slightly different mission and population of patrons (Janes, 2013, pp. 26-27). By thinking about this one principle of changing a heterotopia's function, it will allow one to go beyond the basic study of space in physical terms of location. For example, one may easily recognize the shift of cemetery locations, changes in tombstone design, layout of caskets as time develops, but the changing perceptions of what it means to live close to the dead, and other aspects such as the cost of burials, or "bourgeois appropriation," allows one to critically analyze a subject, in terms of space, more analytically. Thus for libraries and their physicality, there is a need to escape the dominant discourse of space and to consider more critically what changes are taking place within, and outside of, these spaces as well as how these changes alter the function of the library.

Foucault also labeled museums and libraries as heterotopic sites linked to his fourth principle: "Heterotopias are most often linked to slices in time—which is to say that they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies," Foucault wrote (1986, p. 6). He argued that whereas libraries of the seventeenth century "were the expression of an individual choice" they have altered to become places that seek to organize "a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place" (p. 7). Libraries of today have evolved again since Foucault's statement, becoming virtual learning centers, where one can conduct research in any place they choose, and information has the potential to race across the globe almost instantly. Just as the function of the cemetery has altered, so too has the library function proving it represents itself as heterotopia through its disruption of spatial learning where information can be obtained in the physical library or via online access from another locale. Libraries not only represent the past and present, but now

attempt to incorporate the future via technology. This “indefinite accumulation of time” reveals itself through open access and scholarly communications where libraries now have the option to collect the past, present, and future scholarly record as it is distributed for free.

Open access repositories are digital platforms that allow for information such as journal articles to be collected and disseminated for free through the Web. In many ways, the open access repository reminds me of Foucault’s ultimate disruption of space being it is similar to a utopia—the mirror. Foucault called the mirror a ‘placeless place’ which Johnson (2006) explains “is also an actual site that completely disrupts our spatial position,” adding, “The space occupied is at the same time completely real and unreal, forming an utter dislocation of place” (p. 80). In *The Order of Things* (1994) Foucault analyzes Diego Velázquez’s 1656 painting “Las Meninas” using his own unique approach, combined with an art historical approach, to consider a network of relations, power, and configurations paying attention to not only the main royal characters of the painting, but also the minor characters. What is unusual about this artwork is that the painter Velázquez appears as part of the scene as he gazes towards his subjects (the king and queen) who are reflected in a mirror that sits in the background. We, the viewers, are situated as part of the artist’s gaze thus becoming part of the painting although not depicted in the small mirror. In breaking down each and every subject in Velázquez’s painting, Foucault essentially reminds us that power and spatial relationships are varied and interconnected. It is also clear from his theory of power/knowledge that it is “the processes and struggles” that people choose to examine which determine “the forms and possible domains of knowledge” (Foucault, 1980, pp. 27-28).

These power/knowledge struggles emerge in many areas of library science and across related fields such as the context of publishing venues where, for example, preference is given to journals that hold the highest impact factors: scholars who publish in these traditional journal platforms have advantages and clear parameters about their articles counting towards tenure. A researcher wanting to publish through an open access platform will have to pay more than a thousand dollars or find an OA platform that is not viewed as reputable as the typical journal platforms. Thus the cycle of publishing is guided by power relationships and discourse that favors traditional publishing methods in opposition to OA repositories. Analyzing this conundrum, and other areas of library science, through a Foucauldian lens of space allows me to identify how these struggles indeed determine what knowledge counts and what knowledge is suppressed. Administrators who focus their attention to the library mission of space in a singular construct such as redesigning a learning commons continue a limited, narrow production of knowledge that threatens to proliferate as it gains traction. This is why Foucault offers a more complex method to analyze and produce something different when thinking about library spaces and how the mission of academic libraries is developing.

Foucault studied Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1958), which helped him think about how most people view space as internally translated or something we relate to intrinsically. This led him to consider external spaces and how outside relations also help to create the sites we live in and experience. As Foucault explains (1986):

Likewise one could describe, via its network of relations, the close or semi-closed sites of rest—the house, the bedroom, the bed, et cetera. But among all these sites, I am interested in certain ones that have the curious property of being in relation with

all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invent the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect (p. 3).

Rather than begin with the internal room you are studying, such as the bedroom for example, Foucault makes us consider what lies below, or across, as these relationships reveal themselves when analyzed critically. A spatial analysis thus demands that libraries are in relation to other sites such as publishers; student learning; and faculty research across multiple disciplines that produce competing and conflicting discourses. *What are the dominating discourses of space surrounding academic library trends and how do these discourses vie for the material landscape of libraries today?* In returning to my research question, it becomes clear that researching various discourses of space is necessary to learn why changes are taking place in libraries as well as what practices are causing these changes to occur. Further utilizing Foucault's concept of heterotopias will allow me to critically analyze multiple sites of library discourse where resistance and power operate.

### **Discourse and Heterotopic Space**

Discourses are threads of thought, practices, and other articulations that spread into society, be it scholarly literature or everyday practices, to enable and constrain what one believes or thinks. Foucault's studies of medicine and various scientific fields, such as psychology, highlight ruptures of discourse that took place within relations of power rather than slowly evolving, linear developments. These rapid changes, which are accepted based on science, develop in part from discourse. As Sarap (1993) explains Foucault: "There is a whole new 'regime' of discourse which makes possible the separation not of the true from the false but of what may be characterized as scientific" (p. 64). For example, a specific set of library researchers may write an article based on a case study at their library, which they

may believe to have been successful. There is a tendency for others to read through the example and emulate the work that was conducted. Any researchers who repeat the exercises and cite this case study strengthen its discourse until it becomes almost a perfect practice. In studying heterotopias, it is important to analyze discourses because often the scientific practices, such as those which determine the library mission, can go unchallenged.

One of the most interesting observations through extensive reading and writing about library space is that strong contradictions occur, such as the admission that most students prefer quiet, solo study spaces rather than learning commons areas (Hegde et al., 2018). Despite this repeated notion of preferred independent study space, the literature heavily depicts the discourse of building large, open commons areas. Another contradiction shows that students place a high value on collections, including the print book, despite the belief that low-use materials simply take up space. These ideas are ignored and suppressed in an abundance of literature focusing on learning commons and space dedicated to technology and collaboration. The following analyses from the literature will highlight some of these popular discourses while introducing Foucauldian theories, which allows us to reach beyond simple truths as presented. In analyzing the library science space literature, it was important to keep in mind my research questions beginning with, *What are the dominating discourses surrounding academic library trends and how do these discourses vie for the material landscape of libraries today?*

One example previously mentioned was the discourse of textual space. Using language to build and support an ideology can produce a textual space that causes many effects. Several articles explain the relationship between libraries and books as having an aged, symbolic nature (Hegde et al., 2018; Khoo et al., 2016; Latimer, 2018). This

superficial attachment, which utilizes language such as “traditional,” minimizes the importance of the library as an institution for learning and brings the focus of collections under the panoptic lens as something that needs to be monitored, reduced, and perhaps locked away. “For many years, the library has been perceived as a ‘knowledge center’ on campus, in terms of *symbolism*, geography, and practicality, as it concentrates and preserves the academic knowledge found in various materials,” Shoham and Klain-Gabbay (2019) argue before suggesting that libraries are now learning centers no longer focused on “a traditional book-centered structure” (p.1). Connecting the words “traditional” and “book-centered” reveals a space where discourse is operating in a manner to reduce the importance of the print format giving credence to the notion that such resources are outdated.

As dominant discourses continue to flood an institution’s ideological beliefs, the purpose of the institution begins to evolve. This supports one of Foucault’s principles that claims a heterotopic institution, such as the library, changes its purpose or mission with the movement of space and time. The discourse of textual space also connects more concretely to another one of my research questions, “*How do power and cultural dynamics function in determining what a modern library should look like, what purpose it should serve, and who should be involved in the planning of the library as an institution?*” Foucault’s expertise at deconstructing institutions offers us insight on where power is moving. In his discussion about disciplinary methods, he wrote:

Lastly, there is a the modality: it implies an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result and it is exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement,” he wrote adding, “These methods, which made possible the meticulous



control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility, might be called ‘disciplines’ (1995, p. 137).

Library administrators have largely been responsible for the planning of space projects in libraries, often basing these decisions on what is available to them in the literature and from discussions at conferences (Scherlen & McAllister, 2019). Foucault’s description of these disciplines outlines a protocol that is both coercive in nature and forceful, yet many academic libraries should expect a degree of shared governance to occur. Instead, the material landscape becomes dominated by one side and the idea of ‘docility-utility’ produces subjectivities of individuals who follow along with the dominating discourse as its objectives continue to strengthen.

Foucault’s approach to space and power was to begin comparing it with the idea of “utopia.” A utopian society is one that is perfect and opposite of dystopia where only suffering takes place. By disrupting a perfect society or institution, Foucault revealed an other space where “heterotopia not only contrasts with utopia, but actually undermines and unsettles it” (Johnson, 2006, p. 82).

The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. In other words, we do not live in a kind of void, inside of which we could place individuals and things. We do not live inside a void that could be colored with diverse shades of light, *we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another.* (Foucault, 1986, p. 9; italics added for emphasis)

The above statement is the crux of Foucault's notion about space. Although we would like to think of discourses as textual and physical spaces that can be superimposed and blended into an evolving utopian institution, such as the library for example, it is a set of complex power relations that determine the library mission and material landscape of the academic library, making it an "other" space where power/knowledge occurs.

Some overarching themes become apparent in connecting heterotopias to library spaces, and I will use some of Foucault's principles in analyzing select library literature on space. Discourses of space that circulate in the field of library science compete to produce multiple ruptures, not only to libraries and the services offered, but also to those who work in or use the library every day. These changes are bound to multiple discourses in the field that affect the materiality—the space, body, object, and practice—where power relations produce different types of knowledge through its construction of subjects who are effects of this "knowledge." The relationship of power/knowledge allows for a critical analysis of the multiple discourses of space in academic libraries to consider the library as a heterotopic institution.

### **The Production of Library Space**

A number of discourses of space are present in libraries, working to circulate power relations. These discourses include, but are not limited to, architectural and physical spaces; textual spaces where discourse develops through "knowledge" and power; virtual spaces; social spaces; and cognitive spaces. In addition to Foucault, it is also helpful to utilize other theorists who prodigiously studied the topic of space. One of the most well-known authors of writings about space is Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991), French philosopher and sociologist.

Lefebvre's famous work *La Production de l'espace* (1974) has influenced numerous disciplines, most notably geography, for its notions of space construction and urban social production. Influenced greatly by Marx, Lefebvre's work on the social production of space offers a critique of capitalism while also expanding the spheres of our thinking about space be it social, mental, or physical space.

Social space will be revealed in its particularity to the extent that it ceases to be indistinguishable from mental space (as defined by the philosophers and mathematicians) on the one hand, and the physical space (as defined by practico-sensory activity and the perception of 'nature') on the other. What I shall be seeking to demonstrate is that such a social space is constituted neither by a collection of things or an aggregate of (sensory) data, nor by a void packed like a parcel with various contents, and that it is irreducible to a 'form' imposed upon phenomena, upon things, upon physical materiality. (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 27)

If social space holds no distinction from mental or physical space, then how does Lefebvre define it; how does he understand it to occur? "*(Social space is a (social) product,*" he writes adding, "...the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action; that in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power; yet that, as such, it escapes in part from those who would make use of it (Lefebvre, 1974/1991, p. 26)." If produced spaces affect our thinking and actions, then studying how library space might function to change who we are and how we learn seems extremely important. Harvey Molotch's review of *The Production of Space* offers additional clarity about the large, complex work. He explains:

At the 'production' end of the title, Lefebvre means that humans create the space in

which they make their lives; it is a project shaped by interests of classes, experts, the grassroots, and other contending forces. Space is not simply inherited from nature, or passed on by the dead hand of the past, or autonomously determined by 'laws' of spatial geometry as per conventional location theory. Space is produced and reproduced through human intentions, even if unanticipated consequences also develop, and even as space constrains and influences those producing it. (Molotch, 1993, p. 887)

Foucault would be highly interested in these comments on space as it is associated with power and dominance where power is moving through individuals. The notion that space can constrain and influence would certainly resonate with Foucault's own work on prisons, as well as his notion of "other" spaces. As mentioned previously, he too thought about space both in its architectural formations as well as how it relates to power. An example of this could be found in Foucault's work *Discipline & Punish* (1975) where he analyzes the history of prison systems and punishment. "In organizing 'cells', 'places' and 'ranks', the disciplines create complex spaces that are at once architectural, functional and hierarchical," he wrote adding:

It is spaces that provide fixed positions and permit circulation; they carve out individual segments and establish operational links; they mark places and indicate values; they guarantee the obedience of individuals, but also a better economy of time and gesture. They are mixed spaces: real because they govern the disposition of buildings, rooms, furniture, but also ideal, because they are projected over this arrangement of characterizations, assessments, hierarchies. (p. 148)

Taking Lefebvre's notion that spaces have the ability to constrain and produce, we can see similarities in what Foucault has stated through his lens of power. One can appreciate Foucault's layered description of the intersections between discipline and space, which are helpful in analyzing any relevant space and its effects. Using Foucault's excerpt from *Discipline & Punish* above to dissect library space, in addition to the relevant heterotopic principles (listed below) he established, will be helpful in analyzing discourses to answer my research question about how these dominant discourses of space vie for the material landscape of libraries today. In critically analyzing space as a dominant discourse working in a binary relationship, I seek to reveal the effects these changes to space have on the academic library mission as well as how this trend affects library patrons. Therefore, I believe it will be useful to conduct a close reading of the preceding quotation from *Discipline & Punish* to ponder the concept of space and its movement utilizing Foucault's words. In addition, some overarching themes become apparent in connecting heterotopias to library spaces, and I will use some of Foucault's principles to analyze select library literature on space. Foucault's (1986/1967) six principles of heterotopias can be generally characterized as:

1. Heterotopias are present in all cultures in varied forms.
2. A heterotopia has a "precise and determined function" based on the culture it is situated in.
3. A heterotopia is a place that can hold several "incompatible" spaces.
4. Portions of time are an example of heterotopia.
5. Heterotopias are "not freely accessible like a public place," yet can be opened and closed at times.
6. Heterotopias "function in relation to all the space that remains" (pp. 4-8).

Each heterotopic principle is unique and offers a different idea relating to space. Not all principles are easily applied to library space, so I have selected the ones that best align with each particular topic. Studying the discourses of space that circulate in the field of library science through the layered lenses of heterotopia and power relations in Foucault's work on discipline allows me to analyze the different types of knowledge being produced in addition to the effects of this knowledge.

***It is spaces that provide fixed positions and permit circulation...***

One goal of building large, open common areas is to create a dynamic space where there is always movement. With such grand areas focused on open, collaborative seating arrangements, one might question how changes to the structure of a library commons affects its patrons' use of the library. Foucault's Fifth principle of heterotopia speaks to a system of opening and closing a site that "is not freely accessible like a public place" (1986, p. 7). Foucault initially referred to religious sites where activities of purification took place, but expands this principle to explain that there are spaces where exclusions are hidden creating an illusion "—we think we enter where we are, by the very fact we enter, excluded" (Foucault, 1986, p. 8). In creating these open commons areas, fewer spaces become dedicated to private study spaces and print collections. Those who would venture to the library for quiet, independent research are actually excluded from large areas of space despite the illusory belief that libraries are creating more welcoming spaces for all. Foucault used a term known as *enclosure* to define a place as being different and enclosed from another space (1995). He offers several examples from military barracks to factories (p. 142). There is a type of control within those settings. Alarms and bells sound the times military units must complete training or factory workers must return to their shifts; in these moments it is

unacceptable for military personnel or factory workers to step away from their tasks, thus these spaces form an enclosure. Foucault was speaking about what he called “disciplinary space” explained in his chapter “Docile Bodies” from *Discipline & Punish*. Foucault opens up an important section on discipline and space by stating that “Discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space” (1995, p. 149). As individuals move through a space, they also become part of a disciplinary space that functions as a site where power circulates and is restricted.

With larger, open areas, one witnesses an establishment of a disciplinary system that is easier to assess and identify individuals. Foucault explains:

One must eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable and dangerous coagulation; it was a tactic of anti-desertion, anti-vagabondage, anti-concentration. Its aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It was a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using. Discipline organizes an analytical space (p. 143).

When Foucault explains that discipline has the ability to organize analytical space, he is showing us that the use of spaces can provide certain advantages to some, while disadvantaging others. Although desertion or lack of concentration, as he alludes to, are obviously not the goal of library common areas, the discipline of these new spaces occurs through the elimination and reduction of quiet, solo study areas and print materials that are weeded to create room for more seating and new furniture. Gate counts become the main

attraction for administrators who would like to see usage increase so developing large areas that seat numerous people becomes the preferred tactic. Some authors argue that making space part of your ongoing assessment leads to multiple benefits: “Those benefits come in two forms, the quick tangible benefits (new furniture, funding for painting and power, etc.) and long-term understanding of our users and our space,” Gerke and Teeter (2017) wrote in their ACRL conference paper titled “Counting Heads: Building Space Assessment into your Library Assessment Plan” (p. 159). But assessing library space based mainly on quantitative data ignores some of the more important factors that make the library a space which is more than a great commons area. The heterotopic institution becomes closed in that it is only freely available to those who prefer to utilize a library with fewer resources and less independent study space.

The architectural plans of Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon became part of Foucault’s study of prisons and discipline. Bentham’s idea of a central tower with large windows created a sense of constant surveillance in which prisoners would always feel that they were being watched to the point they began surveilling themselves. “Visibility is a trap,” Foucault said (1995, p. 200).

One might think it far-fetched to compare libraries to prisons, and that is not the intention of bringing forth the notion of the panopticon. Yet Foucault would point out that even the school systems today have borrowed many of the disciplinary methods that are enacted within the confines of prison: formal walking lines, rigid schedules, and close surveillance by teachers. Add in the mix that classrooms are large, open spaces in which you are always on display and one can see that such a comparison to library commons areas is possible. One might ask why the push toward a trend of collaborative space for learning and



the reinvention of library spaces? “Unlike the traditional perception of the lecturer as the source of knowledge, the higher education system today encourages learning groups, multidisciplinary programs, and informal meetings as additional ways of learning,” Shoham and Klain-Gabbay (2019) state citing Zvyagintseva (2018) (p.1). It is true that digital technologies have enabled online learning, but it is still unclear why librarians believe that group, collaborative work should be prioritized over solo study. This is especially concerning given that many of the authors of articles stating the importance of collaborative learning spaces eventually admit that the majority of students prefer solo study spaces.

In 2018, Hegde et al. conducted a survey at Texas State University to find out what types of space faculty and students preferred. The authors worked with a graduate student, who likely provided a student perspective about space design. The authors surveyed 199 people and found that 85 percent of participants preferred independent study spaces. Why is this extremely important? Because so long as libraries continue to diminish the important services and collections known to be the foundational elements offered by libraries, there is a risk of diluting the mission libraries were intended to serve. Rather than maintaining the institution as a place of learning and growth, the informal, social aspect becomes more important and as the authors state, this atmosphere is replicable anywhere on campuses that have comfy furniture and some space.

Disciplinary systems of circulation and monitoring become evident in learning commons areas. More important than disciplinary power is the result of what is being changed or ignored as large spaces are being constructed. In an article about information and learning commons, Allison et al. (2019) looked at what affects the development of a commons area would have on collections and other services. “Library administrators and

librarians who were more learning spaces-oriented argued for the aesthetic qualities of the newly remodeled space and pointed to research on collaborative learning, to research on students' desires for library spaces that suited their needs, to research on learning outcomes, and to research and anecdotes from peer institutions concerning how learning commons greatly increased foot traffic in academic/research libraries" (p. 307). One could ask why students could not just as easily research learning outcomes in private, solo study areas? Foucault would also observe the statistical aspect of this quotation that uses "foot traffic" as an important piece of information derived from other institutions. Why would such a statistic be important for library administrators to focus on? In the next section I will elaborate on the statistical importance of libraries as it relates to power relations.

***(Spaces) carve out individual segments and establish operational links...***

A delicate balance is occurring as libraries attempt to create aesthetically-pleasing spaces that are useful for group work, which coincidentally shifts priorities away from research collections and individual spaces. One component of this thinking is that patrons should be thought of as customers. Mathews and Soistmann (2016) wrote about impulse purchasing in stores and how store spaces and shopping experiences can translate to libraries where the design of various spaces offers an inviting experience (p. 51). One must ask what gets lost in developing individual spaces based on group work and technology-driven goals. Studies have documented various types of spaces including libraries as spaces for social gathering, collaborative learning, solo study, and technology centers (Bryant et al., 2009). These alterations in space suggest a change in the core mission of academic libraries, which also threatens to change the library as an institution. Foucault's heterotopic principle that an institution's mission will change based on its culture connects to the idea that individual

segments are carved out by spaces and establish operations. If heterotopias function in relation to space then it makes sense that individual segments of space help determine the function, or operational links, that take place. The operations will also have strong implications for patrons as well as library employees. This connects to Lefebvre's belief that spaces, which are produced with human intentions, can lead to unintended consequences. While libraries are making these swift changes to spaces, the alterations that take place to the previous mission of offering research collections and quiet, individual study spaces shifts to be more focused on a mission driven by aesthetics and increasing the number of visitors. This new focus takes precedent causing a binary relationship between group study versus independent study and research collections. The changes require monetary support including technologically-based offerings such as makerspaces and furniture enhancements. In this binary we witness power working and the result is the reduction of library emphasis on collections such as print resources that are necessary for humanities research.

Foucault directs our attention to something greater than a single discourse, or a single institution, when it comes to observing this power and its inner workings through individuals who sustain the discourses by which we live and follow.

What we are dealing with in this new technology of power is not exactly society (or at least not the social body, as defined by the jurists), nor is it the individual-as-body. It is a new body, a multiple body, a body with so many heads that, while they might not be infinite in number, cannot necessarily be counted. Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as a political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power's problem. (2003, p. 245)

Indeed, when thinking about space and the population as a biological problem, it makes sense to fill as many seats into one room as possible so as to monitor and increase the number of patrons who might be able to use a library. It also becomes easier to monitor each individual's actions. Community members and homeless populations trying to access computers for their own use are an example of how these public spaces are not freely accessible as Foucault explained in his heterotopic principle. Although they are welcome to the library, there are different treatments that usually take place for patrons wishing to access a computer or print an application. Yet these individuals are counted for statistical purposes and become useful to libraries as it assesses the library population and its use.

Foucault is careful in differentiating disciplinary mechanisms from biopolitics, which include "forecasts, statistical estimates, and overall measures," but it is easy to draw a connection between these two notions when he states that "...regulatory mechanisms must be established to establish an equilibrium, maintain an average, establish a sort of homeostasis, and compensate for variations within this general population and its aleatory field" (2003, p. 246). When statistical averages are achieved, in other words, operations work more smoothly and allow for better connections to occur through a system or institution, be it a library, the U.S. Congress, or the connected medical bodies developing a new vaccine, for example. An imbalance is occurring as libraries attempt to create aesthetically and socially pleasing spaces that are useful for group work while also shifting priorities away from research collections and individual spaces. These alterations in space suggest a change in the core mission of academic libraries, which also threatens to change the library as an institution. Foucault's heterotopic principle that an institution's mission will change has strong implications for patrons as well as library employees.

*(Spaces) mark places and indicate values...*

If, as Foucault states, spaces reveal the very values of the place they mark, libraries appear to be valuing science and technology with the implementation of new technological offerings. Those long-standing supporters of the library who rely on collections become suppressed by the attention given to non-traditional research initiatives. To fulfill this new mission, libraries are moving collections into remote, off-site storage where patrons are no longer able to walk the stacks and browse materials (Schroeder, et al., 2013; Reynolds, et al. 2020). The common discourse claims that print is no longer important despite the number of recent studies that reveal students across multiple disciplines actually prefer print sources (Baron et al., 2017; Enis, 2018; Riffe, 2017). As a heterotopia, Foucault's example of the library as a place attempting to collect all of time is problematic. This is true, but one must also remember that librarians are tasked with providing collections based on their particular institution's curricular and research needs. Using money for technology and space renovation reduces the amount available to collections, and also alters the time-space relationship because instead of preserving certain materials that support the historical research of some disciplines, a focus on collecting technological gadgets representing present-day trends occurs.

In analyzing an article (Latimer, 2018) titled "*2050: A Library Space Odyssey. Planning the Future Library*" we see a number of assumptions and discursive tactics that further strengthen the movement toward changing all libraries into alternative learning spaces. "At the start of the 21st century, there was much talk of the demise of the physical library and the growth of the virtual library" Latimer states, explaining that there was a focus on storing collections. The author fails to ask why it was important to build collections and

what impact resulted. Instead, she moves toward statements about creating a different library model “conducive to interaction and innovation” (p. 203). Her study focuses on various library examples including the Seattle Public Library and Delft Technical University Library.

Both libraries, although serving very different types of users, emphasized the need to move away from book-dominated spaces to ones that provided access to, and interaction with, information in all formats and were welcoming public spaces.

Indeed, at Delft the library director maintained that books, like good wine, should be stored underground. (p. 203)

Many researchers in the humanities would be shocked upon reading the above quotation, yet it is one of many statements that frequently appears in the library science literature discussing the future of libraries. One can easily draw conclusions being made. Limited access would be provided to books moved in basements, or to off-site storage, and there would be no opportunity for scholars to serendipitously discover new, related materials on research topics. In addition, only large, research institutions usually have access to such storage facilities. Foucault wrote about the control of activity and used the time-table as an example for how people refined and mastered the concept of schedule in schools, hospitals, prisons, and other communities to take hold of the body and utilize it for what was needed; oftentimes a rigorous schedule was needed for better production. By removing print collections and “locking” them away in an off-site repository, librarians are essentially controlling the type of research activity occurring inside the library. More collaborative spaces built around technology reduces humanities work and opportunities to use materials that may benefit areas of art, history, music, theatre, dance, English, philosophy and other humanities disciplines save for those invested in digital humanities work. Why the need to lock up, or place print

materials below in a cellar, as if the items were prisoners kept away from daylight? I fear that discourse has pushed STEM-related research so far forward that even libraries will continue to fold under the guise that a program such as “STEAM,” which includes *some* art, is the only course to follow. What is happening in relation to all of this is that the power of discourse and various mechanisms such as discipline and tactics are creating docile librarians who shudder to think of being irrelevant or considered useless. Rather than question emerging trends that sweep across libraries like a tsunami leaving everything changed in its wake before one has time to react, librarians too easily agree to administrators who want to make their name or believe that they are setting the course for a better future.

In asking how power and cultural dynamics function to determine what a modern library should look like and what purpose it should serve, it is important to consider the close association the public shares with public libraries. Several examples of public libraries changing their mission, or conducting massive weeding projects, can be found in more common publications such as newspapers and even on social media. “It’s not a matter of locating everything on one level, that of the event, but of realising that there are actually a whole order of levels of different types of events differing in amplitude, chronological breadth, and capacity to produce effects,” Foucault (1995) wrote (p. 114). This quotation reminds me that even though public and academic libraries share different arenas, what takes place within those institutions has the power to produce effects upon one another. Space and time, indeed, become factors as power moves through people who follow the discourses they believe. Foucault’s words also remind us that these growing discourses are multilayered. One example of this space development as a trend in libraries can be found in the fusing of

academic and public libraries, especially as academic library researchers cite public library studies as models to follow.

With Latimer's example of another public library, we see an infusion of cases where the academic and public territories are being merged. This is concerning for several reasons on both sides. Academic libraries serve a different population than public libraries, and faculty often rely on collections to publish scholarly articles for obtaining tenure and creating instruction as well as research agendas. The courses they teach are part of a curriculum focused on providing students with a rigorous education in hope that each student uses what has been learned to become a professional in the selected discipline. To continue to draw examples from public libraries to support space redesign is flawed. While Latimer is correct that part of the trend has been a movement from print to digital collections, it does not support her claim that spaces should be redesigned based on this sole trend. One reason for moving to digital, Latimer believes, is to create a more aesthetic environment, which could be used as a veil under the auspices of "increasing need for learning".

"This raises challenges of providing attractive spaces with ambiance but has the great advantage of freeing up space to support another trend — the *increasing need for learning, social and research space*," Latimer writes (p. 204; italics added for emphasis). When has learning, especially in the academic environment, ever witnessed a lack of increased need? It has always been paramount to the university and library mission. It is unclear why there is a claim for newfound learning and collaboration, yet many authors assert this is the reason why libraries must be redesigned. What is more astonishing is that many of these same authors who call for large, collaborative commons areas eventually admit that students prefer, and require quiet solo study spaces. Latimer even returns to this idea: "Just as technology, e-



publishing and collaborative learning spaces are key factors in library design so too, is the need to be aware of an increasing demand for silent, even technology-free spaces, custom-designed high quality research hubs and the importance of place-defining print collections and archives in bringing scholars to the parent institution” (p. 206).

Foucault (1995) reminds us that “A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved,” (p. 136). Creating spaces based on aesthetics and large, collaborative areas to increase the number of patrons visiting the library for statistical purposes appears to be an example of docility. By ignoring the need and apparent preference for individual, quiet study areas, libraries are disregarding an aspect of learning that is equally, if not perhaps more important as collaborative learning. Furthermore, the use of technology to extend these spaces potentially jeopardizes the open learning of individuals. While technology can add flexibility, it fails to do so if the binary of technology versus print continues to be dominated by one side. If one were to compare the number of patrons who utilize new technology tools to those who simply need scholarly research materials, be it digital or print, the percentage would likely reveal that technology-inclined research is mostly conducted by specific disciplines. STEM-related programs thrive on technology, but do not make up the composition of the entire disciplinary landscape. Funding for the sciences will continue to increase while humanities and arts research will be diminished, and all of these factors can be witnessed in the evolving spaces of academic libraries. Lefebvre connected his ideas of space to the powerful movement of capitalism, and one may see similar connections when considering how STEM programs are well-funded versus those in the humanities (Cohen, 2016).

Lefebvre (1974/1991) believes that space theory holds a regulatory role explaining that, “As it expands, this society (neocapitalism or corporate capitalism) can generate only chaos in space” (p. 420). “The transformation of society presupposes a collective ownership and management of space founded on the permanent participation of the ‘interested parties’, with their multiple, varied and even contradictory interests,” Lefebvre wrote (p. 422). Perhaps Lefebvre is alluding to a binary relationship when mentioning “contradictory interests.” Foucault explains that within these oppositional relationships there exists a domination by one side. Space, therefore, has the ability to reflect a power dynamic in the binary relationship. Let us examine a prime example of the dominant discourse of space infiltrating the public library setting.

In November of 2019, the Knight Foundation contributed \$10 million to create a new downtown Charlotte, North Carolina public library. “Beyond Books: The Transformation of Charlotte’s Main Library, with \$10M from Knight” depicts the intention of this discourse which has been discussed. The article explains that the campaign to obtain more than \$135 million for the new library will help create a “state-of-the-art public space that can serve not just as a repository for books, but as a true commons for all the city’s residents” (Thomas, Paragraph 1, 2019).

In this vital time, the New Main Library can serve as a forum for Charlotteans to chart a course towards a prosperous and equitable city. With technology at the forefront, this project will play a transformational role in the development of our city, while serving as a model for libraries of the future. (Thomas).

While free technology does offer those who cannot afford it opportunities to learn, the poststructural question of “What is lost?” becomes apparent. “Space is fundamental in any

form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power,” Foucault said (1991, p. 252). Libraries have long been places of community and opportunity, as Thomas is arguing. Yet transitioning to becoming only spaces of community and technology will bring with it effects to all patrons. The loss of reading materials and more quiet areas of study may have ill effects. I frequently visited the public library when studying for the GRE, and I know others who use their public libraries to conduct work as well as research. What happens when these spaces are diminished into large area rooms where there is little privacy to contemplate? Foucault was correct in the opening quote of this section, there are multilayered events that build discourses using time and space to offset the binary. The selection below reveals how one can strengthen a binary:

Because of the transition of libraries from being book-centered to user-centered and in line with the development of digital technologies, academic libraries have become digitally assisted learning centers, where users learn alone or in groups,” Klain-Gabbay explains, “Importantly, as digital technologies eliminate many of the spatial and temporal barriers to obtaining information, currently libraries provide good public spaces with information services, thus supporting learning in ways that are social and immersive in nature. (Bennett, 2009, p. 3)

Many academic authors cite Bennett when discussing space and libraries, and the quote cited by Klain-Gabbay reflects the importance of public spaces while ignoring the importance of private, independent spaces to support learning. No one disagrees that digital technology provides relief in many ways, but there are other aspects one may not consider such as the cost of acquiring and maintaining digital resources, the impermanence of content, and the simple fact that not everything is found digitally, especially materials that support the arts,

humanities and social sciences. In addition, the binary of electronic versus print becomes a sustained discourse where one is favored over the other based on renovated spaces that focus on technology. “Spaces mark places and indicate values...” Foucault (1975) wrote. What values are being indicated from the massive removal of print resources and acquisition of technology? Beyond print versus electronic, what virtual spaces might be removed with the cutting of electronic resources such as journals and ebooks while monies are used to purchase non-collection materials?

***(Spaces) guarantee the obedience of individuals...***

Although Foucault’s essay “Docile Bodies” in *Discipline and Punish*, is largely focused on discipline of the body and how to exhaust an individual through tactics, or what he called an economy of the body, it offers many useful ideas for thinking about library spaces. This is because space is used throughout the work as has been shown in the paragraphs above. Obedience manifests in various formations, including silencing an individual. I witnessed this firsthand while attending the largest academic library conference on collections in North America. At Charleston Conference in 2017, one of the main speakers delivered a white paper titled “The Future of the Academic Library Print Collection: A Space for Engagement.” The white paper focused on a flexible way to offer print collections to faculty and students, highlighting the importance of “a data-driven approach to print collections” and utilizing space appropriately (p. 2). Here are the first two sentences from the abstract which showcase how space reaches all areas of library work, including print management:

Academic libraries seek to engage people with information resources and maximize use of library spaces. When users increasingly rely on digital rather than print

resources, libraries respond by shifting space usage from stacks to user working and reading spaces. How then do we, as academic library professionals, best keep print collections on public view and maximize user engagement? (O'Donnell et al., 2017, p. 2)

There are two interesting points in the statement above. One is that the notion of space, as a subject, makes an immediate and repetitive appearance; the second is the subtle manner in which print resources become defined secondary to digital resources and treated similarly as if they were rare resources that have to be put on display in a museum-type environment. In fact, my first inclination was that the authors were suggesting libraries act more like museums, and while reading the whitepaper, I came across a section with the heading “Long-term: Museum-style Collections” (p. 24). In museums, there is a goal of using space for the movement of individuals to view carefully curated collections. Some of the suggestions in the whitepaper do make sense, I admit, such as promoting new materials and offering displays. Still, the approach used by the authors to expand the social impact of an academic library is by borrowing “inspiration from other institutions already heavily involved in social engagement” (p. 32). Foucault’s (1986) final heterotopic principle is that heterotopias “function in relation to all the space that remains” (p. 27). Drawing inspiration from outside library sources such as stores, businesses, and common architectural institutions, will therefore change the way libraries operate. Our society is heavily influenced by mass media and already well-adapted to consumerism. One need not look hard to find examples of any institution affected by these common arenas that populate everyday life.

In libraries, O'Donnell et al. are arguing that main stacks print collections be moved away in order to allow patrons to have other spaces to use. “While open stacks remain

important engines of discovery, they are often seen by administrators as a less and less effective utilization of campus space at a time when more and more demands are placed on the space inventory,” the authors wrote later adding, “Given that space is limited, each volume’s presence in our stacks needs to contribute specifically to the design of the whole” (p. 23). One of the problems with this statement is that the authors assume most libraries have access to off-site storage, and while O’Donnell’s presentation at Charleston Conference may have been directed at large, research institutions who have such access, it felt as though he was addressing all libraries. The other, probably more concerning, problem with these remarks is the focus on aesthetics and what he calls “design of the whole.” Administrators are obsessed with creating libraries that have the visual appeal of an Apple store: attractive, innovative, and persuasive (Mathews & Soistmann, 2016). Mathews and Soistmann also connect the design process to merchandising:

As I’ve evolved as a learning space developer, I’ve found myself increasingly drawn to retail environments. On a basic level, stores serve as browsable warehouses, where people move through a space and are exposed to many different items. The merchant hopes to make transactions and a profit—but there is more to it than that. The core purpose of a marketplace is to facilitate an exchange. This concept of trade is intriguing since people use libraries to find, share, and develop ideas, tools, skills, and knowledge ... Manipulative? Perhaps. But we can learn from this example. Since the environment has a direct impact on behaviors and emotions, it behooves us to study the science and tactics of merchandising so that we can curate powerful places as well. (p. 36)

Both Foucault and Lefebvre would have reveled in discussing the statement above, which concludes by indicating that power is not only being produced by individuals as spaces are developed, but that the capitalist ideology continues to infiltrate the spaces we once held most sacred including the library. Lefebvre believes that space is politically contested and produced based on growth and production of the state, i.e. industrial, agricultural, etc. Through these systems, ideologies and political organizations are maintained thus determining the production of space, which produces our subjectivities.

. . . The theory of space refuses to take the term ‘space’ in any trivial or unexamined sense, or to conflate the space of social practice with space as understood by geographers, economists, and others. To accept any such conception of space, whether in the original form or as redefined by a particular discipline, is inevitably to view space as a tool or passive receptacle for the planners, with their talk of ‘harmonious development,’ ‘balance’ and ‘optimum use.’ (Lefebvre, p. 420)

Essentially, library administrators are using space as a tool and Lefebvre succinctly describes their utilization of this tool when naming “harmonious development” and “balance” as passive examples when thinking about space. Regardless of whether these administrators would agree with Lefebvre or not, their actions have real effects on spaces, on libraries, and on patrons in addition to librarians. Cox (2019) draws a connection with the trend of space and library renovations to Closet-Crane (2011) who believed “commercial thinking” apparent in student discourses helped spearhead the movement. It is interesting to consider the idea of commercialism in libraries, especially in light of neoliberal concepts such as economic inequality. It seems highly questionable for librarians to spend hefty amounts of money to renovate spaces hiring architecture firms while students and faculty may have benefited

otherwise from the funds. This is not to say that space renovations cannot benefit faculty and students, but in terms of high-cost architecture firms, it would be unfair to proceed as such without the feedback of faculty and students, who may have preferred other resources than comfy seating and a large commons area. Still, Cox does not lose sight of what is most important to patrons at the academic library: “Despite the list including non-work activities, study is the main purpose of visiting the library,” Cox (2019, p. 59) explains citing May and Swabey (2015). He also aptly notes “...that there is not one ideal neutral space for learning,” (Cox, 2019, p. 64). Yet studying these competing discourses of academic library spaces and practicing in the field of library science reveal that the social production of these spaces is counterintuitive to the idea of the library being a place of learning. Coffee shops, game rooms, and makerspaces all have their benefits, but what is at the core of these changes is the dissolution of academia as it evolves into another mere marketplace for the “exchange” of ideas and commercial appeal.

### **Figure 1**

*Architectural rendering of the BiblioTech “bookless library” in Bexar County, Texas*



*Note.* Image courtesy of Muñoz & Company, 2021.



What interested me most about the Charleston Conference presentation was the delivery of O'Donnell's white paper. It was presented in a positivistic manner that informed the audience there was no need to question or debate the notion we should think differently about print resources and the spaces they occupy. The few people who spoke after the presentation simply praised O'Donnell and what was more interesting is that those few outspoken audience members who agreed with the presentation were from tech schools who may have had little understanding about humanities research or the use of print resources. In this very instance, I witnessed what Foucault meant by docility, for I knew there were many people there who fundamentally disagreed with O'Donnell, but no one wanted to debate the library administrator or challenge his ideas because of the binary relationship and dominance of digital over print. Those who would question why print books should be placed in a warehouse rendering them unable to be serendipitously discovered or browsed are trapped in a dominating discourse that discourages any challenge to mainstream thought. In fact, oppositional ideas would make one appear "out of touch" or "outdated" in the field of library science where the belief is that one must continuously evolve to maintain relevance; thus power is always on the move and working to make individuals suppress their own differing beliefs. Foucault's notion that spaces "guarantee the obedience of individuals" occurred both in the space of that presentation, but also in the various library spaces where functions are developed based on the library as a heterotopic institution.

### **Conclusion**

In analyzing the discursive realities that dominate the field of academic libraries, it becomes clear that space reaches into all sectors of library work from collections to leadership and any service that is provided. Library directors, however, continue to turn their

back on important goals such as these and instead continue to pursue the aesthetically-pleasing trends of hiring architects to redesign library space and using important funds to purchase new furniture. One must ask if this puts the library as an institution at risk? There is a statistical desire to justify this evolution of library space, just as Foucault discovered with the institutions he studied. “Because the conceptual basis of current academic library design is still changing away from traditional academic library spaces, it is necessary to continuously evaluate user needs and desires for study spaces, and what makes an ideal study space, to keep the design of academic libraries relevant to its patrons” Hegde et al. (2018) argue (p. 895). This statement preferences the design of library spaces as paramount to learning. Users are evolving with new technology and other trends, but overall the primary reason for students visiting the library is to study and work on research projects. Some have argued that the future of library collections is digital and anyone who counters this argument is in the minority. Still, we must keep in mind that there are clues as to why print is still preferred by many students and faculty. Perhaps we can learn from Foucault’s comments on the effects discipline has on space:

In organizing ‘cells’, ‘places’ and ‘ranks’, the disciplines create complex spaces that are at once architectural, functional and hierarchical. It is spaces that provide fixed positions and permit circulation; they carve out individual segments and establish operational links; they mark places and indicate values; they guarantee the obedience of individuals, but also a better economy of time and gesture. They are mixed spaces: real because they govern the disposition of buildings, rooms, furniture, but also ideal, because they are projected over this arrangement of characterizations, assessments, hierarchies. (1995, p. 148)

The hierarchy that predominates libraries is connected to the physical and mental spaces that prioritize open-area, collaborative seating and technology. A colleague once said to me, “When will we ever have enough seats in the library?” He was alluding to a space renovation that took place at Appalachian State University in which one of the goals was to add more student seating and decrease the print stacks. One of the main arguments for increasing seating in addition to a growing student body was that students packed the library during exams. While this may be true, another colleague also asked me what students would study when all of the print collections were purged, and collections were cut because of the large expense to redesign the library. Fortunately, a careful review of Appalachian State’s print book collection preserved many items in the humanities and social sciences. Although students may use digital books and articles more frequently than print, it is notable that they still prefer something tangible when working on research projects (Baron et al., 2017; Mizrachi et al., 2018).

It is intriguing that Foucault states how spaces both “establish operational links” as well as “mark places and indicate values” given that the direction of academic libraries appear to support such notions (1995, p. 148). The academic library is evolving into a characterization that is reminiscent of the 1970s lounge, with its mixed furniture including plush seating, blended with the storefront of an Apple Store that bustles with activity and is littered with screens and other gadgets.<sup>3</sup> One interesting notion Hegde et al. (2018) explain is even when collaborative areas are arranged, many students will alter these environments to suit their individualized study needs. “Studies indicate that students alter furniture arrangement or orient themselves away from others to seek visual privacy and to respect

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<sup>3</sup> See bookless library in Bexar County Texas: <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2013/09/14/222442870/bookless-public-library-opens-in-texas>

personal space and territory,” Hegde et al. said adding, “Students generally prefer not to use occupied tables even if there are seats available” (p. 897). What many in the field of library science may not realize is that Hedge et al. point out a “shift from emphasis only on communal/social learning spaces to an equal emphasis on quiet learning spaces” (p. 897). Why would this be suppressed? Discourse is usually reflected in binaries dominated by one voice. The dominant discourse has been collaborative space for more than a decade now, so overturning such a discourse is a real challenge, but that’s also not the goal of poststructuralism. If Hedge et al.’s suspicion is correct, all of the numerous library renovations dedicated solely to group study and collaboration, as well as the millions of dollars poured into these projects, have been out of pursuit of the latest trend. From an educational leadership perspective, this reflects poorly on library administration. Everyone agrees that libraries must be aware of changes in technology, but the field severely lacks the discipline to question and deconstruct extremely major changes that can affect users. Connecting these issues to philosophy, especially poststructural theories, will allow libraries to move at a more even pace while surveying all of the options that are inside and outside of binary thinking.

What effects might these drastic changes to library spaces have on the subjectivity of individuals? If spaces become locales of power and resistance in patrons, employees, and administrators, how do we navigate such expeditious changes to the library’s resources and its physical space? As the production of library space becomes more connected to capitalism and the marketplace, there is the potential to see a loss of core values that have always helped populations learn and succeed. In addition to affecting the subjectivity of employees, the library patrons will witness the greatest challenges. Thus it will be useful to analyze in the

next chapter the spaces that are continually changing in tandem with Foucault's idea of biopower to learn how academic libraries can become spaces that are both produced and producing power to control populations.

## Chapter Five

### **The Normalization of Academic Libraries Through Space and Biopower**

In the previous chapter, I analyzed how discourse and power/knowledge work in the field of library science and space. Power, as Foucault explains, moves through individuals as it arranges and rearranges how individuals situate themselves in library spaces, as well as how bodies of knowledge about library services, collections, and missions are put into discourse through relations of power. In closely analyzing these dominant discourses, I revealed many of the tactics used to produce and strengthen the trend of space in academic libraries such as consumerism and the turn towards group spaces and technology, all of which have effects on the subjectivities of library patrons. It was important to study these issues through a poststructural lens to reveal areas connected to space that may not have been imagined otherwise. Through these changes to library space, individual subjectivities are affected as power moves through both those who lead and support the popular side of a dominant binary and those who may find their voices suppressed. These issues combine to bring about a different conceptual issue Foucault developed—biopower, where the population becomes understood as a resource managed by the state or institution. Transitioning to Foucault's notion of biopower will uncover how academic libraries become spaces that are produced as well as a productive power that has the potential to control its population of users. Furthermore, turning our attention towards the movement of biopower will indicate how populations are controlled and regulated through the normalization of discourse as it moves through the library literature and the subjects who work in and use the library.

This chapter incorporates a close reading of Foucault's theory of biopower to analyze academic libraries in order to create new ideas about space and how it affects the library as an institution. Thinking space with biopower enables us to consider how political power functions in terms of *population*, as opposed to individuals. I also use visual images to consider how changes in space connect to discourse and biopower. This analysis takes up my second research question, *How does biopower function in the 21st-century library? More specifically, how are subjects made and populations controlled through the employment of biopower?* This question allows me to analyze how the discursive field of space shapes academic libraries and the population who both use and work in these institutions. Foucault's theory of biopower is one in which power functions as a force affecting populations based on the dominant discourse. Population, as is defined for this study, includes those who both work in and use the academic library for research and the production of scholarship. It also includes the group of people who determine the everyday practices and services of the library (i.e. library governance), those who are also part of a movement of biopower based on dominant discourses. I also define population in terms of print books, an entire format affected by space renovation, in analyzing the effects of biopower. *The History of Sexuality* reveals much in his thinking about individual subjects, power, and his notion of biopower and is thus the focus of the next section.

### **Introduction to Biopower**

In 1978, Foucault wrote *The History of Sexuality* which included a chapter titled *Right of Death and Power Over Life*. This important work reevaluates his research interest of sovereign power, a juridical form of power where a king could confiscate one's belongings and take hold of not only their possessions but also their body to include even

their life. “But if someone dared to rise up against him and transgress his laws, then he could exercise a direct power over the offender’s life: as punishment, the latter would be put to death,” Foucault explains (p. 135). Likewise, the king would have the power to let somebody live if he decided to show forgiveness; Foucault surmised that this “juridical form must be referred to a historical type of society in which power was exercised mainly as a means of deduction (*prélèvement*), a subtraction mechanism...” (p. 136). Eventually this sovereign power was replaced by the state, and Foucault recognizes that deduction, as was defined during and before the Classical age, is one of several mechanisms operating in a spectrum of power that controls the body.

Foucault’s *L’Histoire de la sexualité* included four volumes analyzing what he believed to be a recent phenomenon as evidenced through the discourses of sexuality in Western society since the 17th century. Using examples from the 18th and 19th centuries, Foucault (1978) reveals that the discourse of sexuality explodes in a scientific spectrum of study that touches on multiple areas from mental illness to sexuality of children. Whether intentional or not, during his study of sexuality Foucault arrives at another important concept as he defines *biopower*, his understanding of power being more than something that only causes repression. This helps him to create an irruption with the discursive line of thinking about power and population:

Governments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a ‘people,’ but with a ‘population,’ with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses, patterns of diet and habitation. (p. 25)



The shift to governmental, state surveillance over population, rather than individual subjects is a turning point, Foucault discovers, as he explains: “Hence there was an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of ‘biopower’” (p. 140). With biopower, there is power moving through a multiplicity of individuals, which translates into characteristics of the population that are the primary concern of the state or institution. All aspects of one’s life are important in terms of biopower, but only in an abstract manner. For example, through the lens of biopower we would observe that 3 million patrons visit the library each year and ignore who those individual patrons are. The library building would be developed based on discursive lines of dominance where those who publish and lead in the field are administrators focused on trends and increasing the number of visits or checkouts. Rabinow and Rose (2006) expand the concept of biopower:

Biopower, we suggest, entails one or more truth discourses about the ‘vital’ character of living human beings; an array of authorities considered competent to speak that truth; strategies for intervention upon collective existence in the name of life and health; and modes of subjectification, in which individuals work on themselves in the name of individual or collective life or health. (p. 195)

This vital character Rabinow and Rose mention can take the form of many life studies from physical health to mental health; longevity; sexuality; and even personal growth. The phrase “collective existence” alludes to a power that overwhelms individuals living in a state system. In an academic library, the design of a building and the types of collections that are offered would guide individuals to conduct their research in a specific way. One may not

realize there is a lack of materials in the humanities, for example, because the environment they come to work in becomes the “norm.”

Libraries factor into these issues of biopower when one considers they are not only places of personal growth aiding in learning and mental health, but also as places of liberation where thinking becomes essential to break apart from dominant discourses. The movement to reduce individual, private study spaces, for example, in exchange for group project and commons areas indicate where individual growth becomes based on a collective. This is not to say that individuals cannot learn from group study and work, but as Rabinow and Rose explain, the subjectification to the particular normalized environment would result in individuals who are subjected to “strategies for intervention upon (the) collective existence” (2006, p. 195). When thinking about these changes to libraries alongside Foucault’s notion of biopower, one begins to ask questions such as “What types of knowledge do we produce in these group spaces and what are we not producing with the reduction of solo study spaces?” Furthermore, as many universities are public institutions, they largely depend on state government funding (Saxena, 2016).<sup>4</sup> If funds are allocated based on particular discourses, specific areas may be neglected. For example, monies diverted to add comfy seating and group tables in a library would mean fewer funds to purchase collections to support research and curricular studies at the university.

When libraries move in the direction of a dominant discourse and biopower, examples such as the one above become the standard or normalized. Foucault became aware of this through his study of the first volume of HOS, which included *Right of Death and*

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<sup>4</sup> This report from the University of Wisconsin indicates the major disparity between funding for sciences versus the humanities citing \$500 million in funds to support STEM compared to only \$37 million for humanities areas at UW.

*Power Over Life*, and another important chapter on *The Incitement to Discourse* that explains Foucault's critique of the Repressive Hypothesis. The chapter suggests that sexuality is suppressed in Western societies through class system and capitalistic ideology. He said that although sex was widely discussed in economic and political terms, the topic of sex and sexuality moved "...to a discourse in which the sexual conduct of the population was taken both as an object of analysis and as a target of intervention..." (1978, p. 26). This means that certain norms were developed around sex and sexuality, and in turn, there become "abnormalities" or taboos that were determined by the growing discourse.

Capitalism and bourgeois society have deprived individuals of direct and immediate communication with each other and they are forced to communicate through the intermediary of a centralized administrative apparatus. [They have] therefore reduced individuals to the state of atoms subject to an abstract authority in which they do not recognize themselves. Capitalist society has also forced individuals into a type of mass consumption with the functions of standardization and normalization.

(Foucault, 2008, p. 113)

The observation of power in individuals to a biopower of the population is based on "standardization and normalization." Foucault defines this grid of assessment and observation as manifesting into the "emergence of a 'population' as an economic and political problem" (1978, p. 25). He dismisses Freud's and Marx's assertion of sexuality being a system of repression as too narrow an interpretation.

It was widely believed, based on institutions of religion, medicine, and psychiatry, that sex was to be reserved for a man and a woman as a married couple. Sex outside of this dynamic would be considered sinful and distasteful, according to the bourgeoisie. This led to

a still existent discourse of repression that circulates and produces silence among those who would disagree or wish to act otherwise in terms of sexuality. It also stirred individuals to revolt and find different ways to express themselves through their individual power. But Fontana and Bertani (2003) explain, "...according to Foucault, it gave rise to a whole proliferation of eminently positive discourses that actually allowed power—biopower—to control and normalize individuals, behavior, and the population" (p. 278). The discourses also produced truths about sex as a phenomenon based on reproduction, what is referred to as *scientia sexualis*, as opposed to *eros*, or sex for pleasure and love. Foucault also questions the discourse of sexuality in order to analyze how it developed into a discursive object linked to power/knowledge where it becomes more than talking points about an individual and reveals itself as a political issue. "On the one hand it was tied to the disciplines of the body: the harnessing, intensification, and distribution of forces, the adjustment and economy of energies," Foucault wrote (1978) adding, "On the other hand, it was applied to the regulation of populations, through all the far-reaching effects of its activity... It was employed as a standard for disciplines and as a basis for regulations" (pp.145-146). This quotation is important because Foucault explains how all of these disciplinary measures, whether obvious or shrouded in a dominant discourse as the norm, are amassed into the notion of biopower. Populations are then affected by the convergence of all of the disciplinary mechanisms being enacted on each individual.

Foucault's interest in studies of sexuality combined with his theories of power/knowledge and discourse contribute much to poststructuralism. "According to Foucault, the repressive hypothesis is the widely held assumption that the normalizing control of social science aids the progress of civilization because it produces value-free,

objective truth,” Powers (2001) said adding, “Foucault called this notion the repressive hypothesis because it engenders a noncritical attitude among people with respect to the authority of scientific truth” (pp. 18-19). This noncritical attitude also plagues the field of library science where learning in graduate programs as well as at professional conferences can largely be dictated by dominant discourses. When specific discourses are repeatedly taught to library science students, and presentations and publications in the field reiterate these discourses as “truth,” a normalization occurs – often producing this noncritical attitude and its acceptance as a common practice.

### **Visualizing Biopower**

Whether it was a diagram, artwork, or architectural drawing of a prison, Foucault was masterful at taking the visual and incorporating his theories of power to develop a critical analysis. Foucault’s approach to analyzing visual material reveals his poststructural tendencies as he brings to light a multitude of possibilities to elucidate how power and biopower are working (Foucault; 1994; Foucault, 1995). In *Discipline and Punish*, for example, Foucault highlights many visuals including Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon; a medal commemorating Louis XIV’s first military revue that Foucault saw marking the change from outright monarchical power to a power of subjects who discipline themselves; an engraving of a steam machine to correct the behavior of children; and other works (1995, pp.169-170).<sup>5</sup> He used these visuals to explain how surveillance and governance can cause people to monitor themselves.

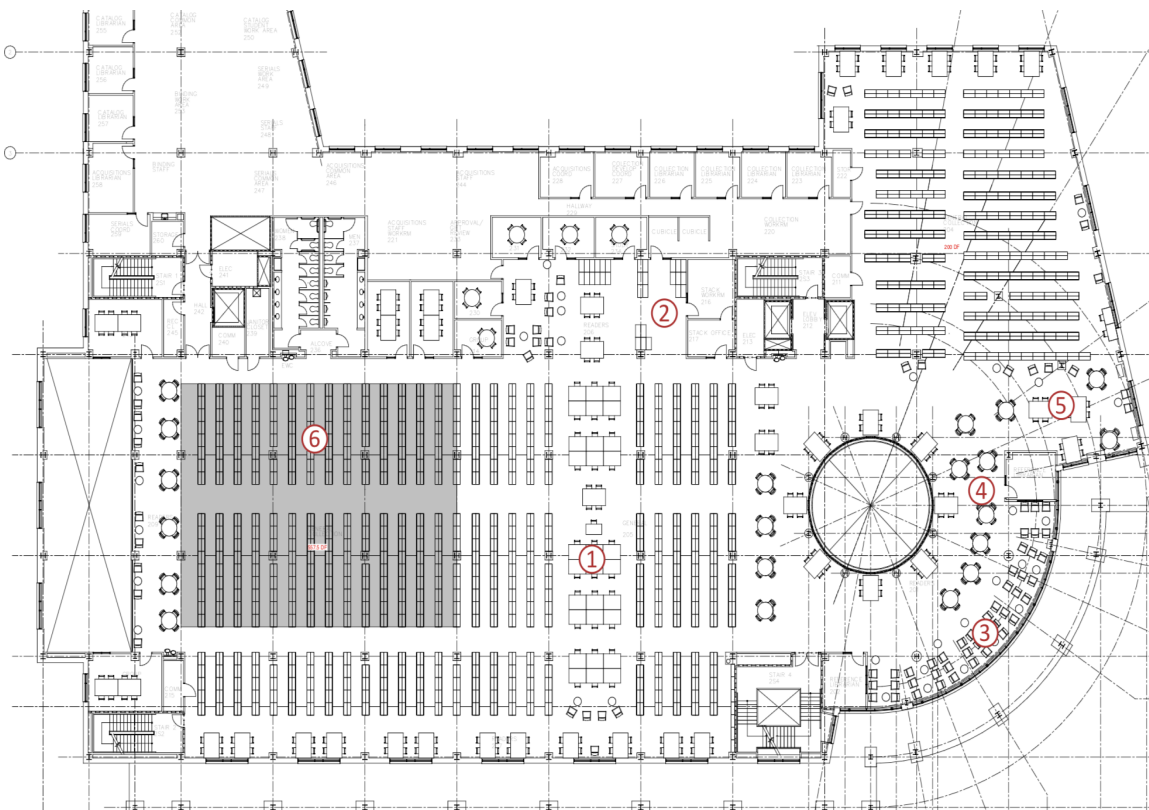
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<sup>5</sup> Foucault elaborates: “The scarcely sustainable visibility of the monarch is turned into the unavoidable visibility of the subjects. And it is this inversion of visibility in the functioning of the disciplines that was to assure the exercise of power even in its lowest manifestations. We are entering the age of the infinite examination and of compulsory objectification” (1995, p.189).

In my study of libraries, biopower, and space, I thought it would be useful to consider architectural renderings depicting a renovation project that took place in 2015 at Appalachian State University's Belk Library. Critical study of the images below will reveal some of the connections between discourses and where power is circulating. After considering these relationships, I analyze how biopower is working to control the library patron experience and the library science research being produced.

**Figure 2**

*Image of Belk Library before renovation of space on the Second floor*



*Note.* Image from McMillan, Pazdan, Smith Architecture, 2017.



NE corner. The large deselection projects that have taken place in libraries over recent years are in part created by discourse. While space problems may be an obvious factor for weeding, there is also a discursive line that reveals itself in a binary opposition of old/new library services or formats. Newer services such as makerspaces and group study areas become privileged based on trends in the field, which are reflected in discourse.

“Traditional services continue their downward trend while requests for technical assistance and multimedia support grew,” the authors of a recent book chapter state, adding, “Book and journal circulation was given way to the increased circulation of group and individual study rooms, audiovisual equipment, laptops, and peripherals” (Andrews et al., 2017, p. 161). In this example, the authors fail to include any statistical justification for their statement. They also reinforce a binary of traditional services versus technology. Foucault (1980) asks the question, “What types of knowledge do you want to disqualify...?” (Foucault, p.85). In comparing Figure 2 and Figure 3, we see that a major change is reflected in resources being removed for seating, a writing center, and group work room. Andrews et al., speaking about books and journals giving way to technology and new spaces, fail to mention if their study counted only print format. Even so, how would one compare those statistics to study room checkouts, the impact one monograph may have had on someone’s thesis or dissertation, and if these metrics are appropriate at an academic institution such as Cornell University? Did the authors look at virtual checkouts such as ebooks and online journals? If this were the case, surely the binary they imagined (old/new library resources) would be reversed and heavily dominated by the research of faculty and students using scholarly materials in comparison to those checking out laptops and other tools.



What is interesting here in terms of biopower is the discourse being produced in an attempt to manage libraries, which aligns with the consumption of technology and social gathering as opposed to a discourse of individual learning and growth associated with scholarly materials. Biopower focuses on how a population functions in a productive capacity. One has to ask what is being produced by increasing the focus on group study areas and a reduction of scholarly materials for peripherals and audio-visual equipment, as Andrews et al. suggest. The biopolitical consequences of knowledge and power translates into real effects on the university population (faculty and students) who rely on academic libraries undergoing such changes based on discourse. This population consisting of students and faculty who use the library for research, instruction, and learning, may find themselves entering newly renovated library spaces based on the norms of discourse of library space. If libraries weed hundreds of thousands of books to make space for the creation of an audio-visual lab, for example, this has numerous effects on students who might rely on scholarly sources as opposed to technological equipment. The normalization taking place from such a change would also regulate how library patrons conduct their research. By limiting resources that focus on scholarly production and seeking, instead, to maintain the latest trends, a mass of library users become affected by the biopolitical movement that changes the way a population uses the library. By reading through numerous library space-related articles, I analyzed the discursive effects of biopower (Cox, 2019; Latimer, 2019; Deng et al., 2019; Closet-Crane, 2011). In these articles, the discursive effects range from “commercial thinking” to moving print materials to off-site storage. Bachelard wrote, “...imagination augments the values of reality” in his work *The Poetics of Space* (1964). The plans that are dreamed by architects give strength to certain discourses in the field of library science as

reality becomes shaped by dominant lines of thinking. Foucault contributes to this idea in a different manner directing our attention to not what is augmented, but what is being diminished:

Which speaking, discoursing subjects—which subjects of experience and knowledge—do you then want to ‘diminish’ when you say: ‘I who conduct this discourse am conducting a scientific discourse, and I am a scientist?’ Which theoretical-political *avant garde* do you want to enthrone in order to isolate it from all the discontinuous forms of knowledge that circulate about it? (Foucault, 1980, p. 85)

Foucault’s questioning of discursive intentions and power remind us that it is often much too easy to diminish previous experiences and knowledge that are part of an opposing or different discourse. The example of the architectural drawings in this chapter indicate a diminishment of written knowledge as well. Although the images depict numerous rectangular stacks where thousands of books were once housed, this previous collective knowledge of the past is part of a discursive line that goes against the trend of recreating library spaces mainly for collaboration. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault said, “States are not populated in accordance with the natural progression of propagation, but by virtue of their industry, their products, and their different institutions” (1978, p. 25). I interpret this statement as meaning the population is largely defined by the popular discursive lines in each industry. In library science, the discursive lines which dominate are based on space redesign, technology, and collaboration. This results in a weakened position for outside areas such as collections.

In the case of Appalachian State University’s Belk Library, the deselection was systematic and collection librarians who realized that faculty had concerns about the project

worked to bring their participation into the process. Still, despite numerous statements of concern for the loss of print books, the project moved forward with librarians doing their best to incorporate faculty feedback. I worked with my colleague, Allan Scherlen, to publish an article on our library's deselection project and the importance of incorporating feedback from faculty. Below is one of the striking comments from a faculty member:

I think the library needs to take into account how different disciplines use books. For historians, oftentimes the older a book is, the more important it becomes as a primary source. It should be remembered too that just because a book has not been regularly checked out doesn't mean that it is worthy of being discarded. Nor can the past records of how often the book has been checked out determine its future importance. Most importantly, the library must work with the faculty closely in conserving and improving these most valuable resources. (McAllister and Scherlen, p. 4, 2017)

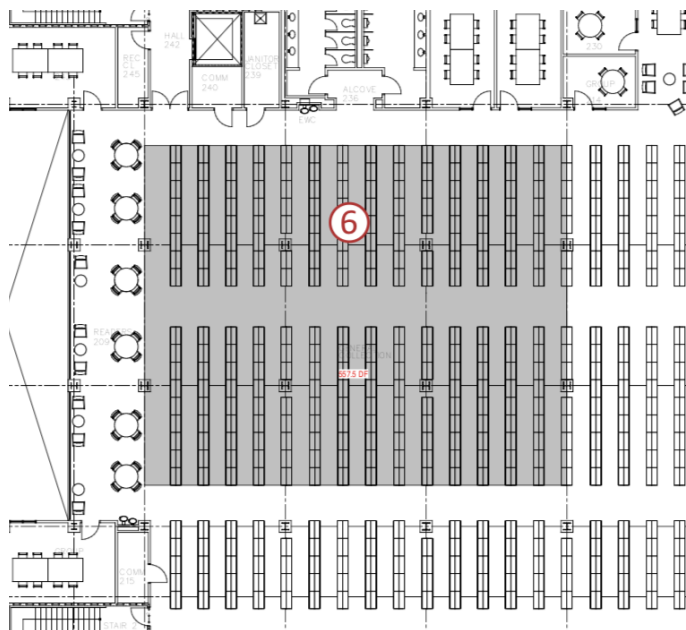
Although thousands of books were weeded from the collection, the library did gain space for its new and expanded services. A makerspace was installed and the University Writing Center obtained a larger space. Additional student seating was also added throughout the library.

Figure 3 depicts the general layout of the Writing Center, which now sits in place of where thousands of books were once located. Comparing both architectural drawings, I believe Foucault's question of "What is lost?" becomes both fair and necessary to ask. In studying Fig. 2, we find additional changes from the renovation calling us to question what else may have been lost or diminished. Reducing the collections and adding space for seating and a large Writing Center are both changes that contribute to a redefined space.

These changes are based on normalizing factors resulting from the dominant discourse of reducing print materials for seating, technology, or other services.

**Figure 4**

*Architectural rendering of Section 6 depicts stacks to be replaced by closed, retractable stacks*



*Note.* Image from McMillan, Pazdan, Smith Architecture, 2017.

In addition, the area indicated by No. 6 in Figure 4 was renovated to change multiple stacks to closed, retractable stacks. These stacks are accessed with the push of a button, but also require maintenance and occasionally break down. No. 1 on Figure 3 indicates where the closed stacks were installed.

While this change does save space and allow for fewer books to be deselected from the collection, it also makes hidden the user-friendly option of browsing stacks and serendipitous discovery. In addition, students who would check out a title must complete an additional step to find what they want. Students have to find these stacks and push buttons to open the stacks before entering the aisle to find the title they seek. While this sounds easy

enough, it is another hurdle in what some feel is an already complicated process.

Furthermore, it is a control mechanism that disciplines the patron to complete another task—one mechanism that could otherwise have easily been avoided.

More importantly, the type of patron it produces encourages students not to seek out print books because of the difficulty and number of steps it takes. This in turn changes the library population and its information-seeking behaviors, steering it towards mostly online resources and placing a greater value on space for seating as opposed to “dusty, old” stacks. Foucault reminds us that minute changes and requirements are what consistently work at disciplining a population. For prisons, it is the schedule, spacing and positioning of cells, and the panoptic lens that leads to self-surveillance, for example. The reduction in print books, and print book access, enters the concept of biopower by producing a different library experience that has major effects on humanities researchers who still heavily rely on the print monograph. It also contributes to a biopower where the discourses and privilege of STEM and space negatively impact the population of humanities researchers.

The architectural drawings in Figures 2 and 3 depict more than the space changes that were presented to librarians as a renovation project. The drawings reveal the presence of biopower, which affects the library population of patrons who rely on print resources and individual study areas. While it is good the library values the writing center and collaboration, it is also important to remember that other services become diminished in this production of power and discourse. We should also recall that “...power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society,” Foucault (1978) said (p. 93).

### Biopower in Motion

One of Foucault's main notions is that power is always on the move. It can be found in dominant discourses, behaviors, resistance, tactics, and more. As interest in the concepts of biopower, and biopolitics, has grown, so too have the ideas connected to these theories. The term *biopolitics* can be defined as a similarly related term where biopower focuses on the body's physical health and biopolitics concentrates more on strategies to control people by means of knowledge and power.<sup>6</sup>

Scholars have also used Foucault's ideas to research health implications and populations, but are also moving towards studies that focus on species-being (Dillon & Lobo-Guerrero, 2008). Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero explain how the transition from analyzing power over a human being has moved to power over a species-being and the multiple implications that can be inferred, in their case through an analysis of security. May (2006) aptly summarizes how biopolitics connects to Foucault's earlier work on prisons and more importantly, why this discussion of body and population (human or species) form a commonality, which is sexuality. He suggests that the later study also connects well with Foucault's earlier research on prisons. "The suggestion rather is that the concern with sex brings a new dimension to the disciplinary interventions described in the earlier text," May said adding, "What the books on discipline and sex accomplish is to describe, from two different but convergent angles, the emergence of modern subjectivity" (May, p. 91). Foucault's concept of biopower describes how modern nations controlled the population using various mechanisms or devices to "ensure the spatial distribution of individual bodies (their separation, their alignment, their serialization, and their surveillance) and the

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<sup>6</sup> The terms biopower and biopolitics are often used interchangeably by some authors, and as I have done.

organization, around those individuals, of a whole field of visibility” (Foucault, 2003, p. 242). Foucault defines (1978) two poles contributing to the organization of power as he expands biopower to the term *biopolitics*: “anatomic and biological, individualizing and specifying, directed toward the performances of the body, with attention to the processes of life—characterized a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through” (Foucault, p. 139). He writes:

One of these poles—the first to be formed, it seems—centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the *disciplines: an anatomo-politics of the human body*. The second, formed somewhat later, focused on the specific body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes; propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls: a biopolitics of the population*.  
(p. 139)

May said that the development of Foucault’s two poles form the basis of genealogical method. Fontana and Bertani are careful to explain that the two types of conceptual powers, disciplinary power and biopower, should essentially constitute one theory rather than two separate fields of thought. “One does not preclude the other; one is not independent of the other,” the authors write explaining, “One does not derive from the other; they are, rather, knowledge/power’s two conjoint modes of functioning, though it is true that they do have

their own specific foci, points of application, finalities, and *enjeux*: the training of bodies on the one hand, and the regulation of the population on the other” (Foucault, 2003, p. 279).

One question that is important in the context of this study is how are library science discourses controlled and what confinements do they produce as biopower works through these discourses?

A number of regulatory controls are what Foucault discovers in the operation of biopower in motion. Foucault (1978) saw this movement taking shape in the form of “a power whose task is to take charge of life” through “continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms” (p. 144). As biopower moves to increase the usefulness of a population, a normalizing effect occurs. Librarians and library patrons are subject to a number of these regulatory controls from surveillance to serialization in the form of consumerism. For example, serialization in the form of ordering library spaces changes how patrons feel both entering the library and seeking out the spaces in which they wish to work. As more libraries continue to frame entrances based on open storefronts filled with computers, this limits and has an effect on those who wish to discover quieter, more independent spaces of contemplation. There is also a type of disciplinary power (surveillance) being enacted where patrons who are exposed to these collaborative spaces upon entering the library may feel overwhelmed that the kind of experience they hoped for must be sought out. The patrons may even begin to regulate their own behavior based on these changes to library space. Library administrators frequently conjoin their own “modes of functioning” often linking the concepts of space and the future in this biopower motion, which trains bodies and regulates populations. Similar to Fontana and Bertani’s (2003) assertion of Foucault utilizing two types of conceptual power, librarians combine the concepts of space and the future under a



similar discourse that can also be analyzed as biopolitical given the effects that future planning can have on the library population of patrons and library employees.

### **Space and the Future**

The concept of space is often tied to the notion of “future.” Earlier examples were noted in analyzing an article (Latimer, 2018) titled “*2050: A Library Space Odyssey. Planning the Future Library*” and the white paper titled “The Future of the Academic Library Print Collection: A Space for Engagement” (O’Donnell et al., 2017). Because many librarians are concerned about relevancy and remaining ahead of the technological curve, a focus on the future is commonplace. Likewise, the past is mentioned as a cautionary tale which libraries should avoid. In my own experience presenting at conferences and studying the literature, library science research mostly focuses on the future with little attention being placed on what happened in the past. Having an awareness of populations of users’ needs and how to best meet those needs while considering institutional memory should be considered. Library science discourses such as the Latimer and O’Donnell examples proliferate and opposing viewpoints are often strongly made docile or silenced. These dominant discourses “...exercised over them a constant pressure to conform to the same model...” (Foucault, 1995, p. 182). Foucault’s words from *Discipline and Punish* connect to this example as those who would challenge Latimer and O’Donnell may be hesitant because of the disciplinary power at play. Because more and more librarians follow the dominant discourse and similar lines of thinking, library science journals assign editing members who have developed similar thinking based on the literature they’ve studied or witnessed at conferences. This creates a surveillance mechanism set up to encourage publications focused on the “future

library” revolving around technology and libraries based on a consumer model where aesthetics are prioritized over resources.

One example can be found throughout Hines and Crowe’s (2017) compiled volume titled, *The Future of Library Space*, which was part of the Advances in Library Administration and Organization series offering research in a variety of approaches including discussions, theoretical movements, evidence-based practice, and more. Many questions are left unanswered in *The Future of Library Space*; take the preface, for example:

Repurposing space is not just a matter of design, renovation, building, and furniture purchase. It is important to assess the needs of our users before making decisions and then conduct follow-up evaluation to see if the innovations are making a positive difference. These new services require different types of expertise which means training for staff and seeking these skills in new hires. Making these changes has implications for organizational structures and requires nimbleness and forward-thinking strategic planning. It is also essential to keep the lines of communication open so that transitions are as smooth as possible. (2017, p. xiii)

This quotation focuses on space in a forward-thinking mode, and a necessity to assess prior needs. Still, the larger theoretical question of why libraries are making these changes has been ignored. In returning to my research question, “*How does biopower function in the 21st-century library? More specifically, how are subjects made and populations controlled through the employment of biopower?*” we see the presence of a biopolitical movement where new employees must be obtained to train current employees on different (perhaps even future) innovations that are now deemed important to the library mission. The entire statement reveals how a “modern subjectivity” functions to expand a discourse. As the areas

of technology and space continue to dominate the library literature focused on the future, the mission is not the only piece that changes. Biopower works through these discursive areas multiplying and administering various techniques, such as the tactic of suggesting new hires who can train other employees on how to use technology. The attention given to preparation for the future could be viewed as a biopolitical tactic of longevity. At one point during Foucault's study of sexuality, he refers to "the future of the species" and the "vitality of the social body" (1978, p. 147). The library population, operating under dominant discourses of space and technology, become part of a biopower that seeks to remain relevant as an institution, even if it means transitioning the library away from a contemplative place of learning to one based on consumerism, marketing, and aesthetics, changes based on a lens of longevity. One would be mistaken to read this dissertation as a defeatist or pessimistic persuasive piece spoken from a luddite. Contrary to this, I utilize and appreciate numerous innovative tools as part of my everyday life and in the work I conduct as a librarian. Still, it does not prevent me from witnessing and thinking critically about how changes in libraries are affecting individual patrons and specific populations.

### **Popular/Unpopular**

Analyzing various binary relationships makes known that there are popular and unpopular approaches in any field of study. This is because within a binary relationship, there always exists a more privileged, or dominant belief that has been given credence through discourse. In the library science literature, a dominant belief in redesigning spaces to privilege group work and technology exists. In terms of biopower, the patrons who would use the library for individual academic study find changes that are less favorable to their research needs of quiet, independent study space with more scholarly collections. There is a

regulation of the library population and what Foucault would describe as a “hold over the body” where people become accustomed to the changes taking place as a result of the privileged discourse.

Andrews, et al. (2017) serves as a popular example where the trend of space and its effects on library users at a mid-size research library would be accepted by most. The article, published in a special volume “The Future of Library Space” from the *Advances in Library Administration and Organization*, shares some initiatives using mostly examples from STEM-related programs as they frame an argument for why the mission of libraries should be altered to include more collaborative spaces using technological innovations both physically and virtually. Yet there are numerous “truths” to this article that require deconstruction. Many of the statements appear unfounded and lack both statistical support and extensive qualitative explanation.

These changing paradigms and programs have required not only new and repurposed spaces but also conceptual and administrative changes, including different services, roles, staff competencies, and organizational structures... And as users’ needs recast the notion of the library, librarians must become more flexible and familiar not just with planning, architecture, and interior design, but also design and systems thinking, change management, strategic planning, assessment, service design, and other areas (Andrews, C. et al., 2017, p. 147).

The above statement communicates a strong administrative presence placing high value on assessment and strategic planning. There is also the problem of prioritizing a need to learn more about interior design and architecture while roles and organizational structures become changed. The most important part of the academic library mission of providing instruction

and collections are buried beneath what these authors deem to be the new curricular foci. One indicator of the presence of biopower, Rabinow and Rose (2006) state, is that individuals begin to “work on themselves” as they relate to truth discourses for their own benefit or their family (p. 197). Librarians who are part of redesigning interior spaces may not realize they are working on themselves by following the discourse of changing libraries to appear more like a consumer-model based storefront. With library administration leading the change and implementation of a redesign, it has an effect that reminds me of Foucault’s “Docile Bodies” (1995). In this work, he used the example of the development of elementary education where one-on-one work shifted to become group work in a shared space. “It made the educational space function like a learning machine, but also as a machine for supervising, hierarchizing, rewarding,” Foucault said.

One might ask, “Who is being rewarded when libraries reimagine spaces and feature mostly collaborative spaces with new technology?” Humanities scholars, who rely on scholarly resources more so than technological tools, become disadvantaged in numerous ways. In addition, some science librarians also echo the need for historical print materials as essential for instruction and research. With academic libraries dedicated to providing more technology and redesigned collaborative spaces, fewer dollars will be available to collections already facing tight budget situations. Furthermore, with the administrative focus and value on assessment, what subjectivities might be produced in library employees who had hopes of focusing their day-to-day work on providing library instruction, collection, and research services to support faculty and students? Recalling *The History of Sexuality* where Foucault analyzes the discourses surrounding sexuality, including how sex became political, he points to two axes where politics intersected and formed a “technology of life” or hold over the

body. One is through what he calls “the disciplines of the body” that harness and grow as power distributes and moves, and the other axis is the “regulation of populations.”

It fitted in both categories at once, giving rise to infinitesimal surveillances, permanent controls, extremely meticulous orderings of space, indeterminate medical or psychological examinations, to an entire micro-power concerned with the body.

But it gave rise as well to comprehensive measures, statistical assessments, and interventions aimed at the entire social body or at groups taken as a whole. (1978, pp. 145-146)

Andrews, et al. (2017) go as far as recommending “Renovating spaces on a continuous basis according to user research and needs, increasing collaborative space, and considering the introduction of makerspaces and other production-oriented facilities” (p. 147). Later in the article, they state that patron requests for additional technology and collaborative study areas are part of the reason for redesigning these spaces, but details such as what disciplinary areas the patrons are from, how many students or faculty were surveyed, and how the changes would fit into the curriculum are not answered. Creating new makerspaces that offer 3D printers, games, crafts, and other tools of creation are a main focus of the article. “Though makerspaces have gained more traction in public libraries, there are increasing numbers of these facilities in academic libraries,” they wrote (p. 150).

This additional example of the fusion of public and academic libraries is another example of biopower. As the world population becomes more consumer-based, purchasing an increasing amount of goods, the need to produce and make goods also becomes part of the economic machine. So what does it mean to argue that libraries need to make more and include more technology for its users? Foucault would redirect this thought to focus on the

individual struggles before assessing biopower in the population. “But in Marx, relations of domination in the factory appear to be established solely by the play and the effects of the ‘antagonistic’ relations between capital and labor. For Foucault, in contrast, that relationship is possible only because of the subjugations, training, and surveillance that have already been produced and administered by disciplines,” (Foucault, 2003, p. 277). A liberal arts school may only have a small contingent of those interested in utilizing such data visualization labs or 3D printing. Furthermore, the idea of libraries as places that must make, market, and be redesigned to feature posh interior spaces suggests a critical change from libraries as a place of intellectual, philosophical pursuits to a library based on aesthetics and socialization. These struggles penetrate all areas of the academic library mission dispersing various effects to research, learning and collections. More importantly, these effects work on the subjectivities of all involved—librarians, library administrators, and faculty and students—as the biopolitical means of knowledge and power regulate the population through dominant discourse.

The prior section critiqued a library science example that would be considered by many to be a popular trend of changing space for appearances and technology additions. Let us now turn to what some would consider an “unpopular” trend in libraries as I analyze an article, contrary to Andrews et al., which considers the value of the library as a contemplative, mindful setting required by many students and faculty (Goodnight & Jeitner, 2016). “With this recent push for interactive spaces, the idea of a library needing quiet contemplative areas may be overlooked or considered outdated,” Goodnight and Jeitner said, before asking, “What do we do when the current focus in librarianship differs from the

primary needs of our user?” (p. 219). The authors provide an interesting summary of how redesigning libraries was transferred over from the technology and consulting fields:

However, over time, these principles were extrapolated and libraries began to reconsider how patrons thought about and used library spaces and service desks. This was, again, not a surprising development—though academic work is frequently exercised in the mind, in abstract spaces within one’s head, it is irrevocably connected to one’s material body, which is unavoidably a part of and influenced by the physical space it occupies. (p. 218)

In keeping with Rabinow and Rose’s interpretation of utilizing Foucault’s notions of biopower and biopolitics, it is easy to identify the truth discourses about redesigning library spaces for technology and more collaborative area additions. What do these discourses state about the “vital” character of populations who frequent the library? Goodnight and Jeitner are arguing that the library movement to redesign spaces based on interaction and not contemplation is negligent of the “primary needs” of patrons. The authors state that the discourses do not have to be biological in nature and may “hybridize biological and demographic or even sociological styles of thought...” (Goodnight & Jeitner, 2016, p. 197). In terms of biopower, the vital character the authors mention reminds me of another space-related trend known as “lifecycle” where libraries will already mark a deselection date, or “death date,” of print books entering the library based on arbitrary estimates. This approach is intended to save space for users rather than accumulating a growing number of print books year after year. The situation is much more complex when studied closely.

De-selection must become as routine as selection. Weeding is not a special event; rather it is an integral part of the lifecycle management of content. The goal is no



longer to build a larger collection; the goal is to assure that content most likely to be used is onsite, and that space for users continues to take precedence over inert content. And a number of libraries in any given region would rely on a shared offsite facility to house little-used material. (Lugg & Fischer, p. 76, 2009)

Lugg and Fischer prioritize user space over what they deem “inert content.” Books, which could also be thought of as a type of population, are now assigned a lifecycle where their importance has been diminished through discourse often describing the materials as “little-used.” In relation to a hold over the body, there now becomes a hold over the books and this “population” has become regulated, more disciplined, in a way that hinders those who would find the materials useful. Most academic libraries do not have access to offsite storage as suggested by Lugg and Fischer.

Goodnight and Jeitner (2016) are challenging the dominant discourse of design that has spread from technology and consulting industries into library service. In naming these foreign industries (i.e. tech, consulting, interior design, etc.) as foundations for redesigning libraries, or what Rabinow and Rose would define as “strategies for intervention upon collective existence,” libraries threaten to reconceptualize what most people have always appreciated and found useful about libraries. While more solo, quiet areas are transformed into collaborative areas, heavily based on new technologies, students and faculty will have fewer places to peacefully delve into the type of academic learning that is at the core of university life. Again, no one thinks collaboration is a terrible idea and of course several group projects have the capability to produce exciting, scholarly work. But Goodnight and Jeitner offer a different, albeit less flashy and popular, perspective, which examines the actual needs of most library patrons as they work against a type of biopower that moves to

normalize what type of learning experiences become dominant in academic libraries.

Goodnight and Jeitner, who surveyed students, offer a different perspective:

Students on campus, especially a residential campus like our own, *seek out silence* because all around them is a hum of activity—in their dorm rooms, in the study rooms and other common areas in the dorms, at the campus center, and at tables outside of classrooms. These disruptive spaces extend into the library, within our learning commons and around our service desks, where people are talking and making noise throughout the day and night. Students are constantly searching for places where they can study in silence, where they will find some quiet to settle their minds as they immerse themselves in the academic process of reading, writing, and studying. (2016, p. 219)

Is there a specific disciplining of the bodies at work, Foucault might ask, as students have to seek out these types of places for quiet, reflective study? And if there is, where does the disciplining originate and how does it cause individuals to work on themselves as it alters subjectivities? “This bio-power was not without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes,” Foucault (1978) wrote (pp. 140-141). Because the majority of libraries follow trends such as redesigning spaces for technology and group study, there exists the potential for libraries to be categorized as part of this “machinery of production.” Fortunately, there are authors like Goodnight and Jeitner who challenge the dominant discourse.

The following statement by Foucault summarizes the issue in all spectrums of life:

If the development of the great instruments of the state, as *institutions* of power, ensured the maintenance of production relations, the rudiments of anatomo- and biopolitics, created in the eighteenth century as *techniques* of power present at every level of the social body and utilized by very diverse institutions (the family and the army, schools and the police, individual medicine and the administration of collective bodies), operated in the sphere of economic processes, their development, and the forces working to sustain them. They also acted as factors of segregation and social hierarchization, exerting their influence on the respective forces of both these movements, guaranteeing relations of domination and effects of hegemony. (1978, p.141)

From the family to schools, one need not look far to identify biopower at work and individuals being repressed by the hegemonic effects of discourse and power/knowledge. When considering all of these unique changes taking place in academic libraries, it becomes necessary to transition our focus from individual processes, tactics, and discourse shaping power to one in which all of these concepts develop into biopower.

In the previous chapter I found it useful to examine Lefebvre's theory of space to further develop my analysis. Combined with Foucault, Lefebvre's contributions to the social production of space enhance the multilayered theory of space Foucault theorized around discipline and power. "(Lefebvre) argues that those in power, together with those in collusion with governmental agencies, impose spatial constraints that regiment the lived experience of entire populations," Conley (2012) said (p. 11). If a majority of intellectual resources (i.e. collections) are being siphoned out in exchange for money spent on furniture, architectural plans, and technological tools, what spatial constraints in terms of learning do

these massive alterations have on the population which relies on libraries for study and research? In addition, the Andrews et al. example from Cornell University incorporates IDEO, a design thinking process, from a private firm, which combines “the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success” (p. 151) once again exposing a connection to economy in the library.

“Changing spaces iteratively prevented the solidification of existing paradigms and emphasized the holistic nature of spaces; changing one piece had ripple effects on other spaces and the whole character of the library,” the authors wrote (Andrews et al., 2017, p. 149). This is an interesting statement given the authors finally surmise that, “In fact, it is not the space of the library that is important in the final analysis, but the mission and activities that academic libraries support” (p. 165). In essence, the authors admit that space redesign is not the primary objective, but changing the mission of libraries from “traditional” learning to collaborative space work environments featuring technology is. The authors ask, “What ideas about learning and information are we embracing and promoting with the design of our spaces and services—static information and seat time or active and collaborative experimentation and creation?” (p. 165). I would ask what librarians are demoting and excluding as these changes are made and strategic plans become the avenue to weed out the fabric of what many find so attractive about the library—its study space and print and online resources. One Foucauldian concept of biopower that connects to the changes taking place over time is serialization. These “serial phenomena” are the events that have occurred at library conferences, in the published literature, in the day-to-day work of librarians, creating biopower that takes place within the library population of users and employees (Foucault, 2003, p.246).

The Andrews et al. example largely interprets space as a physical phenomenon, but Lefebvre suggests that thinking of space in a simple, one-dimensional manner is counterproductive. Molotch (1993) aptly explains that Lefebvre shows us space is not something we naturally inherit and develop; people produce and reproduce spaces with “human intentions... even as space constrains and influences those producing it” (p. 887). Andrews et al. offer an example of virtual space, but with limited affect. The authors explain that librarian collaboration to develop a credit-bearing class to edit Wikipedia articles in STEM-related fields led to Wikipedia hosting events which “provided a physical space for new and old users to interact with each other, share information in real time, then apply this information to updating an article on Wikipedia” (Andrews et al., 2017, p. 157). Still, their example is one that could have taken place in the classroom, or a student union, or virtually as students use computers. Conley makes a strong point that these types of spatial constraints “regiment the lived experience” of a population (2012, p. 11). This is not to take away from the good work the librarians conducted, but to reveal that thinking about space in a multidimensional way is challenging.

What is perhaps more interesting regarding the Wikipedia example is that the project developed from open access initiatives supported by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN), “a growing partnership between the US Government, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Government of the Netherlands, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), The Open Data Institute (ODI), and the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI)...” (Andrews et al., 2017, p. 158). The stipulations for

support appear to be harmless and call for the librarians to ensure that research results are provided within one year of publication and made accessible. While government support is critical to libraries, it also worth considering that such support potentially endangers the population that relies on the library for research and growth. Libraries have long been institutions open to all for, but one need not look long to find multiple examples of either threats to cut, or actual budget reductions to all types of libraries (American Library Organization, 2020; Cheves & Desrochers, 2020; Henderson & Lonergan, 2011; Pettus, 2019). In 2020, ALA responded to a White House proposal to cut the Institute of Museum and Library Services explaining that such a proposal, “dismisses the value of America’s 120,000 academic, public, school and special libraries. The administration’s new budget not only brushes aside IMLS, it decreases funding for other library-eligible education programs” (ALA, 2020).

All of these budget cuts and threats remind me of Lefebvre’s explanation of political forces in connection with biopower: “The social and political (state) forces which engendered this space now seek, but fail, to master it completely; the very agency that has forced spatial reality towards a sort of uncontrollable autonomy now strives to run it into the ground, then shackle and enslave it,” Lefebvre said adding, “Is this space an abstract one? Yes, but it is also ‘real’ in the sense in which concrete abstractions such as commodities and money are real” (Lefebvre, 1974, pp. 26-27). Lefebvre’s attention to the ideas of concrete and abstract space throughout his work make it difficult for many to fully utilize, but his more unambiguous and salient points prove useful for the discussion of space. Money and commodities are real, and information is a type of commodity. Andrews et al. (2017) use multiple examples of STEM fields throughout their article and only mention the humanities

occasionally. While some of the examples may be beneficial to those in STEM-related fields, it is concerning when reading statements that are given little support.

The reliance on government funding poses a risk to all libraries, especially given the numerous examples showing that library budgets are sometimes considered dispensable and non-essential depending on the political climate. It is worth considering these biopolitical consequences of a discourse that further moves libraries to technological centers focused on group thinking, funded by government, which invests library users with a type of “technology.”

### **Conclusion**

The analytic questions that guided this chapter are: *How do biopolitics function in the 21st-century library? More specifically, how are subjects made and populations controlled through the deployment of biopower?* Individual subjectivities and populations have the potential to be regulated and altered by each institution’s discourses at play. Power, as it moves through individuals, eventually multiplies into something much bigger in the shape of biopower. The library population includes both patrons and employees, and there are layers above this that extend to the university administration as well as local, regional, state, and federal governments, all of which have an affect on the institution.

Because of the dangers dominant discourses can pose, it is important for researchers to consider approaches that rely heavily on critical thinking and poststructural methods. Hanson and Abresch (2017) elaborate on several excellent points throughout their research including the need for collaborating with various stakeholders when designing spaces in libraries; using both qualitative and quantitative data for assessment; and realizing the importance of both physical and virtual spaces. Still, the discursive dominance and

tendencies to prioritize technology and collaborative areas is revealed throughout the piece proving that the weight of a dominant discourse is hard to overcome and produces a docility in individuals that gets reflected in the population by means of biopower. The authors set up a binary between quiet and loud places in libraries where a need for more group workplaces, makerspaces, and commons (social) areas are prioritized. “However, libraries also are places to socialize and to work—spaces that are not home or for work but places where people can engage in a common activity,” Hanson and Abresch write explaining, “The notion of library as place requires us to examine closely how libraries fulfill this role as an informal public gathering place, a community of practice, if you will, that facilitates creative and innovative interactions” (p. 105). The authors have good intentions claiming that a socially constructed library space is better for all, yet their subjugated minds clearly follow the path of radically transforming libraries into technological learning centers featuring other campus educational units such as tutoring services, writing services, and STEM-focused labs (p. 119). While this sounds beneficial to the university mission, it still neglects a large part of the library population.

It is also ironic when the authors bluntly state: “The subjective nature of how we experience space, how that space creates community, how the activities in which we engage in that space shape and are shaped by us allow us to make normative claims about libraries as place” (p. 106). Lefebvre, Bachelard, and Foucault would likely agree with their following statement that “It is the cumulative effect of the space, the experiences, the people, and the activities in which participants engage that create place” (Hanson and Abresch, 2017, p. 106). Bachelard (1964) explains that the things we imagine have the ability to augment reality. Foucault takes us deeper into this philosophical notion by asking where power and



biopower are moving. Hanson and Abresch venture outside of the typical library science studies of practicality offering some theoretical ideas about the development of library spaces:

More simply put, a public space is always a construction of some person, entity, or institution who names the space, states its purpose, monitors its use, and reshapes it according to their perceptions. Although academic libraries are ‘public space,’ the experiences of that space are subject to shifts in institutional perceptions and accompanying physical (re)configurations over time and subjective constructions of that space. (Hanson and Abresch, 2017, p. 106)

While their interpretation of perceptions and the subjective experiences listed are worth noting, I believe what this article more starkly illustrates is a connection between Foucault’s theories of power and biopower to an institution such as the academic library. Just as Foucault used the discourses of sexuality, and how sex became political, revealing a “technology of life” or hold over the body, “disciplines of the body,” and “regulations of populations,” so too has this study on the academic library population sought to articulate how biopower and biopolitics are reshaping the 21st century academic library through how subjects are made and populations controlled. The ordering of library spaces is not different from other institutions Foucault would have studied (i.e. prisons, schools, hospitals, etc.). What Foucault offers librarians, however, is a different approach to questioning what movements take place in the field of library science. If we remember that power exists everywhere, it is easy to understand why Foucault went further to develop his theory of biopower explaining “...it is, in a word, a matter of taking control of life and the biological processes of man-as-species and of ensuring that they are not disciplined, but regularized”

(Foucault, 2003, pp. 246-247). The regularization of libraries is now engrossed by a major shift towards space renovation based on technology, consumerism, and group thinking. Perhaps more individuals exercising their own power to question these movements could create a better path for libraries despite the difficulties of challenging a dominant discourse, disciplinary power, and biopower.

## Chapter Six

### Poststructural Leadership in the Library

Plugging in the library science literature on space to Foucault's theories has revealed the relations of power, within discourse, that not only privilege particular types of knowledge, but also produce multiple effects in terms of everyday practices in the academic library. It is important to remember Foucault's statement that "each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true..." (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). No one person created the dominant discourse of space redesign and a preference for libraries to focus on technology and group spaces. Many have contributed to the discourse through speeches, publications, and other everyday practices. As a result, the library population has witnessed a biopower that has transformed the landscape and altered the mission from primarily serving as an institution of research and independent learning to one that is shifting to spaces of collaboration and technology. In researching these changes, I also found a need to problematize issues of leadership where power relations in administrators causes political uncertainty as well as produces new subjectivities. In this chapter, I summarize key aspects of the dissertation before connecting the issues of space, power, and biopower to educational leadership to understand the benefits poststructural thinking can bring to higher education and library leadership.

My dissertation uses a post qualitative approach combined with poststructural Foucauldian analysis and plugging in to develop different ideas about the phenomenon of space in academic libraries. In considering how discourses of library trends shape the

material landscape, I was able to show that the trend of space extends to all areas of library work from collections to leadership. It was important to make these connections because it also allowed me to discuss the binary oppositions frequently found in libraries such as more seating/fewer collections, current/outdated, and libraries as social/independent and vibrant/quiet study spaces. In deconstructing these binaries, it became clear that a power/knowledge reading helped open up and question the discourses being produced.

Library employees, whose subjectivities are made into docile bodies, threaten to negatively affect how the library is designed for some patrons. Fewer questions and the lack of ability to deconstruct these major changes see the dominant discourse sweep through all areas of the library. Still, important questions arise from critically analyzing these power relations. What effects might these drastic changes to library spaces have on the subjectivity of individuals? If spaces become locales of power that translate into resistance in patrons, employees, and administrators, how do we navigate such expeditious alterations to the library's resources and its physical space?

The shift in Foucault's theories from power of the individual to biopower in the population was useful to implement in my own research. After analyzing literature through the lens of discourse and power/knowledge, I moved to biopower and biopolitics to research how the library population of faculty, students, and library employees function in light of the trend of space. In Chapter 5, I sought to critique how biopower functioned in the 21st-century library with an emphasis on how subjects were made and populations controlled through biopower's deployment. In analyzing how the population became understood as a resource managed by the institution or state, I traced the dominant discourse of space in library science producing a docility in individuals that became reflected in the population by

means of biopolitics. A type of normalization of libraries ensues from the discourse of space that is based on consumerism, marketing, technology and group work. I showed that thinking with Foucault's theory of biopower not only allows us to create an awareness of how the library population is subjected to the dominant discourse of space, but also how it opens up room for questioning these hegemonic practices that neglect certain types of library users such as humanities scholars and students who prefer independent study spaces as well as tangible materials.

In answering my first two research questions, I have created a connection between power/knowledge and biopower to show that the dominant discourse of space has both produced and constrained what the modern library looks like. My final research question has been partially answered in the discussion of discourse and power/knowledge, and biopower. Yet it takes us further: *How do power/knowledge dynamics function to produce and constrain what a modern library should look like, what purpose it should serve, and who should be involved in the planning of the library as an institution?*

The purpose a library serves is open to interpretation, but there are some important indicators that identify what resources are believed to be most useful in academic libraries. An Ithaka S+R US Faculty Survey (2018) explains:

Similar to previous findings, the library's most important function according to faculty continues to be the library's ability to pay for the resources they need, such as academic journals, books, and electronic databases. This buyer role has consistently been reported as the most important function of the library *since 2003*. (Blankstein & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2019, italics added for emphasis)

The quotation above is extremely important given that it not only states what faculty found most important in 2018, but states that this has been the case since 2003. For nearly 20 years of the survey, faculty have stated that the collections (i.e. books, journals, databases) are what they find most useful about the library. Why then are libraries pouring all of their dollars into renovating spaces and depleting the most valuable resources needed? Perhaps it is a reflection of the dominant discourse that has taken place surrounding space and its connections to technology as well as viewing the library in a business-like model based on consumerism. Academic libraries, like other institutions, have the possibility to create a balance for those who rely on the library as a place of research and independent study. “A poststructural theoretical practice means integrating into thought problems and events, in order to compose with them, and not simply study discursive strategies,” Dillet (2017) said (p. 525). Although I have analyzed discursive tactics, my post qualitative inquiry does not seek to flip a binary or solve a dominant discourse by replacing it with another. Instead, I studied a problem and their events, as Dillet suggests, to conduct a poststructural study which reveals a major shift libraries are taking. I have analyzed how power and power relations have the potential to rearrange how patrons and librarians situate themselves in libraries. By analyzing some of the emerging themes, such as more seating/collections and aesthetics/scholarly resources, I was able to provide insight on the constraints and diminished voices on the losing side of each binary. I also revealed how power/knowledge works to disclose “truths” that govern leadership, missions, and services that are provided in the academic library. In researching these changes taking place based on dominant discourses, I transitioned my analysis to examine how library spaces are producing a population through biopower.

The normalization of libraries modeling lively coffee shops with an abundance of technological offerings such as makerspaces creates the shift from a population of users who rely on academic resources towards one that is being produced by a biopower focused on controlling and producing a different population of users. When widespread discourse consumes all levels of librarians from MLIS programs to the workplace, a noncritical attitude occurs, or what Foucault called docile bodies. The constant “regulatory and corrective mechanisms” are created by library leaders focused on developing library spaces for the future (Foucault, 1978, p. 144). The research examples I highlight in the chapter on biopower explain the administrative preference to purchase new furniture and redesign old library spaces based on innovation.

It is important to situate all of these discourses in the context of the university and library population of patrons and employees. By studying power and biopower at the intersection of space, I found that the current prevailing discourses in academic libraries may not necessarily meet the needs of the university population it serves. While some patrons may take advantage of these new innovative, collaborative spaces, a number of patrons still exists who are arriving at the library with fewer scholarly collections and fewer places to produce independent research. This does not mean the binary needs to be reversed as this is not the intention of poststructural inquiry. The library, however, is not a silo, and because of this it requires constant analysis, discussion, internal feedback, external feedback, and critique to ensure it remains an institution that serves all of its population of users. As the population continues to evolve based on the social production of society, it is worth noting that many of the changes can be associated with the production of spaces that occur in the

library. We must also remember that this production of new spaces is based on dominant discourses and binary relationships where power and biopower are working.

Who should be involved in planning the library? “In an organization with a high capacity to adapt, people share responsibility for the larger organization’s future...,” Heifetz (2009) wrote (p. 103). Oftentimes, administrators are the ones who lead and control the design or redesign of the library. This creates multiple problems as it requires both buy-in from librarians and campus constituents, as well as a reliance on one leader’s perspective. It also assumes that leaders, who are just as likely to be affected by dominant discourses, always know what is best for library patrons as opposed to the librarians who teach information literacy instruction or develop the collections based on the curriculum of the university. This question of involvement and planning transitions us to a necessary discussion on educational leadership and poststructuralism.

### **Implications for Educational Leadership**

A number of important articles have connected poststructuralism to issues in educational leadership (Beattie, 2020; MacKillop, 2018; Niesche & Gowlett, 2015; One commonality of many of these articles was the need to problematize and critique educational issues and dominant discourses through a poststructural lens. The question of who should be involved in the planning and organization of an academic library is an important one given the institution provides space for learning and growth, which is at the heart of the university mission. In the examples I shared throughout the dissertation, administrators are influenced by the dominant discourse to rapidly change libraries from contemplative, independent learning centers to bustling, collaborative hubs filled with technology. As more libraries make this shift, the discourse is repeated and becomes a type of “truth” working on the



leaders who follow the re-inscribed pattern and understanding of libraries. This is why it is also important to use a poststructural framework to critically examine library leadership.

Beattie (2020) explains how docility occurs in leaders based on a number of pressures, one of which is government dictated educational standards. It serves as a reminder that leaders, just like librarians or patrons, are at risk of becoming docile bodies given how power/knowledge operates through discourse:

Sheathelm (1991) recapped that governmentalisation of education created an environment, where most of the changes were implemented from top down not by the educational leaders within Higher Education institutions, but by professional organisations or outside government officials, who created, devised and published curriculum documents, leadership guidelines, professional codes of practice and board policies to govern how education is delivered, making administrative leaders casualties of disciplinary powers and the docility utilities for the implementation of government agendas. (Beattie, p. 103)

The above quotation reminded me of the Charleston Conference example from Chapter 4 where the power of one administrator who was provided with a speaking opportunity was following the dominant discourse of space renovation in libraries and the reduction of print. In speaking with collection librarians who have attended the Charleston Conference for many years, I learned that the conference has become heavily influenced by vendors (i.e. publishers, private companies selling library resources). Many of today's speakers also present research alongside some of the company representatives who work to sell and market their content at the conference. Beattie's example of outside influence on administrators in higher education is one worth noting, as the same influence appears to be taking place in

academic library administration. If not happening directly from interactions at conferences, then it is occurring through dominant discourse.

Academic libraries are currently operating under a one-size-fits-all model that does not allow for librarians to meet the needs of its main population of users. The requirement for addressing the multiplicity of needs for a library can be found in a distributed leadership model where collaboration and communication are open to all. As Western (2013) reminds us: “A healthy democracy cannot operate without opposition voices to those governing, and in organizations dissenting voices are vital for healthy and creative organizations” (p. 42). Librarians who might find themselves feeling unable to offer counter positions should remember Western’s words about the need for dissenting voices. Foucault (2007) developed a term known as “Counter-conduct in the sense of struggle against the processes implemented for conducting others...” (p. 201). Library deans, just like other university administration, are caught between requirements from above and the pressure from those they lead.

Niesche (2013) used Foucault’s concept of counter-conduct in an educational leadership study to rethink issues of schooling accountability and the practices of principals. “Such an approach can have generative possibilities for theorising productive forms of resistance,” Niesche wrote, adding, “Foucault’s notion of counter-conduct is useful, not as a concept of resistance against forms of domination but rather as ways of working in the spaces of freedom of the accountability logic as part of a governmentality and disciplinary practices” (p. 155). I found this claim intriguing, given that Niesche phrases the idea of freedom in *spaces*, especially as I’ve studied space alongside power to reveal its relation to subjectivity. The spaces in which we work, and think, do present opportunities to escape

dominant discourses and biopower. An important question to ask is, “Where might these spaces of freedom take place?” It seems unlikely that library leaders would develop a counter-conduct, with an ability to question dominant discourses at a conference or to read the literature that advances a dominant discourse of space renovation. Essentially, the same leaders who are unable to break these patterns of imprisonment to dominant discourses because they only work in collaborative realms that re-inscribe “knowledge” are the ones who seek to maintain libraries based mainly on places of group work and less independent study and private contemplation. These spaces of freedom become more difficult to find despite Foucault’s idea of counter-conduct having much to offer library leadership:

On the other hand, by using the word counter-conduct...we can no doubt analyze the components in the way in which someone actually acts in the very general field of politics or in the very general field of power relations; it makes it possible to pick out the dimension or component of counter-conduct that may well be found in fact in delinquents, mad people, and patients. (Foucault, 2007, p. 202)

Foucault’s research on populations who faced oppression and operated within a dominant binary are good examples of the spaces where counter-conduct has the potential to enter a biopolitical field of power, potentially bringing about important change. Still, the risk of docility among leaders is real and counter-conduct is not so easily accomplished or recognized when it happens.

In addition to studying counter-conduct and discipline, I encourage educational leaders to study different types of leadership so that they may realize when an oppressive or dominant leadership style risks belittling the shared governance and democratic values the library as an institution represents. In remembering Taylor’s *The Principles of Scientific*

*Management*, Western (2013) cites Kenny et al. (2012), who found “In effect, Taylor believed that workers should leave their sense of identity at the factory gate, and so be prepared to fit whatever ‘mould’ had been prepared for them by management (p. 168). Library leaders must work against creating moulds, not only of libraries based on the dominant discourses of space and technology, but also moulds of patrons who are expected to fit into whatever type of library is offered at their university. Perhaps more importantly, leaders need to work against the self-moulding process that develops them into a replication of other managers in the field following dominant discourses.

In this context, we can argue that academic leaders have become instruments in the contemporary biopolitical project, focusing their efforts on driving their academic colleagues, departments, faculties and institutions towards the formation of labouring bodies in light of a neoliberal emphasis on self-regulation, entrepreneurial risk-taking and productivity (Beattie, 2020, p. 105, citing Mitchell, 2003).

Beattie’s words capture the biopolitical movement occurring across university campuses throughout the world. One problem lies in that educational leadership has too often placed a “reliance on heroic representations of leadership” (Niesche, 2013, p. 145). The same could be said for academic libraries that view the dean of the library as the hero who will save the library from future obsolescence. Yet it is important to remember that administrators also hold subjectivities that shift based on discourse.

In discussing the infinite definitions of leadership, MacKillop (2018) said, “This recognition of the plurality and contextuality of leadership points to the dangers of conceptualising leadership as a single ‘thing’ or definitive set of practices” (p. 208). This is where poststructuralism offers benefits to the field of educational leadership. “Rather than

widening the net, poststructuralism is useful for both critiquing from within and also opening up new lines of analysis beyond traditional frameworks and approaches,” Niesche and Gowlett (2015) wrote (p. 382). Foucault’s theories have proven useful to deconstruct these concepts of space renovation, also providing us with tools to analyze discourse and the problems and events of our time. They are beneficial in thinking about leadership and how power works to produce docile bodies as well as how counter-conduct might be productive. The knowledge an institution creates and believes in can result in whatever “truths” are being claimed. We should also remember Foucault’s point that resistance is found wherever power resides. This dissertation is a resistance to the sweeping changes that have taken place so rapidly in the field of library science, and also a call for more research and leadership that follows poststructural methods, such as these, which may create new strategies and discourses for approaching problems academic libraries face.

As part of my doctoral studies in Educational Leadership at Appalachian State University, I remember reading *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Heifetz et al., 2009). This book allowed me to apply some of the theory I had studied into practice while working as a librarian at Appalachian State University. Heifetz (2009) explains that during moments of tension and conflict:

There are always a thousand reasons not to speak the unspeakable. For one thing, the organizational system does not want you to say these things out loud; doing so will generate tension and conflict that will have to be addressed... But getting people to share what seems unspeakable is essential for an organization that hopes to move forward in the face of changing priorities or external conditions. Only by examining

the full range of perspectives can a group of people increase their chances of developing adaptive solutions. (p. 82)

This passage struck me as something easily related to Foucault's notion of power. One may feel imprisoned or trapped in a position of docility, unable to express counter ideas to the dominant discourse at play, but we must remember that whenever we are caught in a power relation, "... there is a possibility of resistance" (Foucault, 1988, p. 123).

When I began studying poststructuralism, I was intrigued that there was a different type of approach to explore an issue using a creative analysis that incorporated fascinating theories. Having conducted this post qualitative inquiry has allowed me to think about the trends of academic library space and technology in a different manner: a manner I would not have experienced having just focused on the library science literature with traditional research methods. Being able to ask difficult questions and to ask questions differently is a leadership skill that poststructuralists must endeavor towards and teach.

My dissertation specifically addresses important questions about how libraries have suddenly changed and what this means for patrons and librarians alike. There is a desperate need for leadership, especially in academic libraries, where changes take place because of dominant discourses and power relations. Leaders who can question the "knowledge" that is presented at conferences and in publications contribute more than they realize to the discipline. Foucault (2003) spoke of biopower as a "technology which brings together the mass effects characteristic of a population, which tries to control the series of random events that can occur in a living mass..." (p. 249). Although I have explained how dominant discourses can regulate the subjectivity of patrons, rendering them a specific type of library user who has to adapt to an environment based on its space, we must always remember the

biopolitical movement withholds resistance. This is because power and resistance coexist, Foucault reminds us. As new leaders enter a field encompassed with trends that promulgate the future library, they must be attuned to their entire community of users when determining the library services, collections, and spaces. During these times of rapid change based on conventional research methods, leadership is more important than ever in the academic library. Just as power moves through an individual, at times creating resistance, so too does a type of dynamic movement take place in leaders. “It is never one thing, it is fluid not static, and cannot be reduced to skills, competencies, or a way of being,” Western (2013) said adding, “Leadership cannot be fixed; it moves between people as a dynamic social process (p. 37).

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are limitations to any type of study that seeks to answer a question with the “truth.” I believe the first limitation for this study is that it comes from my own subjectivity, but this is also a benefit to the researcher who withholds a unique perspective. Having experience working as a collection librarian in the humanities is what enabled me to notice certain events that required further examination. The binaries mentioned earlier in this chapter become noticeable when your work is directly affected. As a former Humanities Librarian working in collection management at a mid-sized university, my perspective is limited based on having conducted more work in the humanities as opposed to the sciences. Had someone conducted this analysis with a science background, or one of technology, it would produce something entirely different. This is what makes post qualitative inquiry interesting, because even someone with a similar humanities background would identify different issues and themes that emerge based on the trend of space.

Part of my reasoning for using poststructuralism and thinking with theory as a post qualitative framework was because the questions I sought to answer were never fully defined at the beginning, and instead evolved as I conducted more reading and writing. In post qualitative inquiry, meaning is always on the move and while I admit there are no final answers to my research questions, this is because poststructuralism makes room for future expansion and study of these topics. Although I analyzed numerous texts and images that provoked ideas related to the theories I studied, there were many more scholarly articles, newspaper articles, blogs, emails, and more that I eliminated from my analysis because the sources were repetitive in nature or not as strongly connected to the theories I used.

One additional limitation is found in the perception of Foucault's power/knowledge as it relates to "truth" and practice. Woermann (2012) explains this critique of Foucault's power including the notion that his "analysis of the disciplinary system collapses into nothing more (than) 'a rhetoric and posturing' that 'stands nowhere and finds no reasons'" (p. 117). Woermann cites Greg Seals (1998) who countered this idea to explain that "Foucault distinguishes between the ideological ideal of emancipating truth from every system of power, and the laudable task of detaching the power truth from forms of hegemony that dominate at any given time" (p. 118). In my own poststructural analysis, I often wondered about the lack of concrete suggestions to offer. Yet I am reminded by St. Pierre (2021) that post qualitative inquiry is "not intended for application to lived human experience but for *re-orienting thought*" (p. 4). Still, through conversations with my dissertation committee, it was useful to consider how a Foucauldian analysis of power could be limiting in some circumstances such as when trying to discover places of agency at a more granular level. Foucault's theories of discourse, power, and biopower have allowed me to critically analyze



important issues to learn what disciplinary mechanisms are taking place, but knowing that other librarians may take up poststructural work to discover new truths and challenge dominant discourses is reassuring.

The literature on the topic of space is abundant and although several items I excluded were good for background reading, the sources I chose to analyze and cite maintained a more direct and close connection to my topic and the philosophical ideas in my process of thinking with theory. The precise connections included substantial themes that developed through my thinking and writing between the library science literature and theoretical works. These linkages emerged when I read an important statement on power/knowledge that sparked difference in my thinking about research regarding weeding print books, for example, or when I sensed that a monograph about changing library spaces based on consumerism needed critique by plugging into Foucault's work on biopower.

### **Recommendations for Future Inquiry**

I hope that several opportunities and ideas will arise from my research to inspire future poststructural studies in the field of library science. The research I conducted opens up many more questions and possibilities for inquiry. I have suggested that discourse borrowed from public libraries have had an influence on the academic library and this would be worth investigating further. As public libraries serve a different population providing services to the community and a place of learning and growth, the university has typically emphasized scholarly research. Now that libraries are being redesigned with much attention being placed on spaces for technology, cafes, learning commons, and more, it is worth considering how the influence of the public realm creates power relations in the area of academic libraries.

Again, it is worth noting that the production of my ideas through the two chapters based on power/knowledge and biopower were influenced by my own subjectivity. Further research conducted by other librarians would offer new perspectives that might perhaps augment and expand the findings I have discovered. Because most of the literature in the field of library science is based on conventional qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods and methodologies, there is a serious need to expand the research taking place in the discipline of library science. While interviews, case studies, and thousands of surveys are available across all library science topics, what is lacking is a platform for theoretical discussion and meaningful production of research that addresses issues such as space renovations.

My dissertation has only scratched the surface of endless possibilities one could pursue using other poststructural frameworks to critique truth, identity, the subject, and more. Countless other theorists could be used such as Derrida's deconstruction, Butler's performativity, or Hardt and Negri's multitude. Similar to Niesche and Gowlett's (2015) assessment of educational leadership, the field of library science "remains theoretically weak" and stands to benefit from poststructural research (p. 373). Numerous interviews, surveys, and case studies re-inscribe the dominant discourses that are present in the library science literature. Using deconstruction to break apart other binaries, or an approach such as performativity to rethink how discourse and normativity are performed through "rules of intelligibility" (Butler, 1990, p. 24) are just a couple of examples one could take to explore library discourse using poststructuralism.

In addition, there are numerous gaps in the literature that may be opened up through

other poststructural studies. Earlier in this chapter I cited Beattie in discussing governmentality and its effects on educational leaders. Similarly, librarians operating under the guidance from national organizations such as the American Library Association and the Association for College and Research Library must balance the discourses that seek to govern libraries based on trends. Finally, librarians must be careful not to create additional binaries. Although I have used several examples of humanities scholars working with print, I am also mindful that a number of researchers incorporate digital scholarship into their work. Further study on the development of digital humanities and its incorporation into the curriculum are worth considering as spaces continue to be redesigned.

I think the important aspect of post qualitative inquiry is for the researcher to see a connection between the event or experience and whatever theoretical framework calls them to analyze that event. Indeed, the variety of poststructural approaches available for critical analysis of library science topics is endless. In a field where the preferred research methods are conducting surveys and traditional qualitative data analysis such as coding, it would be useful for researchers to explore new ways of generating analysis, as I have, based on the “unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based” (Foucault, 1994a, p. 172).

### **Concluding Thoughts**

As trends such as space, consumerism, and STEM continue to have a profound influence on the library, it is important to question changes that take place from library design to the mission. The power dynamics that are determining what the modern-day academic library offers its faculty and students should continuously be analyzed to ensure the appropriate balance is being found for each unique library. I have sought to break down binaries that exist where certain groups or ideas are given preference over others. Rather

than intending to simply criticize the leaders of each dominant discourse, my goal was to question, in Foucauldian fashion, how discourse, power/knowledge and biopower, were working to produce the political struggles and where multiplicity was being closed down rather than opened.

In using this post qualitative approach to analyze the discourses of space in academic libraries, I have exposed some new ideas about how we might consider the swift changes to spaces taking place. In light of dominant discourses that call for a departure from the “traditional” library of print resources and a move towards collaborative spaces and technology, there is much evidence from the literature I have shared that justifies questioning these rapid changes. Studies indicating that students prefer print books for their research as well as independent, quiet spaces suggest that academic libraries are not meeting the needs of a large population of faculty and students by forging ahead with major renovation projects that cost thousands of dollars and involve the disposal of thousands of books. The power/knowledge and biopower that I presented in previous chapters indicates that subjectivities of library employees and patrons alike are being shaped by a normalization of the dominant discourses, which produce a regularization of libraries based on the trend of space.

If more library researchers will begin to question the narratives that are shaping the library culture, important change may take place in some of the key areas I have analyzed. Even inciting an awareness of these issues will contribute to the field of library science and offer new ways of thinking about the issues of space.

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### **Vita**

Alex McAllister grew up in Jacksonville, North Carolina. He graduated from the McCallie School (Chattanooga, TN) before pursuing a BA in Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After working as a crime and court reporter in eastern NC for a couple of years, he decided to go back to school and earned a BA in Music with Honors from UNC-Wilmington. He received an MM in Music History from the University of South Carolina at Columbia and an MLIS degree from the same institution. He worked as a public services librarian at Coastal Carolina Community College before accepting the position of Assistant Professor and Humanities Librarian for Collection Management at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. He currently works as an Associate Professor and Coordinator of Collection Management. When he isn't pursuing his scholarship interests, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Stacy, and two daughters, Clara and Myra. He also enjoys playing guitar, cooking, soccer, Tar Heel basketball, spending time with his dogs Mia, Luke, and Wicket, and reading Star Wars novels.