

On the Politics and Practice of Citation: A Conversation, Part 2

nicholae cline, in conversation with Michael Kirby, Kimberly Forero-Arnias, Joseph Kevin Sebastian, Gianna Brassil, Mimosa Shah, Elise Mills, and lawrence maminta (in initial speaking order).

ABSTRACT: (Academic) citation is a representational practice of hollow, ruined potential professional accumulation of intellectual capital. This contribution explores the interview as conversational form to refuse the isolation and atomization that structure much academic labor, including LIS research and scholarship. Rather than treating the author as a singular locus of knowledge production, it stages collective thinking as a method—making visible the relational lineages, political commitments, and affective stakes that conventional academic genres often obscure. Grounded in a critique of (academic) citation as a technology of enclosure and professional accumulation, the piece showcases what becomes possible when citation is approached not as an apparatus of intellectual property and metricized legitimacy, but as an occasion for vulnerability, contradiction, pleasure, and shared study. Across the dialogue, contributors surface divergent and sometimes challenging responses to the call: lawrence’s unapologetically communist indictment of ivory-tower cowardice amidst the ongoing genocide in Gaza; Mimosa’s meditations on extraction, effacement, and haunting within violent institutional archives; Gianna and Elise’s insistence on embodied citation and refusal of polished academic performance; Michael’s prefigurative vision of librarianship otherwise; Kevin’s wrestling with generative AI and the ethics of citing one’s sins; and Kim’s grappling with form itself as both gateway and barrier to understanding how knowledge moves through relationality rather than extraction. Thus, the conversation offers not only arguments about citational politics, but a demonstration of how knowledge production might be reoriented toward collective struggle, collaborative meaning-making, and liberatory horizons.

KEYWORDS: bullshit, critical dialogue, knowledge production, it’s all stories, fake ass shit; acab = all citations are bastards



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Introduction: Toward Dialogue in/against Citational Politics

My initial response to Jaime & Jorge's summoning for this special issue mirrored what many contributors articulated in our conversation: an abundance of possible interventions, a multiplicity of directions one might take in response to the manifesto's provocations. I found myself considering citation as a technology of enclosure and accumulation, imagining a piece composed entirely of fabricated citations that might gesture toward what lies beyond our current citational regimes, contemplating the tensions between referential practices and Indigenous storytelling traditions where, for my people, it is all stories—relational practices of acknowledging the beings, energies, communities, and lineages within which we think and act. Yet in the end, I realized what I most wanted was not to produce another singular text but to create space for collective thinking, to generate something together that might illuminate the processes, stakes, and pleasures of grappling with these questions alongside others who might (or might not) share certain political commitments even as we approach them from different positions and with distinct analytical tools.

This desire for dialogue reflects a deeper critique embedded in the manifesto itself: the isolation and atomization that characterizes so much academic labor, including the production of citation-heavy scholarship. While it is true that we are never entirely alone with our ideas—we are always already thinking within lineages, through relationships, with and against the theoretical frameworks and political commitments that shape us—the conventional forms of academic production obscure these relational dimensions. We write in our individual silos, our work appearing as discrete contributions to a field, our citations functioning as markers of intellectual property and professional accumulation rather than as tracings of ongoing conversations, struggles, and collective study. The dialogue form, by contrast, makes visible what is often hidden or obscured (sometimes deliberately so): the emergent, iterative, vulnerable quality of knowledge production; the ways our thinking shifts and sharpens in response to others; the political and affective stakes that animate our work but often remain unspoken in polished scholarly prose.

I was inspired in part by a series of written conversations between Dominique Scarfone and Avgi Saketopoulou, which demonstrated a different mode of production, demonstrating it in practice through the very form of their engagement with one another. What I hoped this conversation might offer is precisely this: not merely content about citational politics but an expression of how we might think

otherwise about knowledge production (and citation) itself; not merely an interview with individual writers but an opportunity to experience and reveal the pleasure and challenge of thinking about these questions together; not merely a process of information transmission on the page but a generative, political, and shared experience of building knowledge and understanding collectively. This conversation shows ways of thinking by allowing the contradictions, tensions, anxieties, and commitments that drive this work to surface in ways that a conventional academic essay might discipline away.

Together, these contributions and the conversation they generated challenge us to recognize that citational practice cannot be reformed through better methodology or more inclusive bibliographies. Rather, as many contributors articulated, the work happens elsewhere: in organizing, in study sessions, in the ways we remember and refuse, in how we hold each other accountable to movements and struggles for collective liberation. What follows is an attempt to honor that work—to create space for the kind of thinking that emerges when we refuse the isolating logics of professional accumulation and instead commit to study, conspiracy, and the pleasures of thinking together toward worlds we cannot yet fully imagine. It's partial and messy, but still something else.

Being Drawn In

nicholae (nc)

Thank you all for being here, truly. I really wanted to bring all of us together in some way, and this was one of the forms that made sense based on who was involved and the conversations I had with jaime and Jorge.

What I'm really hoping for today is to co-create a space for all of us to be in conversation with one another. Each of you has written something really evocative and compelling—I've read all of your pieces in their current forms, and I'm excited to see how they emerge—and I'm really into a lot of the ideas you're playing around with. While there's already a conversation happening across time and space (with the editors, with the peer reviewer, with the ideas and practices and energies of many others—whether they show up on and through these pages or not—I see this time we have together as an opportunity to generate something together, collectively, that is connected to but also distinct from your individual contributions.

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So, I have several questions, which were drafted in conversation with the call, the manifesto, and your pieces, but I'm not in charge and we don't have to follow a particular path. I hope you'll take some time to consider and respond to each and any of these questions, but also feel free to interject, respond to one another, ask each other questions of your own or about what's been shared, and so on. This is our space, and it is a contribution we are making together.

Let's get started. I'm really curious what drew each of you to this project. Obviously there was a call, a signal went out, and you also had the manifesto and the whole website to peruse and respond to. What called to you? What compelled you about the initial email you received, as well as the form and website and the ideas explored there? How did that find you, and how did you find yourself responding to that initially, before you actually got to work thinking about, writing, and shaping your contribution?

Michael Kirby (MK)

I think what really attracted me to this project was the very interesting prompt, right? I just have this huge problem in general with the orientation of our field, where it's this very behavioral sciency, this very singular definition of what our scholarship can be. That's really what attracted me to this, the conversational tone, but also the invitation it provided for us to play in a more fun way than your traditional methodology.

Kimberly Forero-Arnías (KFA)

I can maybe say something similarish. I don't write papers ever, and I don't like writing, and I don't really care about citations very much. Whoops. There's a lot to just unpack there maybe, but I guess what made me actually apply was that the way it was written felt like there was an invitation to not just write a paper. I wasn't sure what I was going to do, but I also draw and make films, and I was thinking about how I made this film project and then afterwards it was like, fuck, I didn't cite anything. And so I thought it could be interesting to think through it. I also know Jaime and I trusted that there would be an openness to the process and an interesting consideration for how it would move that might be different than other calls for papers that I probably would never submit to ever.

Joseph Kevin Sebastian (JKS)

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I have very similar sentiments to Michael and Kim in that there was something provocative about the CFP. I tend to not take a lot of things seriously, especially in terms of the academy, or I try to present myself as not taking things too seriously (even though I might be). The CFP invited us to be irreverent and sort of flout certain conventions. I thought that there was a great opportunity for me to do what I wanted to do. I really was drawn to that. Similar to Michael, I have a certain impatience for the expectations for what kinds of things we're supposed to write for our jobs and what's acceptable as scholarship. There was something really compelling about the CFP.

Gianna Brassil (GB)

I was drawn to this project less because of the actual CFP and more because of a class that I participated in with Jaime and some other folks in this call, about a year and a half ago, on the professionalization of librarianship. It was an incredible experience especially because I was very new to this field at the time, still a second-semester MLIS student, and was bored and disillusioned by everything that I had read in the LIS canon up until that point. I feel like Jaime really helped me and everyone in the class remember that we can draw our inspiration and our groundedness from outside LIS and still be in this field. I also just wanted to work with my friend Elise and we worked together!

Mimosa Shah (MS)

I was very drawn to this particular prompt, not only because of the editors and the very thought-provoking website they created, but also because a lot of my actual daily labor consists of helping individuals understand how to effectively cite or not cite information, with respect to copyright and possible infringement. Time and again, I share information about the library's copyright statement and fair use. I work at a library that holds a lot of primary source materials, including many archival materials that do not have any form of citation whatsoever. I think a lot about how we know what we know and how it is that the people who help us formulate these structures of what is known and what should be known, and how to effectively talk about it, are also at times so hollow. And in this time and space where so much is being revealed to be hollower than we anticipated, what remains in the midst of it? How can any form of real knowledge be enacted upon and made actionable. So, thank you for giving me this opportunity to think about my weird, tangled thoughts. I'm still in the revision stages and I really appreciate all the support I've received from [peer reviewer] Jose and Jorge and Jaime thus far.

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Elise Mills (EM)

I can go next. I loved what you had to say, Mimosa. That absolutely resonates. For me, I think, yes, definitely very concerned with how do we know what we know. But something that I feel like I was really able to delve into deeper with Gianna was how do we remember? Memory culture is something I'm always thinking about. How we all contribute, together, collectively, to how we know what we know but also how we remember what we remember, and the politics of that. So this was a really unique opportunity to do that in a completely different format than I would have otherwise. Similarly to Kim, I'm into the experimental arts, including music. It was a really nice way to bridge all of these things while not really giving a shit about the academy. This was a good way to synthesize all that.

Against LIS

nc

I'm appreciating these responses. One thing I want to follow up on in thinking with what Michael shared—is around how do you feel this project pushes against, challenges, lies outside of or maybe to the side of the behavioral science leanings of or tendency within librarianship and LIS scholarship? What is this project doing differently? You haven't yet read or engaged with each other's contributions, so you don't know exactly what form these ideas are going to take in the special issue. But in looking at the call and the manifesto—and also thinking about your own pieces, how does it feel and in what ways does it diverge from the typical expectations of and approaches to methodology and scholarship that dominate our field?

MS

There's a real struggle in LIS to conform to patterning itself as a science. And this struggle to pattern itself in a scientific method often leads to contradictions. This desire is also deeply insecure. Through our work, we further uproot how insecure that desire is. We make it known that there's something truly remarkable about LIS being not quite a science, and how that desire to be a science is such an insecure desire—so fugitive and othered, and yet at the same time, a desire that thrives amongst scholars. This need to be seen and heard as earnest scholarship that is not grounded in simply scientific method alone.

nc

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I'm hearing you name an anxiety constitutive to our field, where the drive toward scientific legitimacy is itself a deeply insecure orientation that is also revealing—it reveals the limits of what these social scientific methodologies can hold and do and create and offer us.

MK

I guess what interests me about this question is that the behavioral science disposition of the profession posits or naturalizes a sort of specific subject that I'm not even sure really exists. This is really diving into the work I get to in my paper a little bit, but this tendency often posits a white liberal capital-M male subject that I find problematic. Just in terms of the manifesto, I appreciate the call to think about some of these naturalized forms of the profession and what the profession could actually look like if we wanted to change it (or if we could change it in some significant ways).

JKS

I was thinking about what Mimosa said about anxiety and insecurity, and it just made me think about a parallel there if you're in a tenure-track library faculty position. There is a constant need to say, "yes, I am faculty" or "I am one of you." There's an interesting parallel there in terms of the identity of an academic librarian who may be on a tenure-track journey and this need to perform or conform to the rigidities of more traditional fields or forms of inquiry that have established a culture and tradition around method. So I thought that was interesting that it also plays out there too in terms of our professional identities and expectations.

nc

I like what the three of you are thinking about around the anxiety of professional legitimacy and the concomitant, compulsive stream of publication and scholarship that both provides a sort of pacification of that anxiety, through the comfort of measurement and quantification—which can quell that anxiety and insecurity to some degree, but never entirely—and helps establish one's place in the field. This anxious orientation, and the resulting moves to manage it, becomes a way of addressing existential uncertainty about our professional standing—establishing one's place in the field through the accumulation of measurable outputs, even when the tools seem ill-fitted to the situations under consideration (and of course this obscures some of the more important questions we need to be asking about our field, about LIS scholarship, about professional accumulation, and so on).

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GB

Yes, I was also thinking about feelings of insecurity, anxiety, and the need to prove myself in my contribution. A question that I think about often is: is my goal to integrate into this system and become faculty, a “legitimate” academic, or is my goal to actually embrace the outsider or outcast position within the academy? I guess I’m also coming from the place of still being in my grad program; I don’t have a job and I don’t have one lined up. I struggle with a scarcity mentality, yet I also try to remind myself that if things don’t work out for me in the traditional professional sense, that’s okay. Not integrating into the professionalized LIS system is not such a bad thing.

nc

Yeah, there’s an assimilative and domesticating process that the field requires of us. But maybe we also have a choice between integration and domestication or a more fugitive/outsider positioning or orientation; we can inhabit institutional spaces without being entirely consumed and captured by their logics of legitimation, and do our best to refuse the terms of belonging while still finding ways to study, conspire, and build otherwise from within (à la the undercommons framing). But I think we need to complicate that as well.

I’d love to think a little bit about the manifesto. We’ve talked a bit about the call and the original email, but I’m curious, when you were first engaging with the manifesto and the website, what did you think? It was clearly provocative and compelling enough that you felt an urge to participate or respond, but that doesn’t mean you agreed with it fully. How did it resonate with, challenge, intervene in your own conceptions of and practices with citation as well the forms and practices of citation that constitute or are reflected within librarianship and LIS scholarship?

EM

This is not a very large answer to this question, but when I first read this manifesto I had only known about Jaime and Jorge through Gianna. So when Gianna sent the call to me with “Oh my god, we should do this!” I just felt so seen. It was just refreshing to me and it put words to a lot of my own ruminations similar to this topic.

JKS

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I was particularly interested in this idea of accumulation of capital because I've been thinking about this a lot, especially with how my work engages with and interrogates generative AI and how that affects citation and capital. So it makes me think about citation and even copyright as this product of capitalism. This accumulation of some sort of value; and what are the alternatives? What existing alternatives are there to memory, like Elise mentioned: remembering as opposed to citing. What other epistemologies exist? I'm thinking of, for example, oral traditions and non-Western forms of knowledge sharing.

MS

I recently had the opportunity to view a series of lectures that were given as part of the annual Alchemy lectures at York University.¹ One of the speakers was the musician Immanuel Wilkins. During his talk, he prefaced it by saying his work as a musician is that of scratchings. He later referred to how jazz musicians and musicians overall should always make a point of going out into the woods as far as possible and playing without any walls around them to see where the notes fall. And I think about that idea and how he responded so creatively to the prompt that was given around sound at the interregnum. That was the theme of this year's talk: sound at the interregnum. I'm paraphrasing him, so I don't have quite the citation I need for even this conversation, but I mention him because I think what we're trying to get out of a citation outside of the parameters really of capitalism is to find and hone other spaces and places where we can understand one another's musings, take in and take out what is necessary and strive towards knowledge production in community. It's so idealistic, I know, but there's also something so beautiful about it, so tantalizing.

EM

This is just so good I have to riff on it. I'm writing a research paper right now and I was reminded this week of how bothered I am every time I'm checking citations or in a moment where I'm trying to gather my whole trajectory of understanding a topic and how even beyond an academic research paper context, to have to sit down and quantify everywhere that I have sponged from... and also holding in the same space. I actually work in copyright as part of being a music librarian. So I'm constantly looking at copyright law and thinking about how this only exists because of this

¹ Citation (of sorts): Wilkins, Immanuel, Canisia Lubrin, Madeleine Thien, Glen Coulthard, and Christina Sharpe. "Sound--at the Interregnum." York University, October 30, 2025. <https://www.yorku.ca/laps/the-alchemy-lecture/>

capitalist system that we're in. This concept of intellectual capital is just so gross when we think about how knowledge is collaborative; it's always been and we're always sponging from everything all the time. And obviously give credit to who brought you to who and where you are now, but it's just so bothersome that in a research paper, in an academic context and working world, you have to name the people who have already chosen to legitimize their knowledge capital. You're not even talking about all the people who are on the fringes of that who have also gotten them there, right? It really just feels dishonest and oversimplifies the really complex processes that get us to understand how we understand what we know and how we remember what we remember. You can't quantify it, but we also have to because artists need to get paid. And I hate that.

KFA

I can say that when I read the manifesto, I didn't connect with it as much, actually, and I had a lot of questions. There were so many parts of it that I felt were moving in a lot of directions so I was happy that there was a website that I could look through to try to piece things together for myself. I really appreciated the various offerings that were placed there, like yes, I want to think about citation through the lens of carceral surveillance; I want to think about this through the lens of networks of knowledge that are erased; I want to think about standardization as a means to efficiency but because of my general irreverence for the standard I hadn't really taken it too seriously before this, I was too focused on tracing my family's knowledge that formal citations hadn't occurred to me.

The manifesto and the website really helped me think about citation differently, helped me see the various ways to think through citation, using citation as a sort of starting place, as a gateway drug into information systems.

MK

Returning to the manifesto, I like this idea that citational practice is somehow machine-like, right? This is maybe my personal reading of Marx—a lot of people hate the young Marx, but I sometimes prefer him—it just reminds me of this sort of estrangement from politics, from ourselves, from our labor. The machine-like quality of citational practice, which I think is hopefully getting to what all of you are very expertly talking about.

nc

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Right, citation as a form or practice that draws us into larger processes of machination and alienation.

I also really resonate with the feeling of reading the call, the manifesto, and the website and having more ideas than I knew what to do with in terms of how to respond or what to write; my mind went in a number of different directions, from thinking about exploring citation as a form of enclosure and accumulation to writing a piece that was just fake citations that articulate a story or an argument or a set of ideas as a critique of and gesture beyond citation. And various other possibilities in between. But in the end I realized that I just wanted to have a conversation and create something together, because I thought it might be a more interesting form and might also be more accessible (and supportive for all the contributors as well). I'm so used to writing and scholarship in the academic context—Jorge and I have written together quite a bit over the years, and that's primarily been for academic journals and presses. I felt called to take a bit of a different approach. And here we are today, doing that.

Processes

I'd love to know a bit about your process and the shapes your pieces actually took as they were coming together. We've talked a bit about your relationships with the manifesto, and how you responded to the call and other materials, but your contributions are all quite different; they take different forms, they cover different ideas and theories, and they make different arguments. And that was very exciting and enjoyable for me as someone who has an opportunity to be in conversation with all of you. I'd love to get a sense of how you went from receiving the call to reading the manifesto to summoning an idea and then bringing it forward into the form it is in now or will be later for publication.

lawrence maminta (lm)

Yeah, I'll start. First, let me start with free Palestine. Free the land. Free the people. I feel like I'm always thinking about Palestine.

So when Jaime and Jorge put me onto this call, it was actually my introduction to the concept and framework of citation justice. And you know after just a cursory glance at this intellectual product I couldn't not say nothing and there was a lot that went into this writing. Specifically what was weighing on me was how Western academics

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as a whole have not said shit as academics in support of Palestine—not just Gaza, the West Bank too, through all of occupied Palestine—while they were systematically being massacred. Western academics have just embraced this cowardice that has spread throughout the media class and the professional managerial class, and even some “leftists” in the US. As I looked into citation justice, I looked at who was promoting it and I did what I feel like most people do: search social media for mentions of the genocide in Gaza, which is the moral issue of our time, right? And when I didn’t see shit I was like, “Oh, I have to write this.” And you know, for the record, I don’t be writing shit. I’m not trying to build a CV. I’m in movement. I’m in organizations. And I’m out here in occupied Tongva land where the fucking fascists are snatching up my neighbors and community members and putting them in concentration camps. I’ve been out here doing shit. And if it feels like I’m shitting on these ivory tower folks, I am. At the same time, I’m really feeling like I’m uplifting a long communist tradition of pointing out the bourgeois sensibilities of a specific class of academics.

MK

I mean, I do feel like my radicalization comes from this exact issue—and I talk a little bit about this in my piece—the need to move beyond the organizational structures that exist currently within our field (like the ALA). Their total disinterest in responding to these issues is just morally inept.

GB

Elise and I’s project meditates a lot on the work of Safiya Bukhari, a political prisoner and Black Muslim Revolutionary. Something we’ve thought about incorporating now into the project is an explicit call-out about political prisoners, because we’re seeing such a resurgence in the capture of so many people. Specifically, I’m thinking about a political prisoner in the UK named T. Hoxha, who went on a hunger strike for nearly a month. What stood out about that specific experience was one of her four major demands was to reinstate her job in the prison library. I’ve been thinking about the fact that from what I can gather, nobody in our profession was talking about this. Nobody seemed to care about our colleague rotting away in prison as her body was eating itself alive.

nc

Yeah, to me it seems clear that professional accumulation and practices like citation (building CVs through citation metrics, securing legitimacy through scholarly output...

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even just talking about citation justice all the time) foreclose liberatory political horizons by absorbing the very energies that might otherwise fuel organizing and movement work. We can see how, through some of what you've each been sharing, intellectual labor becomes disciplined toward metrics that serve institutional reproduction rather than collective struggle, and we trade the work of building militant formations capable of challenging empire for the safer work of diversifying bibliographies within institutions that serve it—evacuating the political at precisely the moment when organized resistance becomes most urgent. Did anyone want to riff on that a bit more or say anything else about process?

GB

Our process looked like going to cafes and talking with each other for hours on end. We asked ourselves: who are we writing this for? I think not being a regular reader of the *Journal of Radical Librarianship*, I wasn't quite sure who this audience was going to be. I had a lot of questions about whether they were going to get it. Are they going to even understand the references that we're making here? I think in the end we decided, who cares? I mean, not who cares, but maybe some of these folks reading this journal need to hear the perspectives and voices that we're bringing to the table.

MS

For me the process was quite tortured and that's mainly because of me, but I also work at a very extractive place where terrible things continue to happen and where the very founding of the institution is deeply violent. So, for me, who am I writing for? I often answer that it's for me, even though that's very selfish. I also think a lot about how many people, researchers, visitors from abroad, students, staff, faculty use our library's materials and how that could be seen as another form of extraction. I think a lot in terms of how these materials have accumulated and been cited but also effaced by so many in the process. Writing was a way of trying to make more apparent those who are not able to be present in any way.

What I wrote for this particular call is related to a different piece that I had written (my keyword essay on haunting in the *Critical Keywords in LIS* book), and it's in some ways a continuation but also a diversion from that. Genocide continues abroad while state-sponsored violence bludgeons our lives here. What does it mean to enact solidarity as a verb? It is not necessarily by writing this. It's happening somewhere else and outside. This writing is really about me but also you and we and others

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because there has to be some form of consolation in the midst of this or maybe that's just me offering this homily up as a consolation.

JKS

Thank you everyone, especially Lawrence, for raising some of these very important things. What came to mind is this idea of tension for myself as someone who's writing this thing, who perhaps is gaining their own intellectual capital from what we're writing but also trying to interrogate what that means. There's a lot of tension there, and an added layer of tension for me is that because my work engaged with generative AI—I use generative AI to create a fake bibliography and sort of speculative footnote, I offloaded some of that work. During my conversation with the editors and Jose really challenged me to interrogate this whole process of my choices. One thing that came out of that is, what is some other alternative way to cite this thing that seems to be uncitable or rather is challenging the ways that we think about citing, right? What if, for example, in the moments that I use generative AI, instead of citing generative AI maybe I could cite the number of trees I killed in this prompt or I could cite the laborers who had to filter through awful things for this platform to work. So instead of citing the platform, I'm citing sort of my sins, I suppose. It's still very tension-filled and I guess the process is one that's fraught and something that I still struggle with.

The Political Project, the Political Parts

nc

Following on from this and the thoughts Lawrence posed as an opening foray in response to the previous question, I'm wondering if there is or if you have a sense of the political project your piece contributes to or emerges from? And that might mean gesturing towards some of the theories, ideas, commitments, or critiques that animate your work here or elsewhere, or perhaps could entail a sketching of the lineages of thought in terms of the intervention it is making and is part of. Really I'd like to hear more about the commitments that you're drawing from or putting forward, in whatever form, in your contributions.

jaime ding (jd)

I would also just add that we asked that too on the form for your original submissions, the question of where are you coming from? I would be curious if any of that has changed since the CFP. What is the growth there?

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nc

That's helpful too. I think for some pieces it's quite obvious, or more obvious than others. You have a piece like Lawrence's, which opens with Palestine and the PFLP, where the political commitments and perspective are really clear. In others, we can see that something political, something to do with power and an uncovering of the way things are, is very much happening, but the underlying theories and commitments and positions are worth surfacing a bit more for readers of this conversation and the contributions themselves. But I think Jaime's add-on is really key as well: how has that changed, if it has, throughout the process of developing your pieces?

Im

Yeah, I'll start. For me, it's communism, straight up; as in, Engel's doctrine of the liberation of the proletariat. I've also committed to anti-capitalism and anti-imperialist values. The liberation of working-class and colonized people. My target audience was some of you, I'm not expecting a grand reception of my writing. I'm not expecting tenured faculty who read my shit to be like, "hmm, this really gives me something to think about," because it ain't for them, right? And if I'm being real, I think it's safer for this class of people to ignore and not acknowledge my shit at all. I mean, I wanted to write my paper for those of us who share political commitments and values and who were not comfortable with or experience some sort of unease with frameworks like citation justice, and maybe didn't have the words for what they were experiencing. But yeah, communism.

MK

Generally speaking, I'm coming maybe from a similar sort of intellectual heritage, but I think specifically I was kind of writing in response to this idea that Fredric Jameson has about the unrealizability of utopia.² As in, there's something (life under capitalism, capitalist realism, I guess) sort of stopping us from envisioning what a better form of librarianship would look like, but also a better form of society. I was writing in response to that but also kind of agreeing with him in that I think we can't just peek into the future and see what these things would look like definitively. I think one of the tensions in my piece is that I'm putting forward some very manifesto-like points but I also accept that they're not prescriptive in the sense that we definitely

² See Fredric Jameson's "The Politics of Utopia" (*New Left Review*):
<https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii25/articles/fredric-jameson-the-politics-of-utopia>

know that this is exactly what librarianship should look like in the future. But the point is, we should be having these conversations!

JKS

If there is one philosophical commitment that I have, or something I think about all the time, it's the instability of knowledge and truth, stemming from queer theory. The idea that nothing is stable, everything is contingent. I think that that has led me to always think about how I really don't know anything. Perhaps that's an excuse to disengage from conversations or maybe it's a sincere commitment, I don't know. But the other side of that is always thinking about that as a way to welcome new ideas. I think this was my challenge, this is the challenge that Jaime, Jose, and Jorge gave me, to be more explicit and aligned with the project—the thrust of the project—instead of being conciliatory or ambiguous about some of my ideas. I think about if I have this opportunity to voice this, to add to the chorus, if I have this privilege and the means to do so, I should. I think about that and how the work is the capital-w Work, the collective work that we have to do; it is multi-pronged and not just one thing but all the things. As I revise, I'm trying to make more explicit the political underpinnings of my piece instead of what is my default state, which is more conciliatory and is also how I was brought up professionally and as an immigrant. To not ruffle feathers, to succeed you have to participate in or defer to whiteness. This has been a constant struggle for me, trying to not rock the boat too much because I'm afraid I'll be kicked out. And then another tension is around how I should be taking care of myself. So to what degree should I be complicit so that I am safe but to what degree should I be louder so that I am doing what I think is right.

MS

I don't mean to sound irreverent here, but my political project starts with being a really bumbling auntie who gets herself into a lot of shit. And I do mean that in the very best way. Some aunties are the worst, but I aspire to be among the best. That said, this constant need to interfere and to interject is both annoying and can be made fun of endlessly, and it can also be done in a way that is provocative and done under the radar because it's so commonplace and dreary. So I guess my political project is to uplift and to sustain and to care for the gender diverse people and women who are often told not to speak or rather, cite all the other men and other patriarchy that persists in our society. I don't necessarily make this point as explicit as I could, but your question, nicholae, really made me think, well, what political project would this be part of? And it doesn't hail from any grand theory. It's

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really just the product of a lot of my own experience, but also the experience of working at a library that fixates very much so on women and gender studies.

GB

Although the call for this came out in April, Elise and I ended up mostly doing everything in August. August is Black August, so we decided to basically make this project into a collective Black August study. Black August developed out of a Black revolutionary lineage and is directly related to the struggle for the liberation of political prisoners. For me, forefronting political prisoners as the compass in our liberation struggle was the political project to which I wanted to contribute. I also wanted to highlight the ethical obligation that we have to the people that we cite, especially people who put their bodies on the line and made sacrifices in ways that we have not and do not. And so I also wanted to introduce the idea of a citational practice that is bidirectional where we try to avoid extractive knowledge practices and instead critically reflect on how our actions and material commitments align with our citation practices.

jd

Speaking for us as the editors, we really wanted this to be a very specific political project in that, like what Kevin was saying, asked people to be explicit, especially since I think librarianship often tends to try to be very “access for all for everything” including political projects and that’s bullshit. We’re not having that. I just want to say out loud that we were really specific in terms of who our contributors were and what we understood their place to be kind of in the lens that we were viewing academia from, for example. And you know this is all bullshit, but we want it to be very specific bullshit. We want to have something that is honest.

Holding Bullshit/Tension

nc

Honest, political bullshit.

One of the things that I talked a bit about with the editors (and was also thinking about myself in response to the call and the manifesto) was the question of what is a citation? What are citations? What do they do, what do they not do? It struck me that almost all of these pieces have citations in some form, even if they’re kind of scrambled like Kevin’s. As many of us have noted and many of you have explored in

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your pieces, these writings will be published in an academic journal and potentially can be used to accumulate the very intellectual and professional capital that the manifesto critiques and that that we have been critiquing and working through today. I'm curious how you're holding and moving with that tension—if you see tension here and in that? In what ways have you considered and grappled with this and where has that led you? How does your piece reflect this, if it does? I'm also thinking about this because the Journal of Radical Librarianship is an academic library journal, and there is a certain prestige or critical positionality that publishing in it confers, and given the nature of this call and the manifesto (and what it explicitly critiques), I'm wondering how you have thought about or considered this.

EM

Thank you, Gianna, for summing everything up so beautifully. Something that was really important to me about our project is burying the messiness of thought and trying to stray away as much as possible from a polished project. I would say 90% of what we produced is handwritten, and we really wanted to lean into the form as well as the content to show that we're coming back to our thinking, we're adding annotations, we're adding critiques. And in that way, citations did not show up in a traditional way. Because when was the last time you wrote a citation by hand? Nobody's doing that. At least, you're not doing those parentheticals in the same way that you're required to do in APA or Chicago format, or any of those style guides, right? In form it's definitely not going to look like that. But obviously in writing you're referencing things all the time. You're referencing in speech, too; I mean people today here in this conversation are citing people as they're talking. That was a piece that was important to our project to retain a sense of the conversational and organic as much as we can. We cite by existing, we cite by embodying what we believe, and we mention the people who are important to that process. The citational requirements and practices of the academy or the professional world, creating a structured polished version of that isn't necessarily accurate even if we're trying to be accurate. I'm really happy with how our project ended up, because we really did retain a more organic way of what it means to reference our ancestors and elders and people that we take seriously. It exists and everyone's doing it all the time; it doesn't have to be formalized.

Im

How am I holding the tension? I'm not. like I said, I wrote this for the homies. I don't see any contradiction between being in the field and shitting on it. Look, we live

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under capitalism and we got to do what we got to do to survive. And to me, my intention is to push our collective analysis forward. The number of people included in the term “our” is relatively small compared to the field. The folks who read my shit are the ones who need to read it. And if it’s in a journal or found on some blog post, regurgitated by one of these large language models, however it gets to people is how it gets to people. Folks know where to find me. I’m not hard to find.

MK

I feel like my citations are not actually that adventurous and I feel like they conform pretty well to the established traditions. What I think I’ve tried to do in my piece is cite the story of St. Anthony but not in the approved way, to take it in a different direction, to read it against itself. I’m not actually that interested in religious figures at all. What I am interested in is this idea of faith (faith but also more generally belief in something else), and so, as I was writing, I was thinking: what can we recuperate from these stories? Can we recuperate belief? And trying to think through the ramifications of that. But in terms of citation, it’s very boring; Chicago, if you’re wondering.

JKS

I feel like, apart from therapy and meds regulating my anxieties about all of these things, one thing that I can focus on is the bullshit nature of everything. This is all sort of bullshit right? But also at the same time, thinking about the value of what I am contributing especially in terms of my own library institution. Some of the things that I might be saying in my work are things that I want my colleagues in my library who are more traditional in lots of different ways to read; maybe there’s value in impacting them in some meaningful way, because if I try to think about the potential impact on a larger scale than that then it becomes too much for me to try and metabolize. But focusing on my local context, and the local impact—what I am potentially doing by doing this—there is something there to dispel all of those anxieties that arise from this tension. And I’m thinking about grace, too; grace for oneself, extending that grace towards us too.

KFA

I have thought of this question because I have a lot of white dudes that I cite and, going back to your other question about process and what forms the piece has taken, for me it’s been very hard. I feel like I’m maybe in a little different place in terms of what is the political project I’m a part of and how I’m doing all of this. It

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feels all very new and all I know is that capitalism is definitely not great, and citation is helping me understand and unpack this part of capitalism that I'm not a big fan of. There's a lot of directions I went in, a lot of directions I'm still kind of floundering in, a lot of directions on ways to go. I thought there was really interesting stuff about, for example, how things have been funded and who funds what, why the government has funded certain types of standards and ways of putting information together to be able to then use that to have intelligence for whatever they want to bomb. And what I've been moving through with this submission is finding a way to authentically do and talk about all this stuff. I've tried to do a lot of reading in all of these different areas and I have anxiety around what comes with having to do citations and writing. I thought, fuck, I better know and remember where I got this stuff from and not just copy/paste a bunch of shit into a notes document and then go, "where did that come from? I don't remember who said that." I never really pay attention to how I get knowledge in this way. I make a lot of films and I think a lot about where I get knowledge from in relation to my family, in relationship to my body moving in the world; how my media impacts how I know stuff. I think about these things but I don't think about it then as a way that I need to regurgitate and clearly say "this is the exact path" or something, and then put it in a format that other people can then extract and make connections from. I don't think about that ever. It's been really interesting and I'm still trying to figure out how to bring the citations forward. I feel I got somewhere with citations as my gateway drug, an entryway into a type of absurdity that I'm interested in, that citation gets us into. I've just been struggling as someone who's new to writing. I feel like I have a better sense of how to do that visually, but it's harder for me to do in text. Again, to go back to why I appreciate the editors, they were very open with format, and they told me we could do different shapes; it might not even have to fit as a PDF, that was very helpful to me. I don't know that I feel the tension. I don't care really, I don't care if I have to cite a couple people or do whatever, but I do care about form and making sure the package feels like it connects to what I'm saying. So I'm still grappling with that.

nc

As we come close to the end, one of the ideas that has been gestured towards here in this conversation and that many of you think about in your pieces is how to think about citations in other forms, other shapes. I'm a little wary of the word "citation" at all, because for me, for my people, it's stories; it's all stories. We refer to people, communities, places, beings, energies, ideas, and relationships through our practices

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and rituals of storytelling. There's a relational and referential quality to all we do and all the ways we think, consider, live, and act regardless of whether we're always aware of this, which is true of non-Indigenous people as well. I would love to hear you all think together a bit about or share some thoughts around alternative frameworks, modalities, imaginaries, and horizons of citation, whether you would use that word or not; what could they be? Could they do a different kind of work, is there a different form they might take? Can you imagine a citation—a citational practice, politics, and ethics—that does something radically different in and through and with the world than how we've been critiquing them (how the manifesto and many of your pieces critique them)?

MK

I kind of differentiate between two types of citation. There's what I would call a sort of rehabilitative type of citation where we're trying to on some level critique librarianship and its political orientation. And then there's also what I've kind of proposed, which is saying something like, maybe this isn't a useful exercise and maybe librarianship as it currently exists can't be rehabilitated on any level (and shouldn't be for various reasons). I think this other form of citation that I'm trying to articulate is a more constructive form of citation. Moving away from the rehabilitative model and just thinking through what do we actually want these alternative structures to look like? I'm really into the idea that librarianship could be a prefigurative organization or entity that in some way mirrors what we want our "ideal" society to look like. Obviously, I'm not too invested in the idea of using citation to save currently existing librarianship, but I also accept that it's our only tool in attempting to articulate some of these political horizons.

nc

I think the "prefigurative" is really key here.

MS

In my piece, I refer to the possibility of transformation through Black study, and through study in general. Through the work of Harney and Moten I thought about how this form of study is a possibility, a pathway elsewhere and otherwise. And then I traced that through (with the help of Jorge and Jaime and Jose) the work of Ashon Crawley who writes about Black Pentecostalism and its form of breath and this notion of being able to find other ways of developing and engaging and studying and thinking together and against. It helped me realize the possibility that it is not

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going to be in our academic spaces. Far be it for me to fully understand the lineage of Black study because I'm not of that community, yet I can say that it inspires me. One of the examples that Crawley raised in his work is around the Wednesday Night prayer meeting, and this performance of music by Charles Mingus and how it references Mingus's own life as a young boy who attended the Holiness Pentecostal Church in Los Angeles in the Watts neighborhood. It's very specific and positional, but I referenced that as a form of thinking really deeply about how placehood, our elders, the people who we want to rebel against, all the ways that we have embodied knowledge is really just going to be outside and elsewhere and otherwise and not here. So to respond to your question, I do think that that [i.e. outside, elsewhere] is what I come up with, which isn't satisfactory to many, yet felt much more whole to me than trying to repair something here.

Im

Yeah, man. I think citation should be abolished. Like straight up. I mean I think of the term citation primarily as a legal one, you know? And also I grew up listening to hip hop, lots of rap music, right? And folks be using samples in their songs and that's something with which, if you know you know, right? I'm thinking about sites and corporations like Genius.com that provide something that is for and by white people, essentially, and I'm noticing that we don't have many Black folks on this call and you know, full transparency, I think Black folks should be gatekeeping more. I find that citation really just facilitates the extraction of knowledge and culture as well as the commodification of ways of life that really sustains the dictatorship we live under. So yeah, it can go.

KFA

Yeah, I really appreciate that. Where I have gotten to on this topic that I never thought about before was basically it's for a certain group of people trying to do a certain thing and it tries to claim and posture a certain type of openness and connective network that connects all of these kinds of knowledges and it just doesn't do that. It's just claiming and acting like it's doing that. This is something I'm trying to figure out in my paper. There's something in the format that is already an indicator of the type of way it connects knowledge systems through extraction and segmentation, but acting as if it could be a bridge even though the way it works is through separation.

JKS

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I wanted to have fun thinking about imaginaries and what citation modalities are different or could be imagined, like how I wrote. I agree that citation is so deeply enmeshed with capitalism, copyright, ownership, the sense of ownership over ideas (how one can own an idea). But maybe we can look to art or poetry, right? When we read a poem, for example, we don't need to fully know all of the more intellectual references for us to appreciate the truth or the impact of the poem. Maybe there is something there about appreciating these kinds of expressions, artful or poetic, that don't rely on erudition or formal citation. Maybe the future of citation is in poetry.

nc

Thank you, Kevin.

I just want to express how grateful I am that you were all willing to take a couple hours out of your day to talk about this. And I'm grateful to Jorge and Jaime for letting me take all of you on this journey rather than write something. They definitely could have said, "Nah, girl. You got to write something." I'm really excited to see your contributions in their final forms whenever that comes. I hope we can all talk again about this someday when the issue emerges into the world.