

2B—THE ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP IN THE CORPORATE U #1

Consultants in Academic Libraries: Challenging, Renewing, and Extending the Dialogue

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In this research, we provide historical and linguistic analyses of consultants in academic libraries using a critical framework to discuss issues that librarians may not have been able to previously fit into library practice dialogue. The historical perspective along with a targeted review of library and information science resources is used to guide two lines of linguistic analyses. The first provides a critique of the core tenets that are used to define and characterize library consultants, namely, the claim that consultants are unbiased professionals who bring “expertise” and “fresh” ideas to libraries. The second analysis investigates the rhetorical strategies used in existing texts about consultants: polarizing language, figurative and indirect language, and strawman reasoning. The implications of these linguistic strategies are unpacked further by reflecting on what is missing from these texts, and the introduction of elements of knowledge and power seen in times of neoliberal deliverables.