VOCATIONAL AWE AND LIBRARIANSHIP:

Loving Yourself Is Not A Crime

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Fobazi M. Ettarh





fobettarh@gmail.com

Before We Begin

This will cause some discomfort.
Embrace it!

Feelings are great, but actions are better.

Loving What You Do

What does it mean to love libraries?

• Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life!

Identity Outside Librarianship?

Who are we outside the realm of "the library?"

Who is Fobazi Ettarh?



- Cis Woman
- Queer
- Figure
- Sister
- Activist
- Scholar





Vocational Awe

Is librarianship an occupation or a vocation?

• Civilized nations build libraries; lands that have lost their souls close them down.



Vocational awe describes the set of ideas, values, and assumptions librarians have about themselves and the profession that result in notions that libraries as institutions are inherently good and sacred, and therefore beyond critique.

Libraries Are...



Inherently Good

Provide access to all, have diverse collections, champion truth and free speech

...unless they're undesirable.

Inherently Sacred

Holy, otherworldly, awe-inspiring, safe space, a sanctuary

...for the privileged; those we deem worthy.

Beyond Critique

Last bastions of democracy, the "soul" of the community

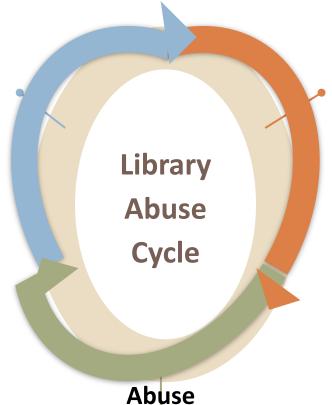
...but upholds white supremacy; ignores valid critiques.

The Cycle of Exploitation





The worker burns out and leaves/retires.



Recruitment

A passionate worker is hired by the library.

The worker is put through many types of abuse and low morale experiences.

Examples of Vocational Awe

How does vocational awe play out in the workplace?

Work-life separation

Wave your hand if you've ever heard and or said one or more of the following:

- I usually work through lunch/work late.
- I'm addicted to checking email/I check and answer email all the time.
- I feel guilty whenever I take sick/vacation days.

Job Creep

When those "other duties as assigned" become a regular part of your day to day responsibilities.

- Social worker
- EMT
- Therapist
- Legal consultant

Burnout

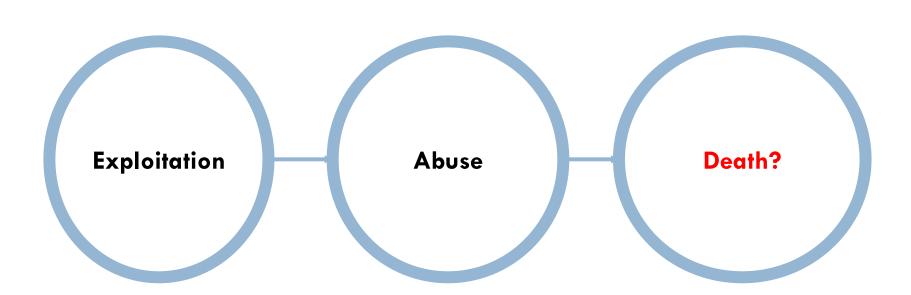
"...a state of exhaustion in which one is cynical about the value of one's occupation and doubtful of one's capacity to perform"

- Emotional labor
- Invisible labor
- Job creep-->heavy workloads
- Lack of institutional support



The Cost of Your Service





Loving Yourself

Is it possible to love libraries AND yourself?

Caring for myself is not selfindulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.

"

Audre Lorde

How do I start?



Set Boundaries

As important as those job duties might seem, they can wait. Set aside time for your life-your loved ones, hobbies, whatever they may be.

Work Collectively

It can be hard to set and stick to something new without help. Whether you are in a unionized place or not, organize with your coworkers to set and maintain a life outside work.

I Love Myself Too Much to...

Accept a lack of work-life balance.

Allow my job to become my whole identity.

□ Tolerate job creep.

 Witness inequality and/or unfair practices and do nothing.

Thanks!

You can find me at:

