Hopeful visions, practical actions: cultural humility in library work

This book edited by three competent and devoted librarians from the University of New Mexico University Libraries is devoted to the explanation and implementation of the concept of cultural humility. The editors explain it as an emerging "approach to equity, diversity and inclusion efforts within librarianship", but obviously it has already established itself as suitable for application in other service areas and is bound to spread further.

It may be put into the semantic space occupied by the concepts of "decolonization of library collections and services", "library work for collection and preservation of indigenous and local knowledge" and bears clear links to cultural competency and rethinking of power structures occurring and reconstructed by library institutions. These are all useful aspects to broaden and diversify library services with regard to the served communities and individual users, though I am not sure that one can cure deeply-seated and often consciously unperceived prejudice or inherent inequality infrastructure just by introducing some concepts. However, every single bit helps.

The most interesting aspect of this book to me is its personal character. All the chapters are written from the personal perspectives of their authors as a deliberate approach to the discussion of different aspects of the central theme. Personal stories, wider narratives of institutions, surrounding context and historical backgrounds are related in each chapter. This personal account of the cultural humility and how each of the narrators implemented it or at least reflected on it creates a lively and inclusive text. It is also worth noting that the authors of the chapters not only see the advantages of cultural humility, but also the possible dangers, especially, when it is practiced by the people who traditionally are seen as humble servants (Chapter 11).

Thirteen chapters of the book are divided into four parts presenting the origins of the concept (Part I), stories of reflective practices (Part II), advantages provided by cultural humility in community settings (Part III) and reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of the suggested approach as well as its potential impact on future library services (Part IV).

It is also worth noting that the authors being of different origin present the perspective of the libraries in the countries with the history of white immigration stealing the countries of indigenous populations, pushing them from their lands and otherwise overriding any of their rights or concerns. Those we see in this book are at present English-speaking territories on different continents, such as the US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

As I belong to the indigenous population of a European country, twice occupied, and colonialized by a big Eastern empire (why we are denied the title of indigenous populations in Europe is anyone's guess), that was robbed of the native language and deprived of its history as well as culture, I started thinking about cultural humility in the context of European libraries. It is more than appropriate on the continent where people speak different local languages, many of which are close to extinction because of nationalistic policies of the central governments. Many countries

on this continent are also facing immigration challenges from their previous colonies or from those seeking refuge from various natural and social disasters. Even without these processes, the inequality between the regions even in one country, let alone on the continent is sometimes overwhelming. All these challenges require significant cultural humility, though most probably it will be expressed and experienced differently in this economically developed but so varied in cultural, linguistic and ethnic respects.

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