

1A—ACADEMIC LIBRARY FUTURES #1

Seeing the Forest for the Trees on Mars: Rethinking the Ideology of the 'Library of the Future'

Michael Dudley (University of Winnipeg)

For many decades now, library practitioners have been generating a vast literature concerned with the “library of the future.” While much of this literature may be classified according to its imperatives for radical versus incremental change, what is largely absent from these articles is a theoretical understanding of the underlying ideological bases of their arguments, as well as extrinsic or transdisciplinary perspectives. Reconsidering these prescriptions for the future of the library through the lens of futures studies has the potential to afford us critical perspectives on their ideological foundations. Hal Niedzviecki’s 2015 book *Trees on Mars: Our Obsession with the Future* is analyzed to locate the ideological tensions in LIS literature between chasing the future on the one hand and cherishing the security of tradition on the other, and to caution against a neoliberal “future-first” imperative of “owning” the future of libraries at the expense of enduring values.