"Let's Not Homosexualize the Library Stacks": Liberating Gays in the Library Catalog

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> I went to texts on abnormal psychology, to encyclopedias, to medical books, to every book dealing with sex, as well as to whatever I could find under card catalog headings like "sexual perversion." I was so anxious to get to the materials on homosexuality, I didn't even mind looking in categories like "perversion" and "abnormal." And I half believed them anyway.
>
> —Barbara Gittings

Encountering a book with queer characters and storylines can be a personal or academic milestone—a transformative awakening to self-knowledge. For the more seasoned among us, such a discovery was likely fraught with pathologizing language that reflected the prevailing attitudes of the time. In libraries before the 1970s the books would have been cataloged with the subject heading "Sexual perversion" and shelved alongside books on sex crimes, incest, and pedophilia. Those searching for fictional works about gays and lesbians found themselves identifying with particularly flawed characters whose stories usually ended tragically. These readings often took place in the stacks, in stolen, secret moments. For some, this first experience was the result of directed searches in card catalogs, as Barbara Gittings describes above, while for other readers, like Lillian Faderman, the first book was encountered by accident:

> So I'm in the stacks of the English Reading Room about to be seduced. I'm looking for a novel by E. M. Forster, and it's not there. . . . But in the spot where the book is supposed to be sitting is another book, not by Forster, but by Foster. Jeannette Foster. With the title *Sex Variant Women in Literature*. . . . Is "Sex Variant Women" really a euphemism for what I think it is? It is! And that spectacular revelation knocks the breath out of me. . . . Standing there in the stacks, I devour the opening section, even forgetting to look over my shoulder to see if I'm being observed. I read for twenty minutes or half an hour, and no one comes by to frighten me away. But I mustn't press my luck. I place the book

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back in its slot, vowing to visit again as soon as I can, praying I'll have no rival for my devoted attention to it.[1]

Anecdotes like those of Gittings and Faderman testify to the importance of books and libraries in the coming-of-age experiences of LGBTQI people. The present generation has access to a wealth of fiction and nonfiction waiting to be stumbled upon and inviting scholars and the wider public to enjoy books filled with joy, depth, and complexity. The current richness of possibilities contrasts with the sense of fear and revulsion or thrilling transgression that discovering oneself in a book once entailed for sexually curious or "perverse" individuals. Much of this pleasure is owed to activist librarians of the 1970s, primarily in the United States, who launched the movement to promote and increase access to gay and lesbian library materials. These librarians, who were generally active in the wider gay liberation movement, not only demanded rights and recognition but also challenged the organizing techniques that regulate and enforce heteronormative knowledge structures in the places where we find literature and information about sex and sexuality.

The stories of some of these individuals are well known. Barbara Gittings, for instance, is revered for her role in influencing the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality from its list of disorders and as the leader of the Task Force on Gay Liberation of the American Library Association (ALA), the first gay and lesbian professional organization in the United States. Inspired by personal experience, she also devoted herself to increasing the accessibility of gay-positive reading materials.[2] Rather than revisiting the already-told stories of gay and lesbian library activism in these years, however, this article focuses on the work of cataloger activists who effectively persuaded the Library of Congress (LC) to revise its terms and arrangements regarding homosexuality during the 1970s and 1980s. I rely on documentary evidence, particularly correspondence with and about the Library of Congress. In the following pages I will discuss the impact of the Task Force on Gay Liberation in effecting change in the organization of gay subjects in libraries—changes that came to influence practice in libraries of all types around the world. These librarians were well aware of the

The epigraph is from "Barbara Gittings," in *Gay Crusaders*, ed. Kay Tobin and Randy Wicker (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 207.

[1] Lillian Faderman, foreword to *Sex Variant Woman: The Life of Jeannette Howard Foster*, by Joanne Passett (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2008), xii.

[2] Gittings was the second coordinator of the task force. She was preceded by founder Israel Fishman. Cal Gough, "The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Task Force of the American Library Association: A Chronology of Activities, 1970–1995," in *Daring to Find Our Names*, ed. James V. Carmichael, Jr. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 121. See also "Jack Baker and Michael McConnell," in Tobin and Wicker, *Gay Crusaders*, 135–55; and Barbara Gittings, "Gays in Library Land: The Gay and Lesbian Task Force of the American Library Association: The First Sixteen Years," in Carmichael, *Daring to Find*, 81–93.

pathologizing force of the institutionalized vocabularies for homosexuality in advance of queer theory's conversations about the slipperiness and problematic applications of categories for gender and sexuality. They challenged the dominant structures and ideologies at play in the very institutions that collect and situate knowledges, and they persuaded the Library of Congress to bring into being gay and lesbian subjects in ways that reflected emerging literature. This article explores two key changes that the task force helped to bring about: the removal of "Homosexuality" from the broader subject category "Sexual perversion," and the authorization of "Gay" in place of "Homosexuality" for books on nonclinical topics. It also presents the debates among librarians around these issues.

The ubiquity of libraries makes the sparse attention paid to them by historians of sexuality surprising. While some scholars are actively attempting to queer and critique library and information studies, their research is generally confined to that discipline and tends to place an emphasis on practical matters rather than developing historical approaches.[3] The participation of libraries in the interdisciplinary conversation about the history of sexuality is long overdue, particularly given the fact that libraries and their classifications are critical components of a network of agencies and apparatuses that produce and regulate discourses about sexuality. Indeed, libraries are where knowledge is stored and accessed in the academy. The Library of Congress and its cataloging standards are the central focus of my research because as the United States' oldest federal cultural institution and the largest library in the world, it occupies a particular position of authority among the discourses that have established sexual categories.[4] Its present subject heading and classification systems were first created in 1898, when the LC moved into its current Jefferson Building. The LC was viewed to be national in purpose and universal in scope, and the categories

[3] See, for example, Grant Campbell, "Queer Theory and the Creation of Contextual Subject Access Tools for Gay and Lesbian Communities," *Knowledge Organization* 27, no. 3 (2000): 122–31; Emily Drabinski, "Queering the Catalog: Queer Theory and the Politics of Correction," *Library Quarterly* 83, no. 2 (2013): 94–111; Patrick Keilty, "Tabulating Queer: Space, Perversion, and Belonging," *Knowledge Organization* 36, no. 4 (2009): 240–48; K. R. Roberto, "Inflexible Bodies," *Journal of Information Ethics* 20, no. 2 (2011): 56–64. Edited volumes in the field tend to be practice oriented. See Carmichael, *Daring to Find*; Tracy Nectoux, ed., *Out behind the Desk: Workplace Issues for LGBTQ Librarians* (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2011); Cal Gough and Ellen Greenblatt, eds., *Gay and Lesbian Library Service* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1990); Ellen Greenblatt, ed., *Serving LGBTIQ Library and Archives Users: Essays on Outreach, Service, Collections and Access* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010). More recently, Keilty and Dean have published an interdisciplinary anthology: Patrick Keilty and Rebecca Dean, eds., *Feminist and Queer Information Studies Reader* (Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books, 2013). A book series was launched by Library Juice Press.

[4] The Library of Congress was established by an act of Congress in 1800. See *Annals of Congress*, 6th Cong., 1st sess., 684, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage.

and hierarchies designed to organize the collection reflect this ideal.[5] Over the course of the twentieth century, the Library of Congress's influence and authority across libraries has expanded, so that it has come to create and standardize the rules by which libraries around the world analyze and organize knowledge.[6] It not only produces knowledge through disciplinary techniques but also ensures that its structures and vocabularies are adopted across disciplines and throughout libraries of various types and locations, including the local Main Street public library, digital libraries in cyberspace, and academic libraries. The Library of Congress is the type of institution to which Foucault refers when he calls for us to "account for the fact that [sex] is spoken about, to discover who does the speaking, the positions and viewpoints from which they speak, the institutions which prompt people to speak about it and which store and distribute the things that are said."[7] Because the LC is a central player in a knowledge-power system, it is integral to the political, intellectual, and social histories of sexuality.

George Chauncey and others might challenge the notion that the institutionalized vocabularies in libraries play such a critical role in identity formation among individuals and communities. Chauncey argues that Foucault's assessment of the influence of medical and other institutions in the lives of homosexuals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is both exaggerated and reductive, and he calls for a more nuanced investigation into the varied histories of homosexuality.[8] I would agree with Chauncey that his investigation of the flourishing gay subcultures at the Newport (Rhode Island) Naval Training Station and in New York City in the early twentieth century provide rich evidence that medical discourse was one of many discourses and that there was a degree of freedom from the punitive categories established by medical authorities and opportunities for a range of expressions and encounters in parts of the United States. Indeed, an entire range of cultural currents informs sexual identity. Even in the creation of formalized knowledges about sexuality, such as those within medicine, law, and government, there is a range of opinion, and debates about categories play an important part in the shaping of sexualities. I focus here on the dialectical processes involved in the formalization of categories of sexual

[5] For a thorough history of LC during this period, see Jane A. Rosenberg, *The Nation's Great Library: Herbert Putnam and the Library of Congress, 1899–1939* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

[6] For an account of the expansion of LC's authority, see Francis Miksa, *The Subject in the Dictionary Catalog from Cutter to the Present* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1983), 365–66.

[7] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 11.

[8] George Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War One Era," *Journal of Social History* 19, no. 2 (1985): 189–211, esp. 203–6. See also Patrick Keilty, "Sexual Boundaries and Subcultural Discipline," *Knowledge Organization* 36, no. 6 (2012): 417–31.

difference in libraries and the strategies of activist librarians who challenged those categories. While those responsible for formalization relied upon medical discourses, activists insisted upon humanizing language. These debates indicate that libraries serve as critical sites of identity construction and that the terminologies they use have mattered in the lives of queer, lesbian, bisexual, gay, intersex, and transgender-identified people.

The metrocentric/metronormative analyses most common in investigations of LGBTQI histories frequently efface the stories of homosexuals living outside large cities or highly concentrated communities, and they fail to appreciate the influence that institutions like libraries have in smaller communities. Chauncey's argument regarding the formation of categories within subcultures is best applied where a "queer critical mass" is present, but in rural areas and small and midsize towns, where there are only liminal or nonexistent gay subcultures, especially in the pre-Internet era, people obtained resources to gather an understanding of their place in the world from television, newspapers, and books in the library.[9] When access to fiction and nonfiction is gained by way of pathologizing terms in the catalog, medical knowledge attains an authorized status in a cultural public sphere, rather than being reserved for the medical profession and its patients. Ron Day has suggested that libraries and the documents they contain mediate social and personal identity through documentary codes and infrastructures like classifications.[10] Libraries house and provide access to cultural knowledge and literature that includes but far exceeds scientific disciplines. They are places where ideas are exchanged, and when collections are organized according to medicalized terms, those words and structures guide discovery and discussion of information and thus are reproduced culturally and socially. As the Gittings epigraph at the beginning of this article suggests, labels like "perversion" and "pathology" were to some degree accepted as truthful and internalized by those who sought books for knowledge about sexuality.

Indeed, Gittings, who was invaluable to the wider gay liberation movement, directed attention to her "main crusade," which was "to counter the lies in the libraries about homosexuality, so that gay people will no longer be assaulted or bewildered or demoralized by almost everything they read on the subject."[11] She believed that working with the Task Force on Gay Liberation to improve access to gay-positive fiction and nonfiction in the

[9] For a compelling account of one LGBT advocacy group that hosted a more recent information event in a public library in Kentucky because it was the only location available, see Mary D. Gray, *Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America* (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 35–60. For a description of metronormativity, see Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 36–37.

[10] Ronald E. Day, *Indexing It All: The Subject in the Age of Documentation, Information, and Data* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 38–41.

[11] Barbara Gittings, quoted in "Barbara Gittings," in Tobin and Wicker, *Gay Crusaders*, 206.

library was essential to getting appropriate information in the hands of gay people. In fact, Gittings said that she stopped going to her university classes and devoted her time to personal study in the library because, in her college years, libraries were the only safe spaces for gay people to learn about their place in the world.[12]

The task force worked toward the mission of increasing access to print resources in a variety of ways, with the goal of heightening visibility of the information needs of gay people and the professional needs of gay librarians. They compiled annual bibliographies, created the annual Gay Book Award (now the Stonewall Book Award), and held talks and publicity events at ALA meetings. They also brought the perspective of gays and lesbians to bear upon categorizations used in the public and academic library, effectively altering the landscape and terms of conversations about homosexuality by changing the way that knowledge was accessed. Librarians took up the cause of challenging the LC because libraries play a critical role in the lives of the reading public, and the labels and arrangements by which access is granted affect readers' experience of literature.

I will show that activist librarians challenged a large cultural government institution and succeeded in changing the terms by which we come to knowledge. This is a particularly important piece of history not only in the story of gay liberation but also in terms of clarifying the role of libraries and knowledge organization in the discipline of sexuality/queer/LGBTQI studies and for queer reading publics more generally. At the same time, though, these struggles over appropriate terminology share the troubling challenges and consequences of all rights-based queer movements. By viewing library catalogs and classifications as historical documents we gain insights into the material effects of discourses, as the tensions inherent to political movements based on identity and recognition are put on display on library shelves. Confronting the disciplinary techniques of the library and the challenges brought by activist librarians reveals a dialectical exchange concerning access to information within institutional structures. This analysis mirrors critical conversations about rights and access for LGBTQI communities more generally, and a critical question this article addresses is whether the radical tactics of the 1970s and 1980s continue to carry force today.

Since the Library of Congress is a public research institution that provides infrastructural and classificatory support for American academic and public libraries, it must be viewed in terms of the larger influence of academic discourse on social categories of difference. Roderick Ferguson argues that the academy became the model of "archtonic power" in the United States, using texts to regulate and instruct the nation on difference. Ferguson suggests that academic discourses paved the way for the administrative regulation of queerness, and he cautions that "the condition for sexuality's absorption

[12] R. Ellen Greenblatt, "Barbara Gittings," in *Gay & Lesbian Biography*, ed. Michael J. Tyrkus (Detroit: St. James Press, 1997), 193.

into power's archive is the managing and disciplining of sexuality so that it conforms to institutional legibility."[13] As one step in this process, the library organizes texts within classifications that aim to capture the entire bibliographic universe. This is a practice that essentially establishes the range of approved sexualities within library classifications and thus intervenes in wider conversations about these categories in queer politics. When librarians assign sexual identities and expressions to categories within these systems, they (often unwittingly) contribute to a mechanism to incorporate subjects into larger aims under authorized terms within a heteropatriarchal system. Indeed, universal classifications can only function by positing oppositional relations, placing minorities in the margins, as exceptions to the rule. Hope Olson has described and documented the universality of patriarchy in library classifications, arguing that one of the sources of this problem is the conceptualization of a singular public with unified information-seeking needs and habits.[14] Heterosexuality and whiteness are similarly universalized norms in these systems. The Library of Congress is both the preeminent research institution in the United States and a critical arbiter of standards for knowledge organization in libraries serving many different publics, and so the universalization of heteropatriarchy is especially problematic for non-normative subjects.

Although activists have succeeded in altering the terrain of the library by bringing visibility to gay subjects, our perspective in the present compels us to ask whether a movement that arose out of the politics of recognition inadvertently helped to refine a disciplinary apparatus in service to power. We need to ask, in other words, whether the changes to the classificatory system in the Library of Congress effectively incorporated these and other subjects across the library into a neoliberal, academic machine and whether it might be time to dream up new approaches to organizing the library. I turn now to an examination of some of the key actions and successes of activists before closing with a consideration of the ways in which this movement altered the dialectic of classification and an interrogation of the efficacy of such tactics today.

LIBRARY ACTIVISM, 1970–1988

Librarians joined the social movements of the 1960s by organizing the American Library Association's (ALA) Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT), which provided a space for progressive librarians to collectively advance social justice issues related to librarianship. Unanimously approved by the ALA Council on 30 January 1969, SRRT stood in opposition to the

[13] Roderick Ferguson, *Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 221.

[14] Hope A. Olson, "The Power to Name: Representation in Library Catalogs," *Signs* 26, no. 3 (2001): 639–68, esp. 645–47.

long-standing ideal of library neutrality, an overarching concept based in the belief that librarians can be unbiased in their selection, organization, and dissemination of materials—that objectivity is possible and desirable. SRRT challenged this ideal and advocated for political and cultural action.[15] Within a year the organization had authorized members to create problem-based task forces, including groups focused on librarian education and training, publishing, and the concerns of black and gay and lesbian librarians.

Fifty librarians attended the first meeting of the Task Force on Gay Liberation, held at the ninetieth annual ALA conference in Detroit in 1970.[16] By the following year, the task force had gained a visible presence and raised awareness of gay and lesbian issues in librarianship, making an impression at the 1971 ALA conference in Dallas, Texas. There they announced the first winner of the Gay Book Award and hosted the nearly famous Hug-a-Homosexual booth, which brought extensive media coverage. *Life* magazine took photographs but did not publish them in its 1971 feature article, "Homosexuals in Revolt."[17] Gay librarians were also on the official conference program for the first time with a panel titled "Sex and the Single Cataloger: New Thoughts on Some Unthinkable Subjects," featuring Joan Marshall and Steve Wolf. Marshall and Wolf presented one of the earliest public criticisms of the Library of Congress's treatment of gay and lesbian subjects in cataloging.[18] Both would continue to be key players in agitating for change. Wolf corresponded directly with the LC and reported his efforts to the task force in the following years, while Marshall devised a new comprehensive subject scheme titled *On Equal Terms: A Thesaurus for Nonsexist Indexing and Cataloging*, published in 1977.[19] The task force's work on improving classifications to better reflect the concerns of gay readers focused on two kinds of subject access: bibliographic classification (e.g., HQ75), which has to do with location, or placement of books on the

[15] Toni Samek, *Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility in American Librarianship, 1967–1974* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001).

[16] The Task Force on Gay Liberation has undergone several name changes. It became the Gay Task Force in the early 1970s, then the Gay and Lesbian Task Force in 1988, and it has evolved to become the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (GLBT-RT) of the ALA.

[17] Janet Cooper, "Librarians as Cultural Enforcers," in Carmichael, *Daring to Find*, 113–19, esp. 116; Ben Cosgrove, "Silent No More: Early Days in the Fight for Gay Rights," *Time.com*, 1 May 2014, http://time.com/3507166/silent-no-more-early-days-in-the-fight-for-gay-rights/; "Homosexuals in Revolt: The Year That One Liberation Movement Turned Militant," *Life Magazine*, 31 December 1971, 62–71.

[18] Wolf's piece was revised and published as "Sex and the Single Cataloger," in *Revolting Librarians*, ed. Celeste West and Elizabeth Katz (San Francisco: Booklegger Press, 1972), 39–44. Versions of Marshall's talk were printed as "Viewpoint: Prejudice through Library of Congress Subject Headings," *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom*, November 1971, 126–27, and as "LC Labeling: An Indictment," in West and Katz, *Revolting Librarians*, 45–59.

[19] Joan K. Marshall, *On Equal Terms: A Thesaurus for Nonsexist Indexing and Cataloging* (New York: Neal Schuman, 1977).

shelves according to discipline; and subject headings, which are the terms the user must use to find books in the catalog.[20]

While the task force was undoubtedly a crucial player in the efforts to improve classifications and subject headings, the success and momentum of this agenda depended on the tireless efforts and advice of Sanford Berman, a cataloger at the Hennepin County (Minnesota) Public Library and leader in library social activism. Berman authored and distributed a regular bulletin announcing local changes to the Hennepin Library subject headings, as well as recommendations for the Library of Congress, along with extensive supporting documentation. The bulletin was largely devoted to a discussion of the reasons for changing headings regarding groups of people and featured excerpts from other publications, letters, and commentary from librarians and experts in fields of inquiry for which categories and classes were created. He also frequently petitioned the LC with heading proposals and corresponded with a network of librarians and activists.

Berman became interested in the importance of subject headings in around 1969 while working in a library in Zambia. There he realized the racist and colonialist origins of subject headings like "Kaffir," a derogatory term for black South Africans that, at the time, was included in all catalogs that used Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), including the library at which he was working in Zambia. This launched a research project investigating LCSH, which he published in the pathbreaking treatise *Prejudices and Antipathies*.[21] Berman enlightened the library world about the power of language to propel attitudes and prejudices and showed that language can "function to underpin often malicious stereotypes, to de-humanize the subjects, transforming them into unsavory or at least worthless *objects*."[22] Also known for his "Sex Index," which he created to draw attention to a range of subjects that were missing from retrieval tools and catalogs, Berman has been particularly interested in access to materials about sex and sexualities.[23]

[20] Subject headings belong to controlled vocabularies, which are designed to ensure uniformity and universality within and across library catalogs or other information retrieval systems so that locating information is predictable and precise. Subject headings are strings of words that are created and maintained by a group of authorities, such as LC, to help users find materials on a given topic. Generally based on standard and contemporary American English–language usage, headings are intended to reflect current literature.

[21] Sanford Berman, *Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on the LC Subject Heads Concerning People* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1971).

[22] Sanford Berman, "Where Have All the Moonies Gone?," in *Worth Noting: Editorials, Letters, Essays, an Interview, and Bibliography*, ed. Sanford Berman, 22–31 (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1988), 5.

[23] Sanford Berman, "If There Were a Sex Index . . . ," in *The Joy of Cataloging: Essays, Letters, Reviews, and Other Explosions*, ed. Sanford Berman, 37–59 (Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1981).

Resisting "Perversion"

Eugene T. Frosio, the principal subject cataloger at the Library of Congress, cited Berman's protests when he explained in a 1972 letter to librarian Edith Spencer the changes from the subject heading "Sexual perversion" to "Sexual deviation," for eliminating cross-references from that heading to "Homosexuality," and for revising the hierarchical arrangement in the official Library of Congress Classification (LCC), which had previously placed homosexuality as a category within sexual perversion.[24] Berman's defense of the need for these modifications appeared in Prejudices and *Antipathies*:

> With the advent of the Wolfenden Report, the liberalization in many lands of laws regarding homosexual relations, and recent birth of an outspoken, self-confident "Gay Liberation Movement," the stigma traditionally attached to Homosexuality has markedly lessened, and—among the more enlightened—vanished.[25] Increasingly, Homosexuality has come to be regarded as only one among many varieties of sexual or social liaison, not intrinsically better nor worse than the others. "Perversion," however, unmistakably brands it "worse," a form of "corruption" or "maladjustment." The referent thus smears and blemishes a large and already much-harrassed [*sic*] body of men and women, whose habits may be different, but not therefore more dangerous, disagreeable, or censurable, than those of the heterosexual majority.
>
> Remedy: Delete "Sexual perversion" as an "xx" [cross-reference] under both heads, and similarly eliminate "Homosexuality" and "Lesbianism" as sa's [see also] under the prime head, SEXUAL PERVERSION.[26]

The Library of Congress staff members' edits over time to the subject heading "Homosexuality" appear with all the strikethroughs and modifications shown in figure 1.

Wolf, a librarian at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, credited the task force for the change, and he reframed the argument he had made in his 1971 talk for publication in a collection of essays titled *Revolting Librarians*, edited by lesbian librarians Celeste West and Elizabeth Katz. In that essay he wrote, "After agitation by the cataloging sect of SRRT's Task Force on Gay Liberation, LC pulled 'Homosexuality' from the shadow of

[24] Eugene T. Frosio to Edith P. Spencer, 30 June 1972, Subject Analysis Committee Subject File, 1955–73, 1978–82, box 1, American Library Association Archives, Record Series 31/48/5, box 1, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

[25] Berman cites the 1957 Wolfenden Report, compiled by a committee sponsored by the British government, which stated that homosexuality should no longer be considered a crime. *Report of the Committee on Homosexual Offenses and Prostitution* (New York: Stein and Day, 1963).

[26] Berman, *Prejudices and Antipathies*, 182.

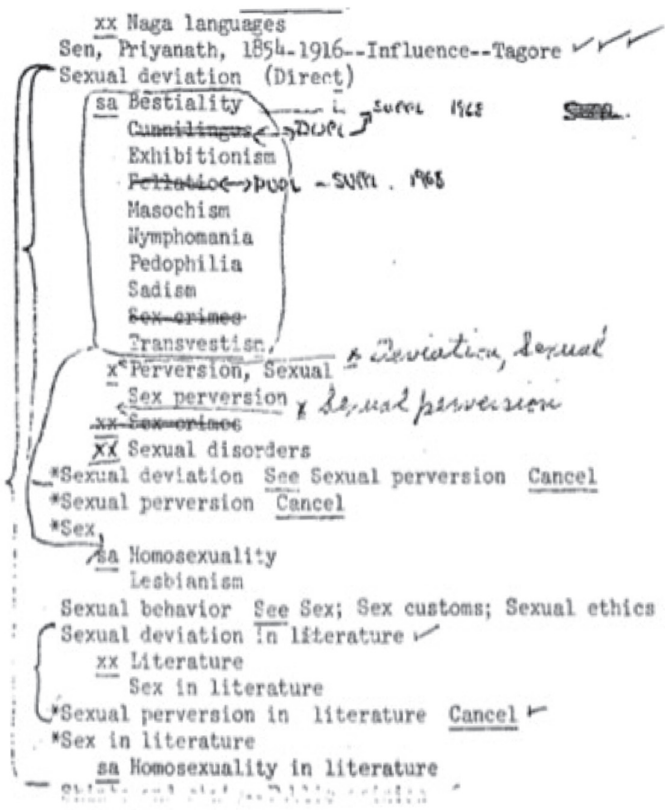

Figure 1. Library of Congress authority card: "Homosexuality." Source: Library of Congress, Cataloging and Acquisitions, Policy and Standards Division, photocopy.

'Sexual deviations' into the clear *descriptive* light of 'Sexual life.'"[27] Remarkably, this change was made ahead of the American Psychiatric Association's decision to remove homosexuality from the list of sexual disorders in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*). That same year "Sexual deviation" replaced "Sexual perversion" in the LCSH.[28] The combined efforts of Berman and the task force likely persuaded the Library of Congress to make this change, and the effects of these revisions are quite apparent if we contrast the new headings with the older hierarchies and terms. For example, as we see in figure 2, the record for Jeannette

[27] Wolf, "Sex and the Single Cataloger," 42.

[28] The policy change came into force in 1972, but the printed list of subject headings that included "Sexual deviation" was not published until the eighth edition of *Library of Congress Subject Headings* was published in 1975.

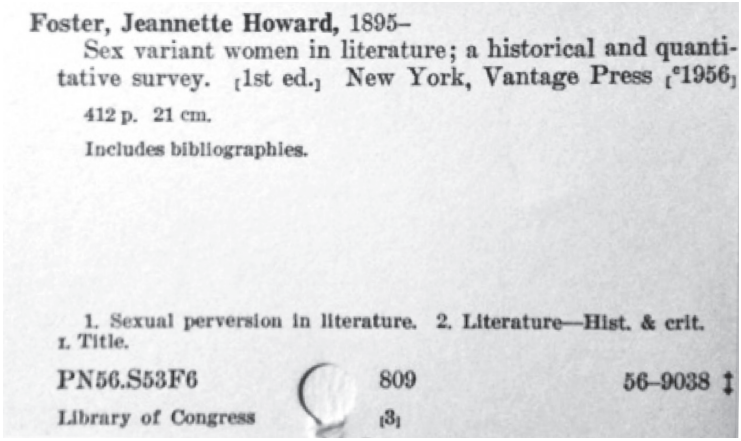
Foster, Jeannette Howard, 1895–
Sex variant women in literature; a historical and quantitative survey. [1st ed.] New York, Vantage Press [°1956]
412 p. 21 cm.
Includes bibliographies.
1. Sexual perversion in literature. 2. Literature—Hist. & crit. I. Title.
PN56.S53F6 809 56–9038 ‡
Library of Congress [3]

Figure 2. Catalog card for Jeannette Howard Foster's *Sex Variant Women in Literature*, 1956. Source: Photograph of catalog card, now in author's personal collection. Acquired from the University of Wisconsin–Madison Memorial Library after the card catalogs were removed.

Foster Howard's *Sex Variant Women in Literature* (the book that began Faderman's voyage of self-discovery) was assigned "Sexual perversion" because it was published ahead of the authorization of the headings "Lesbians," "Lesbianism," and "Lesbians in literature." All books mentioning sexual relationships between women had previously been subsumed under the category "Sexual perversion."[29]

A similar transformation occurred in the bibliographic classification that governs the arrangement of books on the shelves. The importance of this arrangement will be familiar to sexuality scholars who know well the joy of browsing and getting swept away in the HQ section of the library. The HQs are reserved for works on family, marriage, and women, and there are subsections within the HQs that house works on specific aspects of LGBTQI studies. This area of the library has been and continues to occupy a highly contested space, because the first edition of the *Library of Congress Classification*, printed in 1910, placed homosexuality within "Abnormal sex relations." Although it is perhaps not readily apparent, this decision has had lasting consequences. For example, upon browsing her library's

[29] "Lesbianism" was included as a heading in the 1957 edition of printed subject headings. "Lesbians" was added in the 1974–76 supplement to the subject headings. Subsequent editions of Howard's book have been cataloged with the heading "Lesbians in literature," and some libraries have updated their older records. LC's collection has separate records for different editions, and the earliest one now includes "Paraphilias in literature" because "Sexual perversion" was replaced by "Sexual deviation," and in 2007 that was replaced with "Paraphilias."

shelves at the University of Washington in 1989, a patron discovered that books on child molestation were shelved alongside books on gay men and lesbians. She wrote to the director of Bibliographic Control and Access Services at the University Library: "Having these books in the same area perpetuates negative myths about homosexuality and further promotes the existing pervasive homophobia inside the academic community and outside, in the mainstream society. . . . Realizing the time and energy it would take to recatalogue books, I, nevertheless, find it imperative that the library systems within the school take a role in assisting the building of positive bridges between all peoples. Words are powerful tools. They have subliminal effects on people's choices as to how they see themselves, others, and their world."[30] The librarian forwarded the letter to Mary K. D. Pietris, chief of the Subject Cataloging Division at the Library of Congress, who responded directly to the patron: "I can understand your concern that works on sex crimes class next to works on gays, but this is an accident of classification, in which some topics must appear next to other topics although there may be no relation between them except that they are subtopics of a larger subject. . . . To even begin to contemplate any intent other than to arrange works on distinct topics on the shelves boggles the mind."[31] Of course, this problem is not simply "an accident of classification" but rather the result of deeply embedded practices with social, political, and historical roots. Already in the 1970s Wolf had called attention to this positioning of books in his complaints to the LC, which responded by removing the indentation from the list of categories so that homosexuality aligned with but was not hierarchically under "Sexual deviation" (the heading that had previously been "Abnormal sexual relations"). Erasing the hierarchical relationship from the classification system did not, however, alter the arrangement of books on the shelves, and changing indentation in the printed classification did not wipe away the legacy of the previous structure, which remained apparent in the 1989 exchange between Pietris and the University of Washington library patron.

Although Wolf's complaints did succeed in encouraging the LC to modify the hierarchy in the printed classification, there was a strong tendency to abdicate responsibility for names and classes and to assert that they simply reflected usage in the literature. Like Pietris after him, C. Summer Spalding, assistant director for cataloging at LC, responded to Wolf by insisting upon the neutrality of LC headings:

> You apparently have a mistaken view of the nature of our cataloging function. We do not establish usage by means of our subject heading

[30] Marla S. Nonken to Betty Bengtson, 8 January 1989, box 26, Library of Congress Subject Cataloging Division Papers, Library of Congress Manuscripts Division, Washington, DC.

[31] Mary K. D. Pietris to Maria [*sic*] S. Nonken, 1 March 1989, box 26, Library of Congress Subject Cataloging Division Papers.

> list or our classification schedules, and therefore these bibliographic tools can never be found in the vanguard of social change, however desirable that change may be. . . . It is our mission to identify properly by means of the appropriate subject headings and class numbers the subject contents of the new books we catalog. New headings and numbers are established at any time as required by the material in hand. . . . [O]nly those terms or phrases are selected which reflect current authoritative American usage in the relevant subject area.[32]

The Library of Congress establishes headings and classes according to the principle of literary warrant. While it is true that LC creates headings based upon the literature in the collection, Spalding was eliding the fact that the LC bases its headings and classifications upon particular types of sources. In other words, his insistence that the LC's categories simply reflect common usage in published literature refused to acknowledge that the library privileged certain literatures over others. LC catalogers relied on the definitions in psychiatric literature to determine the literary warrant of subjects related to sexual variance while ignoring and neglecting audiences and voices from other disciplines.[33] Even in the social sciences sections of LC's classification, it is common to use medical terminology to classify sexual variation. The earliest caption for HQ71, drafted in 1910, falls under the broad category "Abnormal sex relations" and is defined as "General. Psychopathia sexualis, etc."[34] Offering *Psychopathia Sexualis*, a foundational sexological taxonomic work by Richard von Krafft-Ebing, as an example is quite telling, because it provides clear evidence for the origins of the classification. Translated into English in 1892, the same decade that the Library of Congress moved to its current building and developed its subject headings and classification system, *Psychopathia Sexualis* seems to have provided the basis for LC's organization of sexuality. And although the LC has long held works of alternative voices in its collection, it has consistently ignored them when creating subject headings. Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century authors such as John Addington Symonds and Edward Carpenter presented accounts of homosexuality and inversion from the perspective of experience, repudiating pathologizing explanations and rejecting the label "perversion."[35] In

[32] C. Sumner Spalding to Stephen H. Wolf, [19 February 1972], Subject Analysis Committee Subject File, 1955–73, 1978–82, box 1, Record Series 31/48/5, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

[33] This is still true in certain respects. "Sexual perversion" was changed to "Paraphilias" in 2007, and the literary justification was drawn from psychiatric literature. See "PARAPHILIAS: The Perversion of Meaning in the Library of Congress Subject Headings," in *Feminist and Queer Information Studies Reader*, ed. Rebecca Dean and Patrick Keilty (Duluth, MN: Library Juice Press, 2014).

[34] *Library of Congress, Classification: Class H Social Sciences* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1910).

[35] Indeed, the concept of inversion is not equivalent to homosexuality but rather was a late nineteenth- / early twentieth-century attempt to explain same-sex attraction, as well as

the LC's catalog this and similar texts were all given precisely that label through 1946, and after that, some texts on homosexuality continued to be cross-listed with perversion. And, as we can see in figure 3, the books were placed on the shelves within the broad class of "Abnormal sex relations," a hierarchical arrangement that remained until 1972. Referencing such problems, Wolf wrote: "The current library classification and subject heading systems do not reflect the changing social attitudes. Fifteen million gay men and women in this country refuse to be called sexual aberrations . . . . And why must the 'Sexual deviations' category remain at all?"[36] Suggesting that the Library of Congress should not be in the business of making moralist determinations of normal and abnormal, Wolf further rejected notions of LC neutrality: "While we are continually flattering ourselves with claims that we are 'educators,' whom can we possibly enlighten when our own 'intellectual tools' are so hopelessly backward?"[37]

THE "HOMOSEXUALIZED" LIBRARY

Wolf also insisted that it was time to replace "homosexual," which he viewed as heterosexist, with "gay." The Library of Congress and gay and lesbian activist librarians wrestled with the argument as to whether "homosexual" was a flawed label, especially during the mid- and late 1970s. Indeed, the authorization of "Homosexuality" as a subject in the catalog has a troubled history that precedes this discussion. Homosexuality was simultaneously closeted and pathologized in the library, subsumed under the heading "Sexual perversion" along with all of the other sexual practices and expressions that were considered abnormal and not individually classified. The Library of Congress authorized "Homosexuality" in 1946, applying the category to a 1937 Italian book entitled *Homosexualismo em medicina legal* by Antonio Bello da Motta.[38] The addition of "Homosexuality" to the official LCSH lexicon does seem to reflect a shift in discourses at large around this time—particularly postwar attention to homosexuality as a perversion to be controlled and policed as part of the "war on the sex criminal."[39] Margot Canaday has shown that federal-level homophobia produced the most powerful and harmful discrimination by creating

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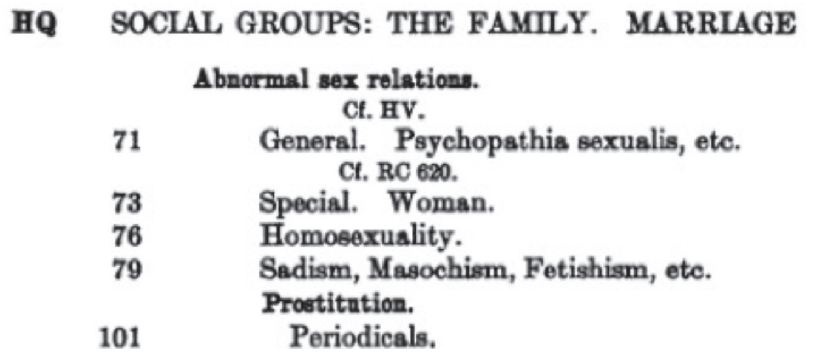
other physical and behavior traits, in terms of gender reversal. For accounts of the use of the term "inversion," see George Chauncey, "From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: Medicine and the Changing Conceptualization of Female Deviance," *Salmagundi* 58–59 (1982): 114–46; Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality and Its Discontents: Meanings, Myths, and Modern Sexualities* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 61–90; Jonathan Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 54–55.

[36] Wolf, "Sex and the Single Cataloger," 39.

[37] Ibid., 44.

[38] Paul Weiss, catalog librarian, Library of Congress, personal email, 26 June 2009.

[39] Jennifer Terry, *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 323.



HQ SOCIAL GROUPS: THE FAMILY. MARRIAGE

Abnormal sex relations.
Cf. HV.

71 General. Psychopathia sexualis, etc.
Cf. RC 620.

73 Special. Woman.

76 Homosexuality.

79 Sadism, Masochism, Fetishism, etc.

Prostitution.

101 Periodicals.

Figure 3. Library of Congress classification, 1910, HQ71–HQ79.

tools, including classifications, to regulate sexually aberrant behaviors and identities. The categories provided the scaffold on which to base efforts toward surveillance, arrest, and punishment of "sexual perverts." In the federal government, this resulted in the persecution and firing of suspected sex perverts (primarily homosexuals) and intense censorship campaigns that centered on invasions of privacy through the Postal Service and the Customs Bureau. In the catalog, this took (and in some cases continues to take) the form of regulating sexual perversion by naming categories of deviance. Arguably, the organizations of sexualities in the nation's library served to regulate, reinforce, and circulate the discourse on homosexuals as threats to the public.[40]

When "Homosexuality" first appeared in LCSH, it was cross-listed with "Sexual perversion" and given a "see also" note to "Sodomy." Call numbers for the heading fell under the categories of "Social pathology" and "Medical jurisprudence."[41] And, as indicated above, it was hierarchically placed under "Abnormal sexual relations" (subsequently "Sexual

[40] Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 261; also see John D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity," in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, ed. Ann Barr Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983). For a discussion of LC's participation in Truman's Loyalty campaign, in which the LC persecuted its employees suspected of being homosexuals, see Louise Robbins, "The Library of Congress and Federal Loyalty Programs, 1947–1956: No 'Communists or Cocksuckers'" *Library Quarterly* 64 (October 1994): 365–85.

[41] Ellen Greenblatt, "Homosexuality: The Evolution of a Concept in the Library of Congress Subject Headings," in *Gay and Lesbian Library Service*, ed. Cal Gough and Ellen Greenblatt (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1990), 95. She updated her findings in a 2010 collection of essays, observing that it took LC twenty years to address each of the two changes and seven proposals she had made in 1990. Ellen Greenblatt, *Serving LGBTIQ Library and Archives Users: Essays on Outreach, Service, Collections and Access* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2010), 212–28.

deviation") in the classification scheme, which explains why books categorized with "Homosexuality" were placed next to sections on pedophilia and sex crimes on the library shelves.

Conflict over the connotations and denotations of "homosexual" arose from activists' awareness of the stigmatization that resulted from the psychiatric community's pathologization of homosexuality and from their insistence on the importance of these categorizations in the fight for gay liberation. David Halperin has pointed out that the adoption of "homosexuality" in the early twentieth century made sexual desire for members of the same sex the central organizing principle of social difference. This turned same-sex eroticism in its multiple forms and expressions into a single, integrated entity distinct from "heterosexuality," thus creating a binary system that ultimately subjected all individuals to a process of normalization.[42]

Although libraries removed "Homosexuality" from the broader categories of "Abnormal sexual relations" and "Sexual deviation" in the subject headings and the HQ section of the classification, the term itself retained its orthodox, clinical connotations. Librarian activists believed that the term "gays" would remedy some of these problems by offering a description of the whole person rather than reducing individuals to their sexual orientation. The heading "Gays," they believed, identified homosexuals as people rather than simply categorizing them through a condition (homosexuality or lesbianism). Although the 1974–76 *Supplement to the Library of Congress Subject Headings* did add "Lesbians" and "Homosexuals," providing "Gays" as a nonpreferred term, "Gays" would not become the authorized heading for another twelve years.[43] People searching for "Gays, male" would be directed to "Homosexuals, male," and those searching for "Gays, female" would see "Lesbians."

In 1974 J. Michael McConnell, who worked at Hennepin County Public Library with Sanford Berman, gave a talk at the ALA entitled "Let's Not Homosexualize the Library Stacks" that was attended by over three hundred ALA members. Asserting that the label "homosexual" was preventing access to gay-themed materials in libraries, he argued for the abolishment of the heading "Homosexual": "Gay men and women will remain unspeakable so long as we remain bound by the label of 'homosexual.' . . . Unspeakable topics seldom find a warm welcome in public library collections. And when they do, you can be sure they're medicalized, criminalized, or sociological entities. Positive, or even neutral subject headings will not refer you to the Gay materials. And, besides, you'll probably find them locked away."[44] Gay and lesbian librarians

[42] David Halperin, "How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality," *GLQ* 6, no. 1 (2000): 110, 114.

[43] *Supplement to the Library of Congress Subject Headings, 1974–1976* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1976). The supplement moved the "see also" cross-reference for "the criminal manifestation of homosexuality under Sodomy" to "Homosexuality—Law and legislation" instead of the general "Homosexuality."

[44] The text of McConnell's talk is available as "Text of remarks by J. Michael McConnell to the Task Force on Gay Liberation: 'Let's Not Homosexualize the Library Stacks,'" 9 July

did not agree on the preferability of "gays" over "homosexuals," however, and Berman suggested that the task force conduct a study to ascertain which names the major homophile groups were using for themselves. Investigations were carried out in part by the activist Jack Baker (McConnell's partner), and these made it clear that "gay" was the term preferred by the gay community and that "homosexual" carried negative connotations for most.[45] In defending the proposal to replace the subject heading "Homosexuals" with "Gays," Baker cited the work of the Gay Activist Alliance, which published an annual list of gay organizations, and he suggested that although a wider public used the term "homosexuality," gay people did so much more rarely.[46] The majority should not determine terminology if such usage conflicts with the preferences of the group being described:

> Why are librarians such semantic worry-worts [*sic*]? The terms ordinary people (Gay and nongay) use in everyday conversation should not control the way in which minorities will be represented to the public. Otherwise, we would have headings like "nigger," "kikes," "cunts." . . . An analysis of the comprehensive list of Gay organizations compiled by Gay Activist Alliance (GAA) of New York City shows that a mere 16 of the 652 (3.2%) known Gay organizations in this country have chosen to be publicly identified with the term "homosexual."[47]

Such observations reflected the beliefs and tenor of the Gay Liberation Front and the more radical activists in the gay liberation movement. For them,

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1974, box 1, record series 97/1/40, Sanford Berman Papers, American Library Association, University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign. Hereafter cited as Berman Papers. The text quote is from p. 4. See also Gittings, "Gays in Library Land," 86; Gough, "The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Task Force," 122.

[45] McConnell and Baker were the first gay couple to apply for a marriage license in Minnesota in 1970. At the same time, McConnell had just been nearly hired by the University of Minnesota, with only the approval of the Board of Regents required to make the hire official. However, in the aftermath of the publicity of the marriage license application, the University of Minnesota Board of Regents determined that "his conduct was not in the best interest of the university" and revoked his contract. When the couple was turned away on the basis of the illegality of same-sex marriage, they appealed until the case reached the US Supreme Court, which refused to hear the case. McConnell legally adopted Baker, they changed Baker's name to the gender neutral "Pat Lyn," and they went to a rural clerk of courts, who granted them a marriage license. Jack Baker, "The Right to Be Human and Gay," *Manitoban*, 13 March 1972, reprinted in Ken Bronson, *A Quest for Full Equality* (self-published, 2004), 69, https://www.qlibrary.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/QuestforFull_Equality.pdf.

[46] These negotiations contradict James V. Carmichael, Jr.'s observation that there "seems to be no rationale for the new use of the term 'Gays' in cataloging applications" ("Effects of the Gay Publishing Boom on Classes of Titles Retrieved under the Subject Headings 'Homosexuality,' 'Gay Men,' and 'Gays' in the OCLC WorldCat Database," *Journal of Homosexuality* 42 [2002]: 65–88, 82).

[47] Jack Baker, quoted in Sanford Berman, *Hennepin County Library Bulletin*, no. 5 (21 January 1974): 4.

a "gay identity was a revolutionary identity: what it sought was not social recognition but to overthrow the social institutions which marginalised and pathologised homosexuality."[48]

The denaturalization of categories was one of the tactics of the broader gay liberation movement, and so it is not at all surprising that libraries, which depend upon categories, became a site of contestation. Indeed, questions of voice and authority have fueled much of the controversy around Library of Congress classifications and subject headings.[49] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has argued that it is impossible to establish firm rules about using "homosexual" or "gay."[50] Citing the historical and cultural situatedness of each term, she suggests that we should probably prefer "gay," if only because post-Stonewall movements have shown that the majority of people to whom the word refers prefer it. The debate among gay librarians about how the Library of Congress should determine categories reflected a larger social attention toward advocating that names for groups of people should be assigned according to what that group would call itself. At its 11 July 1974 business meeting at ALA, the task force unanimously approved a resolution authored by McConnell that concluded:

> THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that it is the position of the American Library Association / Social Responsibilities Round Table Task Force on Gay Liberation that "homosexual" and "homosexuality" are inappropriate library subject headings for Gay people and same-gender lifestyles.
>
> AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force Coordinator is directed to appoint a committee to study subject heading lists and other pertinent library tools for terms applying to Gay people and make recommendations to ALA at the 1975 San Francisco Conference.[51]

The ALA and the Library of Congress endorsed a statement written by SRRT in 1975 stating that "the authentic name of ethnic, national, religious, social, or sexual groups should be established if such a name is determinable. If a group does not have an authentic name, the name preferred by the group should be established. The determination of the authentic or preferred name should be based upon the literature of the people themselves (not upon outside sources or experts), upon organizational self-identification, and/or upon group member experts."[52] And yet three years later "Homosexual"

[48] Annamarie Jagose, *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 37.

[49] Olson, "The Power to Name," 655–60.

[50] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 16–17.

[51] Sanford Berman, "SRRT Task Force Launches Offensive against 'Homosexuality,'" *Hennepin County Library Bulletin*, no. 8/9/10 (1 September 1974): 33–34.

[52] Sanford Berman, "Even Library of Congress Uses Our Label in Its Files," *GLC Voice*, 21 March 1983, 4.

remained the authorized heading for gay people. On 10 February 1978 task force member John Cunningham wrote to Berman seeking advice on how the task force might best approach the LC to adopt changes. He indicated that the top priority was to replace "Homosexuals" with "Gays" and to recommend that LC adopt new headings, such as "Gay rights," "Gay teachers," "Jewish gays," "Homophobia," and "Homophobia in education." The task force also suggested that "Heterosexuality" should be recommended as a complement to "Bisexuality" and "Homosexuality." Berman responded by agreeing that it was a good time to push LC and provided Cunningham with a sample letter of protest. Cunningham copied this letter almost word for word, had Barbara Gittings sign it, and sent it to the chief of the Subject Cataloging Division of the Library of Congress on 4 April 1978, where it was essentially ignored.[53] It would be ten years before LC would finally authorize "Gays," a delay that prompted Gittings and Berman to directly petition community librarians to implement change on their own initiative by adding headings like "Gay rights," "Gay teachers," and "Homophobia" to their local card catalogs.

Another dimension of the debate over the term "gay" as an umbrella category was the question of whether there needed to be one term that could refer to both male and female homosexuals. Berman, in his documentary fashion and in advance of the discussion eventually led by Gittings in 1977, quoted the Indexing Task Force of the Herstory Archive, a lesbian archive established in New York in 1972, in his 1974 bulletin to call attention to related action: "We have radically changed our policy on descriptors for homosexuality. 'Lesbians' is no longer being used, although of course there will be a see reference from that term to the new one GAY WOMEN. Similarly, articles on homosexual men will be indexed with the heading GAY MEN."[54] Although some lesbians, like Adrienne Rich, objected that this language constituted an erasure of lesbian existence, Gittings held firm in her belief that "gay women" is a more apt and inclusive heading than "lesbians."[55] For example, in a letter to Berman, Gittings insisted that "even if a thousand lesbians in Minnesota told you otherwise, I still insist that *I am gay*—also homosexual, and lesbian—and no one is going to take the word gay away from me and turn it over to the men! Thus, 'Gays—Fiction' and 'Lesbians—Fiction' is a conceptually false distinction and one that bothers me personally."[56] She vehemently insisted that "gay" and "gays" always implied both men and women and that the terms "gay men" and "gay women" should be used to distinguish

[53] John Cunningham to Sanford Berman, 10 February 1978; Sanford Berman to John Cunningham, 13 February 1978; and Barbara Gittings to Chief, Subject Cataloging Division, 4 April 1978, all in box 6, Berman Papers.

[54] Berman, "Even Library of Congress," 34.

[55] Adrienne C. Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs* 5, no. 4 (1980): 631–60.

[56] Barbara Gittings to Sanford Berman, 21 November 1977, box 6, Berman Papers.

accounts exclusively about one or the other. Gittings would later insist that the name change from Gay Task Force to Gay and Lesbian Task Force was a mistake, because the term "gay" was inclusive and provided language for a unified front.[57]

The Library of Congress finally authorized the heading "Gay" in 1988 when it announced in the *Cataloging Service Bulletin* that all instances of the heading "Homosexual" would be changed to "Gay."[58] Other new headings included "Gay couples," "Gay parents," "Lesbian mothers," "Gay teenagers," "Homosexuality—Law and legislation," "Gays—Travel," "Lesbians—Travel," "Gays—United States," "Lesbians—United States," and so on. Librarians were directed to use "Gay" and "Gays" for books about both men and women, while books solely about gay women were to be cataloged using the existing term, "Lesbians." In response to these changes, the task force published the following statement in its newsletter: "LC subject headings are used in the catalogs of thousands of libraries throughout the world, and library users looking for gay-oriented materials have had difficulty locating them due to the unexpected—and sometimes pejorative—headings these materials are listed under. Various librarians have been lobbying LC for at least fifteen years to revise the subject headings used for gay and lesbian oriented materials."[59] Although the task force finally accomplished the goal of adding "Gays" with a number of variations and extensions, its work in challenging LC on subject headings and classifications did not cease. In fact, Berman immediately launched a new campaign in response to the LC's decision, which he viewed to be lacking in critical respects. He circulated a petition to librarians and academics to be submitted to the Library of Congress in support of abandoning "Gays" as an umbrella term for men and women, creating a "see" reference from "Gays" to "Gay men" and "Lesbians" and establishing new headings for "Heterosexuality," "Gay and lesbian rights," "Gay authors," "Gay baths," "Gay literature," "Lesbian battering," "Lesbian feminism," "Lesbian literature," and "Homophobia," among other suggestions. The 1988 petition was distributed to librarians and academics, and Judith Butler and Joan Wallach Scott were among the signatories. Berman advised readers to make copies of the page, circulate it, and send it to Pietris at the LC. When she received the petitions, Pietris sent Berman a terse reply, arguing that his list of "so-called 'inclusive' forms" was not necessary to remedy any sexism or noninclusivity in the existing terms. Although she assured him that his recommended terms would be considered once they took firm hold in the English language, she said that the LC did not have the time

[57] Ellen Greenblatt, telephone conversation, 23 December 2013.

[58] Cal Gough, "LC Abolishes Derogatory Gay/Lesbian Subject Headings," *GLTF Newsletter* 1 (Spring 1988).

[59] Ibid.

or staff to address them individually, and she directed him to the new instruction manual for submitting headings proposals.[60]

At its June 1988 meeting the National Women's Studies Association, which at the time was the professional association for over five hundred women's studies programs and four thousand educators, passed a resolution on LC subject headings. Stating that "many women-related topics have appeared in both scholarly and popular literature but have not yet been recognized by Library of Congress descriptors, making such topics difficult to identify and retrieve," the NWSA called upon the LC to replace a long list of sexist and exclusive subject headings (e.g., "Man/Human" and "Watchmen/Guards") with more inclusive or gender-neutral terms, many of which overlapped with Berman's suggestions. The national director of the NWSA captured the role of the Library of Congress in the production of knowledge in her letter to the LC, which accompanied the petition: "As educators whose task it is to enlarge the mind's boundaries and make knowledge readily accessible, NWSA seeks the cooperation of the Library of Congress in that adventurous process. By making women or other groups invisible through language, we rob learners of crucial information and diminish the complex reality of our world. By describing more accurately the categories of information, the Library of Congress would be acknowledging the lush diversity of our culture and inviting researchers to explore uncharted territory."[61] Later, publications such as the *Lambda Book Report* and *Women Librarian Workers Journal* announced petitions initiated by Berman's Cataloging Consumers Network.[62] Such cooperation from a broad base of women's studies scholars, librarians, and gay and lesbian organizations seems to affirm the notion that libraries and their cataloging procedures were vital to the emerging disciplines in gender and sexuality studies.

Systemic Barriers to Change

With all of the modifications resulting from action, the LC's classifications—built upon a scaffold of binary categories, hierarchies, and exclusion—are ultimately resistant to certain significant changes. While access to literature and information has been greatly enhanced by the creation and ongoing correction of headings and classes, the LC's strategy of slow addition and revision is inadequate in the face of categories that rested upon ideological convictions about the division of sexualities into normal and abnormal and about a firm boundary between heterosexuality and homosexuality. As Sedgwick has pointed out, the hetero/homo binary has a "deadening" effect; it creates a "pretended knowingness" that precludes us from asking

[60] Mary K. D. Pietris to Sanford Berman, 24 March 1988, box 9, Berman Papers.

[61] Caryn McTighe Musil to Mary K. D. Pietris, 22 September 1988, box 9, Berman Papers.

[62] "Finding Sex in the Library: New Petition Seeks to Make It Easier," 9 April 1993, press release, in *Women Librarian Workers Journal* (Summer 1993), box 9, Berman Papers.

appropriate questions and reduces homosexuality to a normalized, stable phenomenon that perpetuates and propels homophobic discourses.[63] While the classification gives the illusion of stable and natural divisions and subdivisions, it reduces the complexities of queer subjects to a single dimension. Scholars like Hope Olson and Sue Searing have already noted some of the challenges of making decisions on where to place books that cross disciplinary lines.[64] Should books on homosexuals in the military be located with other materials on the military or with those about gays? Should books on parenting gay teenagers be placed in the parenting section or in the section about gay teens? But even these questions are necessarily reductive in that they insist upon knowing which class dominates in texts that are obviously taking on a multidimensional subject. They reflect not only challenges of interdisciplinarity but also the impossibility of reducing a text to a single class. Relying on categories and classifications for access to texts in the library is unavoidably fraught with such dilemmas. On the one hand, we need organizational tools and structures to bring order so that we can find the texts we seek. At the same time, such structuring techniques necessarily confine and inscribe dynamics of power and politics. As Emily Drabinski points out, "The problems of bias in library classification structures and subject language are, from a queer perspective, problems endemic to the knowledge organization project itself."[65] In the case of homosexuality in the catalog, there is simply no way to account for the multiplicity of identifications. It is thus important that we investigate both the ways in which categories take hold and the possibilities and modes of resistance.

There are also structural barriers to change. Joan Marshall argued that the majoritarian point of view upon which LC subject headings are based pushes all exceptions to the norm to the margins. The foundational principles guiding the creation of headings thus work against the practice of using names preferred by those being named. This insensitivity toward minority groups is a result of a focus on the practice of assuming that headings should serve a majority or, in Hope Olson's terms, a "singular public."[66] The "majority reader," Marshall noted, is presumed to be white, Christian, male, and straight: "To be outside the norm means, in the philosophy underlying the list, that everything you do is colored by your 'normless' place in society."[67] Under this logic, headings describe the norm, and exceptions

[63] Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 12.

[64] Susan E. Searing, "How Libraries Cope with Interdisciplinarity: The Case of Women's Studies," *Issues in Integrative Studies* 10 (1992): 7–25, esp. 8–9; Olson, "The Power to Name," 653.

[65] Drabinski, "Queering the Catalog," 108.

[66] Marshall, "Viewpoint," 126; Olson, "The Power to Name," 645–47.

[67] Marshall, "Viewpoint," 126. Rose Schlegl and Hope Olson analyzed the efficacy of subject access standards in representing marginalized groups and topics. They found three general problems, affirming Marshall's critiques: first, bias results from satisfying a majority of library users; second, aims toward objectivity are based in the false notion of library

must be named. Under the heading "librarian," there is the exception of women as librarians, for example; under the heading "scientist," there is the exception of Jews as scientists, and so on. Since Marshall made these observations in the 1970s, a body of literature has grown to critique the way that classifications have relegated certain populations to the margins of knowledge in the library.[68]

Correcting these marginalizations is extremely difficult. In the case at the University of Washington, for example, the placement of a book on gays and lesbians next to books on child molestation and sex crimes was not an accident of classification, as Pietris asserted, but the result of a 1910 classification decision derived from then current sexological definitions of "Abnormal sex relations," which were given the subcategories of "Homosexuality," "Sadism," "Masochism," "Fetishism," "Prostitution," "Special," and "Woman." Even if we were to abolish the category "Abnormal sex relations" (now "Sexual practices outside of social norms. Paraphilias") entirely, decisions of what reasonably constitutes a relationship—not only which categories we choose but also what the subcategories should be—will almost always be contestable. And even if consensus were possible, the labor and investment to make the changes would be prohibitive, since every library that uses the system would have to change every call number label, every catalog record, and every classification and would then have to move the books to new locations. The system is so deeply entrenched that some of the more significant changes at the structural level are all but impossible, and mandating that libraries adopt these kinds of changes will likely be met with resistance. Such a project is rendered even more absurd when we consider the historical situatedness of relations and terms; the need to reconceptualize and recategorize would never end.

These examples lay bare some of the predicaments inherent to the construction of subject classifications. They reveal exclusions and silences while displaying which discourses have achieved the status of authorized knowledges and which disciplines are privileged over others. Library classifications simply cannot account for the complexities of subject formation. Although we know, for instance, that race, class, gender, sexuality, able-bodiedness, colonialism, and religion are interwoven within individual subjectivities, a classification can only recognize one of these dimensions at a time, including other dimensions only as the occasional subcategory. It is ultimately an unavoidable dilemma that a book can reside in only one space on the shelf. Some of this is overcome some of the problem by adding

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neutrality; and third, "standards homogenize the results of cataloguing and, thus, impose a universal language in diverse contexts" (Hope A. Olson and Rose Schlegl, "Standardization, Objectivity and User Focus: A Meta-analysis of Subject Access Critiques," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 32, no. 2 [2001]: 61–80, 77).

[68] Perhaps best known among such scholars is Olson, "The Power to Name"; see also her "How We Construct Subjects: A Feminist Analysis," *Library Trends* 56, no. 2 (2007): 509–41.

multiple headings to the catalog record and by concocting some slightly more multidimensional subject headings, like "Asian American bisexuals." But any authorization of terms will still require adherence to constraining language and form. As Wendy Brown has argued, the problem of overlapping subjectivities is not so easily solved: "To treat various modalities of subject formation as simply additive or even intersectional is to elide the way subjects are brought into being through subjectifying discourses, the way that we are not simply oppressed but produced through these discourses, a production that does not occur in additive, intersectional, or overlapping parts, but through complex and often fragmented histories in which multiple social powers are regulated through and against one another."[69] Applied to library categorization, this means that the act of dividing subjects into discrete units effaces the ways that subjectivities are formed.

In a sense, we do get a glimpse of the essentializing histories and regulatory mechanisms if we read the classifications for evidence of the disciplinary context and cultural values that helped produce them. The HVs house the history of social pathology; the HQs contain the history of sexuality; various parts of the E section account for the history of racial and ethnic groups as they relate to the history of the United States. Speaking about subject formation more broadly, Brown tells us that various kinds of powers "do not operate on and through us independently, or linearly, or cumulatively, and they cannot be radically extricated from one another in any particular historical formation."[70] The Library of Congress provides a perfect example of this because it uses a system to divide the bibliographic universe into subjects, it views these subjects through the lens of heteropatriarchal norms, and its universalizing logic makes the excluded appear illegible or renders them invisible. Indeed, these systems assume that subjects are male, middle class, heterosexual, and white. Those that deviate from these norms are marked. For example, we do not see headings for heterosexual librarians, but we do have headings for lesbian librarians and gay librarians. We do not have a heading for white librarians, but we do have one for African American librarians. Within the classification, this means that exceptional subjects like these are relegated to the edges of a broader class. Gay men and lesbians are considered a "special group" of library personnel, and books on gay or lesbian librarians would be shelved among other special groups, including types of librarians, like catalogers and children's librarians, as well as African American librarians and women librarians. These special groups are arranged alphabetically.

Even as we become aware that the classifications arose out of the normalizing discourses of various scholarly disciplines, we must also draw attention to the fact that the activists were not immune to the dangers of simplifying

[69] Wendy Brown, "Suffering Rights as Paradoxes," *Constellations* 7, no. 2 (2000): 230–41, 236.

[70] Ibid., 235.

identities and excluding possibilities. The task force hardly mentioned race or class, for instance. It is indeed telling that whiteness and class bias prevail in the history of American gay librarian activism in the 1970s. In other words, the activists were not immune to the dangers of what Ferguson describes as the heteropatriarchal universality of the academy, which along with normalizing tendencies of the state operates to erase differences of class and race in order to uphold normative ideals of citizenship. The fact that the Library of Congress serves as a direct link between the academy, public libraries, and the US government is cause for reflection about how these structures serve normative ideas about sexuality.

The Dialectic of Classification

Patrick Keilty has argued that critiques of classification systems tend to present them as having been exclusively designed from above or—in the case of social tagging of online content—from below. He suggests that it is more productive to conceptualize classifications as developing out of a dynamic interaction between these levels. Citing Chauncey and Halperin, he argues that subcultures always operate in dialogue with dominant discourses and that the interplay between these forces produces complex cultural and identity structures.[71] Similarly, Ian Hacking has used the example of homosexuality to suggest that classes of people come into being through dialectical exchanges between classifiers and those who are classified in institutional contexts. Categories, he argues, "come into being by a dialectic between classification and who is classified. Naming has real effects on people, and changes in people have real effects on subsequent classifications."[72] In other words, categories both open and close fields of possibility. In the library, this ongoing dialectic brings subjects into being on the library shelves while simultaneously positioning the user in relation to documents and the system of categorization. As Ron Day notes, the process is one of interpellation in the sense that in order to find documents in the library, one needs to have an understanding of oneself within the library's system of knowledge. In order for this system to work, it has to hail its users via indexical signs, in other words, classificatory notations and subject headings.[73]

The exchanges between actors and institutions examined in this article reveal this kind of process. As librarians became conscious of underlying power structures in the library, they revealed the ways in which the dominant heteronormative discourses relied upon and were enforced by

[71] Patrick Keilty, "Sexual Boundaries and Subcultural Discipline," *Knowledge Organization* 36, no. 6 (2012): 417–31.

[72] Ian Hacking, "Between Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman: Between Discourse in the Abstract and Face-to-Face Interaction," *Economy and Society* 33, no. 3 (2004): 277–302, 280.

[73] Day, *Indexing It All*, 75–84.

subject classifications. Librarians recognized that labels could stigmatize library patrons and preclude access and that they influenced broader public understandings of sexuality and its power structures. This dialectical exchange between scholarship, librarians, and their subject headings helped to frame the emerging discipline of gay and lesbian studies in terms found in the literature of the time. This article has investigated the negotiation of classificatory structures between various players with diverging interests and degrees of power.

The books on library shelves, organized according to standard classification systems like the Library of Congress Classification, model and reflect but also shape the disciplinary arrangement of the academy. The 1970s witnessed an increase in discussion about sexuality in the humanities and in popular literature; the subject was no longer the exclusive preserve of medicine and psychiatry.[74] This served to legitimize a wider range of perspectives on sexual variance by bringing more voices into the discussion and by offering diverse narratives of the internal and external lives of homosexuals.[75] Academic discussions of sexuality had become interdisciplinary rather than exclusively psychiatric/sexological, thereby changing the form and substance of the bodies of literature upon which the classifications and names were based. Although the LC's policy is to add a new subject heading as soon as a topic appears in the literature as long as no existing heading properly addresses that topic, it required agitation to enact this policy with regard to gay and lesbian subjects. The policy states that headings should reflect the literature of the LC's collection, and in general, it should choose commonly understood terms over technical or scientific jargon. LC catalogers were increasingly organizing materials from emerging disciplinary perspectives, which provided warrant for new headings, as well as shelf locations within disciplines outside of the sciences. It is important to note that such accommodations were not made until Berman and the task force brought notice to the problems in the LC systems.

With the establishment of new disciplines arising from the influence of the women's movement and the gay liberation movement, librarians argued for a more human-centered approach to the organization of information about homosexuality.[76] Cataloging and classification activism supported the

[74] James V. Carmichael, Jr., has observed dramatic improvements in the type and quantity of literature written about gay men, with a 400 percent increase in library holdings from 1981 through 1995. He notes increases in nonfiction, particularly in the social sciences and history, as well as fictional, poetical, and dramatic works. In sum, he found that in 1995, 241 nonfiction gay monographs newly appeared in the WorldCat database, compared to an annual average of 31 new titles for the years 1970–81, amounting to a growth rate of nearly 775 percent. See Carmichael, "Effects," 82–83.

[75] Vern L. Bullough, *Sin, Sickness & Sanity: A History of Sexual Attitudes* (New York: Garland, 1977), xi.

[76] For descriptions of the formation of women's studies and LGBT studies, see (there are far too many to list them all) Mary Romero, "Disciplining the Feminist Bodies of Knowl-

task force's wider library movement, which included the Gay Book Award and bibliographies. These all contributed to an emerging field in gay and lesbian studies. Published in 1971, the task force's first bibliography included thirty-five nonfiction gay-positive titles. Subsequent editions were published annually, and by 1977, 250 items appeared in the bibliography, of which 23,000 copies were distributed to librarians.[77] The first Gay Book Award was given to Isabel Miller for *Patience and Sarah* in 1971, and importantly, the 1974 award went to Jeannette Howard Foster for *Sex Variant Women in Literature*, first published in 1956 by a vanity publisher and then reprinted the year after winning the award by Diana Press with an afterword by Barbara Grier.[78] A librarian at the Kinsey Institute, Foster indexed all subtle and overt references to same-sex love between women portrayed in literature from ancient times to the 1950s.[79]

These bibliographies and awards provided new impetus for work in sexuality studies by increasing the visibility of the available resources and encouraging patrons to search, browse, and locate materials on homosexuality. Encountering a book had come to depend less on chance than it had for Faderman, and the shelves increasingly reflected the interests and tastes of those seeking books. As research in various fields produced a growing body of literature on a wide range of subjects related to gender and sexuality, that literature then provided warrant for new subject headings. The headings and classifications and shelves shifted and expanded to accommodate the growing number of books on these topics, and the growth of interest in sexuality in the academy has brought even more readers to these sections of the library. Among them are scholars who have continued the conversation, so that now we have entire sections within the HQs in which to find and lose ourselves.

As the success of Berman's petition and the broad range of its signatories demonstrate, scholars, readers, and librarians came to demand that subject headings be based on terms in use by the communities involved rather than on those of medical professionals who had historically pathologized homosexuality. By transforming the ways that sexual topics are categorized in the LC, activist librarians have helped to convey developments in the

edge: Are We Creating or Reproducing Academic Structure?," *NWSA Journal* 12, no. 2 (2000): 148–62; Leora Auslander, "Do Women's + Feminist + Men's + Lesbian and Gay + Queer Studies = Gender Studies?," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 9 (1997): 1–30; Judith Butler, "Against Proper Objects," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 6, nos. 2–3 (1994): 1–26; Grace Kyungwon Hong, "'The Future of Our Worlds: Black Feminism and the Politics of Knowledge in the University under Globalization," *Meridians* 8, no. 2 (2008): 95–115.

[77] "A.L.A.'s Gay Task Force Celebrates Seven Years of Accomplishment," *SRRT Newsletter*, 3 July 1977.

[78] Gittings, "Gays in Libraryland."

[79] For a thorough account of Foster's life and contribution to gay and lesbian studies, see Passett, *Sex Variant Woman*. The Gay Book Award is now known as the Stonewall Book Award and is an official award of the ALA.

Typesetter: Insert a closing single quote after "Worlds" above to go with the opening one in "'The Future of Our . . . "

academy to the public and to ensure that the experiences of gays and lesbians are reflected in the disciplines and on the library shelves. Their attention to critical academic work in these fields also exposed how the Library of Congress's mandate to serve majoritarian interests could contribute to the marginalization of sexual minorities. Just after Berman sent the 1988 list of proposed headings with accompanying signatures, efforts were made to establish the now-flourishing Subject Authority Cooperative Program (SACO; the program would be formally organized in 1992).[80] This program allows librarians to submit proposals for new classification numbers and headings through a formal process. While this move can certainly be celebrated as a success in the move toward participatory cataloging, we might also read this procedural change, with its standardized forms and channels, as a measure of control. Whatever the case, through increasingly democratic approaches to subject cataloging and technologies, as well as the growth in publishing on gay topics, we have witnessed an almost overwhelming proliferation of terms for gay and lesbian subjects and greater recognition of variations in gender and sexual expression. Additions to the lexicon now include "Gay man–heterosexual woman relationships in motion pictures," "Gay online chat groups," "Gay motorcycle clubs," "Lesbian clergy," "Lesbian composers," and on and on. We could argue that the strategies of library activists in the 1970s and 1980s were the precursors to participatory, user-generated content on the Web.[81] Social tagging, a mechanism by which users can name or label their own resources (e.g., photos on Flickr, friends on Facebook, and books in LibraryThing), is an extension of this kind of practice, providing new mechanisms for online cataloging.[82]

But to what extent has the incorporation of subjects into library hierarchies and online spaces simply served to refine and reinforce a neoliberal state apparatus? The case of homosexualizing the library stacks highlights

[80] SACO currently includes over eight hundred institutional members and has contributed thousands of new headings and classifications since its inception. As of 2014, over 60,000 new headings, 14,500 heading changes, and 16,500 new class numbers have been authorized through the SACO program. See Program for Cooperative Cataloging, *Program for Cooperative Cataloging*, *Statistics—BIBCO/CONSER/NACO/SACO Annual Compilation FY2014* (Washington, DC, 2014), http://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/stats/At-a-Glance.pdf.

[81] It was also around this time that projects on developing indexing terms were developed, including Robert Ridinger and John Gregg's thesaurus for indexing gay and lesbian publications, in order to support the emerging discipline in ways that schemes like LCSH were ill-equipped to do. John Gregg and Robert B. Marks Ridinger, *International Thesaurus of Gay and Lesbian Index Terms* (Chicago: Thesaurus Committee, Gay and Lesbian Task Force, American Library Association, 1988). For an account of the development of the thesaurus, see Robert B. Marks Ridinger, "Playing in the Attic: Indexing and Preserving the Gay Press," in *Liberating Minds: The Stories and Professional Lives of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Librarians and Their Advocates*, ed. Norman G. Kester (1997), 92–97; Dee Michel, "Gay Studies Thesaurus" (1985).

[82] LibraryThing is a social network site that allows users to import library data from LC and other sources into personal catalogs.

the paradox that the possibilities for increased access to resources and information are always necessarily constrained by and complicit with political structures. Lisa Duggan has argued that, contrary to appearances, the social activism of the 1970s was actually aligned with probusiness interests and thus helped to build a neoliberal economy.[83] She sees the seventies as the moment where possibilities for social change and an expansion of civil rights actually began to disappear.[84] Taking into account the ways in which power has used multiculturalism and identities as capital, we must ask difficult questions of our libraries, including whether library activists were unwittingly advocating their own regulation by supporting a machinery that maintains rights based on a politics of recognition and that excludes some of the most vulnerable among us.

In the end, negotiations between librarians, readers, and authors about library classifications are always structured by hierarchies of power in society at large. Given this fact, we must continue to challenge any fictions of the neutrality of the LC's subject hierarchy and consider alternative projects to advance the work that has been done in different ways. As we have seen, reading the library shelves, catalog, and classifications as primary sources reveals these spaces as grounds of contest in the regulation of sexual identities. Although the librarians of the 1970s opened up the possibility for this conversation, the knowledge we have since gained about how power incorporates subjects makes it clear that simply changing the classifications fails to address the larger challenges that both librarians and queer activists face as they negotiate the dilemmas of classification for access.

About the Author

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[83] I have written about some of the ways in which the Library of Congress's practices can be read in terms of neoliberal governmentality: Melissa Adler, "Broker of Information, the 'Nation's Most Important Commodity': The Library of Congress in the Neoliberal Era," *Information & Culture* 50, no. 1 (2015): 24–50.

[84] Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), esp. ix–xxii.