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Introduction

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Introduction

EMILY DRABINSKI AND PATRICK KEILTY

In October 2014, more than one hundred scholars, practitioners, and activists gathered at the University of Toronto to discuss the ways that race, gender, sexuality, and their intersections with other identity-constituting discourses shape the ways that information is produced, organized, and preserved, particularly in libraries and archives. Organized by the independent publisher Library Juice Press/Litwin Books and the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto, the Gender and Sexuality in Information Studies Colloquium (GSISC) emerged in part from the publication of the *Feminist and Queer Information Studies Reader* (2013), edited by Patrick Keilty and Rebecca Dean as part of the Press's Gender and Sexuality in Information Studies series. Their volume brought established and emerging scholars in Library and Information Studies (LIS) together with scholars from other fields that share a commitment to critical race theory, feminism, and queer theory. Pairing scholarship by Hope Olson and D. Grant Campbell with that of Dean Spade, Chela Sandoval, Judith Halberstam, and Ann Cvetkovich, Keilty and Dean's volume positioned race, gender, and sexuality as central to the project of information studies, and information and technology as central to race, gender, and sexuality studies. GSISC attempted to do the same.

GSISC joined a number of other attempts to bring scholars and practitioners together to talk about issues of race, gender, and sexuality in LIS. The GLBT Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ALMS) conference has been held at international locations every two years since 2006, and sessions at conferences, including those run by IFLA, ALA, and ASIST, and the iConference, have embraced critical perspectives on race, gender, and sexuality. Published scholarship has also begun to center this work. *Archivaria*, the flagship journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists, devoted half a volume in 2009 to the topic of "Queer Archives," and nearly

every LIS journal has published several essays in the past two decades relating to these topics. However, this issue of *Library Trends* marks the first of its kind for an LIS journal.

The contemporary interest in these subjects builds on and extends scholarship pioneered by scholars such as Roma Harris, Mary Niles Maack, Kathleen de la Peña McCook, and Sanford Berman. The 1990s and 2000s gave rise to an increase in scholarship concerning sexuality, including Cal Gough and Ellen Greenblatt's ground-breaking book, *Gay and Lesbian Library Service* (1990); Hope Olson's *The Power to Name* (2002); and Ellen Greenblatt's *Serving LGBTIQ Library and Archives Users* (2011). The Women and Gender Studies Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) has compiled a fairly comprehensive bibliography of library and information science research concerning gender and sexuality, which can be found online (Gilley, 2015).

Sexuality also has a long history in the discourse and practice of the profession. Commensurate with the postwar women's rights and civil rights movements across the country, the American Library Association created the Social Responsibilities Roundtable in 1969, the year cited in LGBT liberation rhetoric as the beginning of that movement, when police raided a New York gay and drag bar called the Stonewall Inn. The following year, ALA created the Task Force on Gay Liberation, later known as the GLBT Round Table, the first professional organization of its kind in the United States. Since that time, librarians have concerned themselves with issues facing gender and sexual minorities, including the difficulties accessing LGBT information, intellectual freedom, privacy, prejudice among librarians and library staff, independent publishers and bookstores, LGBT subject headings, and services to LGBT youth. During the culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s, librarians were, on the whole, defenders of access to books with LGBT content.

The racial segregation of libraries and inadequacy of library collections to serve racial minorities have had a long-lasting legacy within librarianship. According to the American Library Association's Diversity Counts 2012 Tables, credentialed librarians remain predominantly female and white; only 5 percent of credentialed librarians identify as African American, 4.8 percent identify as Latino, and only a small fraction of 1 percent identify as Native American, all well below the national average. The profession continues to have a diversity problem. Furthermore, rarely are race, gender, and sexuality discussed together in LIS scholarship, thereby neglecting their intersection, even as scholarship in each of these areas continues steadily to grow.

Critical studies generally are consigned to the margins of the LIS scholarship, but this is especially true of race, gender, and sexuality issues. At the colloquium, we heard again and again how much pleasure people took from being with others in a space where the questions we asked and the terms of our discourse were taken for granted as necessary and over-

due, and as central to the intellectual and practical project of knowledge production, organization, dissemination, access and preservation. In a field where so many racial, gender, and sexual minorities are forced to argue for the right to ask questions about cultural difference, the day in Toronto was a wonderful respite.

Perhaps because so much was shared among the attendees, the colloquium also allowed for more nuanced and critical engagement with each other's work than at mainstream LIS conferences. Monolithic white constructions of gender and sexuality, for example, were questioned again and again during question and answer periods and on Twitter backchannels (#GSISC14). Talking broadly about lesbian archives was not enough; presenters were asked to clarify which lesbians in terms of intersecting race and class identities. At the colloquium's close, there was a sense that more work needed to be done to ensure that work on gender and sexuality in information studies occur alongside issues of race and postcolonialism.

The collection of articles in this issue of *Library Trends* represents only a handful of work presented at GSISC. Our hope is that these contributions provoke new work that can animate and extend our conversations. The collection opens with questions of affect. Lisa Sloniowski writes from the perspective of a practicing academic librarian whose work often consists of managing the feelings of others in the neoliberal university. Read through Marxist and Autonomist theories of immaterial and affective labor, Sloniowski articulates the gendered nature of this work and offers a feminist vision of subversion that librarians can mobilize against the market logics of corporatizing higher education. Gina Schlesselman-Tarango also turns her attention to the figure of the librarian, asking why the librarian is always figured as a Lady Bountiful. What work does the figure of a benevolent white woman do to further the colonizing project of early public libraries? Insisting that a feminist critique of librarian stereotypes reckon with archetypes of race, Schlesselman-Tarango productively places whiteness itself at the center of interrogation and analysis. Placing libraries in conversation with legal discourse, Melodie J. Fox explores the challenges of classification projects that grapple with changing understandings of gender across time. Her work demonstrates the historicity of our conceptions of gender and asks about the implications of fixing in place identities that are in flux. Michael M. Widdersheim and Melissa A. McCleary explore the project of readers advisory as identity construction for young people. A moment of matching reader to text, the authors argue that this standard library service often essentializes and normalizes identity instead of reconstituting it for nonnormative identities. Kadin Henningsen reflects on *Somatica*, a performance piece in which the author attempts to catalog and classify the body as a library book. Henningsen takes seriously the materiality of both the body and the book without reductively objectifying either. In doing so, Henningsen highlights the ways that complex formations of sex and gender emerge from and mark both book and body. In her contribution,

Marika Cifor returns to the role of affect, exploring hatred as a feeling as an organizing principle in archives. For many archivists, processing, arranging, and describing LGBTQ collections often involves cataloging and handling hate mail and evidence of hate crimes. Cifor argues that naming and theorizing hatred might enable archivists to resist reproducing these narratives of hate in archival collections. To close the issue, Kellee E. Warren traces a line between the absence of Black women in archival collections and the absence of Black women in contemporary librarianship. Warren asks us to frankly and directly connect our material past and present and to begin to remedy the harms in both.

These contributions to discussions of race, gender, and sexuality in information studies offer a set of trajectories for research and analysis in the field that we hope readers will find as compelling as we do. Connections of affect theory to information work of all kinds, the central role of race as an organizing principle of our theory and practice, and the materiality of knowledge organization systems are all important extensions and reorientations of work in this area. We look forward to reading what comes next.

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