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M. A. Adler. Disciplining Knowledge at the Library of Congress

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at the Library of Congress†

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ABSTRACT: The Library of Congress is a federal institution that occupies a critical space where medical, social science, political, literary, and other discourses are collected, arranged, and disseminated to Congress and the public. LC plays a vital part in discipline creation and maintenance, as it actively reproduces specific discourses, while silencing others, such as those from the humanities, social sciences, and the general public. Alternatively, social tagging seems to disregard conventions of disciplinarity and allows much more diversity of representations. Tagging may provide important insight for organizing materials in research libraries, as choices between single disciplines are no longer necessary and voices from various fields and audiences can name resources using their own terms, whether they prefer medical/technical jargon or everyday words. As the academy moves more toward interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary studies and aims to find the intersections across political, social, scientific, and cultural phenomena, the implications and effects of library organization based on classes and subjects needs to be interrogated.

1.0 Introduction

Contrary to conventional wisdom, library classifications do not just organize or mirror what is produced in scholarly and popular literature, but rather, they are in the business of producing and reproducing disciplinary norms within the academy, as well as social deviance more generally in society. Moreover, libraries are powerful institutions that choose to privilege some disciplines and voices over others. They reproduce dominant discourses and produce silences through censorship or undercataloging. To realize the implications of the relationships libraries carry with power and knowledge, Foucault's notion of governmentality is key, as the standards for organizing information in libraries of all types and around the globe are set by the Library of Congress, a federal agency that participates in government-approved practices. This paper will discuss the consequences of disciplining knowledge, particularly through naming and classification practices at LC, and it will address the following questions: How do library classifications serve or limit interdisciplinary studies? Are there technologies that better support interdisciplinarity?

Building on my previous research on the social construction of sexual deviance through the lens of the Library of Congress, I begin with a discussion about the production of knowledge about sexual per-

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version, and I then extend disciplinarity to a variety of identity-based fields, using critical animal studies to illustrate the subjectivity and limitations of classifications. I will propose that technologies of the self, such as social tagging, would better serve interdisciplinary studies, because it provides opportunities for minority and marginalized voices to speak in their own terms. Vocabularies from individuals as well as marginalized disciplines emerge in folksonomies, rather being silenced by someone in a position of authority.

This study contributes to Donna Haraway's (1988) notion of situated knowledges, which are "structured by different disciplinary precepts and methods as well as by different conditions of possibility." I am interested in how the Library of Congress has acquired and organized and situated various knowledges into disciplines of literature, sociology, medicine, popular culture, legal studies, etc. I argue that the situating of knowledges on library shelves is a form of disciplining, which "is a technique of modern power: it depends upon and deploys normalization, routines, convention, tradition, and regularity, and it produces experts and administrative forms of governance" (Halberstam 2011, 7). Foucault has suggested that, in order to understand discipline formation, we need to examine discursive practices, which "take shape in technical ensembles, in institutions, in behavioral schemes, in types of transmission and dissemination, in pedagogical forms that both impose and maintain them" (Foucault 1977, 12). Judith Halberstam (2011) observes that "disciplines qualify and disqualify, legitimate and delegitimate, reward and punish; most important, they statically reproduce themselves and inhibit dissent" (10). Libraries and their technologies remain an underexamined facet of of disciplinarity. Library classifications, as much as their designers may try to allow flexibility, serve to ensure the static nature of disciplinarity as they place methodologically and thematically related materials together and separate them from others. Classifications prohibit, rather than provide, means for cross-disciplinary conversations.

Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* reveals how techniques and institutions have converged to create the modern system of disciplinary power. At the core of Foucault's picture of modern "disciplinary" society are three primary techniques of control: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examinations. The primary function of modern disciplinary systems is to correct deviant behavior by coercing citizens to live according to society's standards or norms. The examination situates individuals in a "field of documentation," as results of exams are recorded in docu-

ments that provide detailed information about the individuals examined and allow power systems to control them. On the basis of these records, those in control can formulate categories, averages, and norms that are in turn a basis for knowledge. Catalog records serve the same purpose in a various disciplinary fields of documentation. As I demonstrate in the following section, sexuality is disciplined by being classified, labeled, and categorized according to normal and abnormal sexual behaviors and identities. Library materials are placed in sections of the library according to the discipline in which catalogers determine the books intend to participate.

2.0 Disciplining sexual deviance

The Library of Congress has a long-standing tradition of drawing literary warrant for subject headings and classifications about sexual deviance from medical and psychiatric literature (Adler 2012). My research shows that LC has chosen the medical and psychiatric disciplines as experts to rely upon when deciding how to describe materials on sexual deviance. At the heart of this choice is the assumption that sexuality is a medical concern and certain sexual acts and identities are, in fact, medical or psychiatric problems. The normalizing effects of these professions are at play in the LC collection and catalog, as these areas seem to have great influence on subject authorization and knowledge organization.

The subject heading "Paraphilias" was authorized by the Library of Congress in 2007, replacing "Sexual deviation," which had been the heading from 1972, replacing "Sexual perversion," the earliest form of the heading, created in 1898. Although the recently authorized term "Paraphilias" is intelligible to the psychiatric community and may help those professionals find materials, the word is rarely used in other disciplines. The heading neglects the social sciences and humanities. For example, the book description for *Part-time Perverts: Sex, Pop Culture, and Kink Management*, reads (http://www.amazon.com/Part-Time-Perverts-Culture-Kink-Management/dp/0313391572, emphasis added):

> An interdisciplinary exploration of sexual perversion in everyday life, *Part-Time Perverts: Sex, Pop Culture, and Kink Management* starts from the premise that, for better or worse, everyone is exposed to a continual barrage of representations of sexual perversion, both subliminal and overt.... Drawing on her own experience, as well

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as on pop culture and a multidisciplinary mix of theory, *Rosewarne shifts the discussion of perversion away from the traditional psychological and psychiatric focus* and instead explores it through a feminist lens as a social issue that affects everyone. Her book examines representations of perversion—from suppression to dabbling to full-body immersion—and proposes a classification for perversion management.

Despite the clearly stated aim to position alternative sexualities outside the medical establishment and inside an interdisciplinary field of cultural studies, the only Library of Congress subject headings applied to the bibliographic record for this book are "Paraphilias" and "Sex customs." The author has no recourse, other than to petition LC to drop or change the medically derived heading. The act of naming, in this case, ignores the author's stated objective and disciplines the work by situating it in psychiatry.

Summarizing and applying James Scott, Halberstam (2011) notes that to "see like a state" is "to accept the order of things and to internalize them; it means that we begin to deploy and think with the logic of the superiority of orderliness and that we erase local practices of knowledge that may be less efficient, may yield less marketable results, but may also, in the long term, be more sustaining" (9). Barbara Tillett has acknowledged that, at the Library of Congress, subject choices tend to reflect the attitudes and beliefs of the federal government. The use of "Paraphilias" as a subject heading performs the disciplinary act of prohibiting access while pathologizing certain behaviors and expressions (Litwin 2006).

In contrast to and as means of resistance to technologies of the state, Foucault (1977) argues that technologies of the self "permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being" (18). As Raphael Capurro (1996, para. 27) points out, "The "self" is not the "ego" but the intersection of natural and artificial dimensions through which we shape our identities." Subjectification, or in other words, our relations to ourselves, is the result of "processes and practices by means of which human beings come to relate to themselves and others as subjects of a certain type" (Rose 1996, 25) . Everyone's process is unique and has its own history. Technologies of the self , such as social tagging, may have potential to serve interdisciplinary fields as they permit voices from various positions to name resources in a common space. Nikolas

Rose (1996) argues that we need an examination that accounts for a matrix of apparatuses, technologies, and practices that are intertwined with subjectivities and identity formations.

Foucault finds the beginning of self-examination, of knowing oneself and caring for the self, in ancient Greece, and locates writing as a critical component of taking care of the self. The experience of selfhood was intensified and widened by the act of writing. Similarly, tagging can be thought of as a mechanism by which people write themselves into the resources they identify with and care about by using writing. Using LibraryThing as a point of comparison, one observes that members of this social network rarely tag books in their personal catalogs with the term "paraphilias." The term and the singular form "paraphilia" have only been assigned a combined total of 21 times by ten different users, and most of these were assigned by special collections libraries, rather than individuals. "Perversion" or "sexual perversion" is applied 180 times by 80 members. "Sexual deviation" or "sexual deviance" is used 37 times by 28 members. Much more common are tags for specific practices, such as bdsm, fetishism, fantasy, etc. In fact, "bdsm" is used 6,458 times by 716 LibraryThing members, and "kink" is assigned 1,489 times by 113 users. Historical texts, such as Richard Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*, originally translated into English from German in 1892, is assigned a wide variety of terms ranging from "bdsm," "gay," "historical," "gender," "psychology," and "necrophilia." The LC records for various editions of this early work only include "Paraphilias," omitting terms for the range of practices and identities covered in this text and providing users with no information about its historical significance.

3.0 Beyond sexual perversion: interdisciplinary studies

The intersectionality of groups that perform identity work, such as Women and Gender Studies, Ethnic Studies, Disability Studies, Queer Studies, and Animal Studies (which might be considered a subset of non-human or posthuman studies), illustrates the limitations of library classifications. Whereas Enlightenment classifiers like Linnaeus and Bacon ordered nature as part of a project to master it, new areas of study are calling for compassion. Rather than dominating the world, these fields seek ways to understand it on its own terms. Various entities "all question and shift the location, the terms, and the meanings of the artificial boundaries between humans, animals, ma-

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chines, states of life and death, animation and reanimation, living, evolving, becoming, and transforming. They also refuse the idea of human exceptionalism and place the human firmly within a universe of multiple modes of being" (Halberstam 2011, 33).

The processes of coming of age for each of these categories is similar, as each has been and is subject to policing and disciplining by the state, othering by a dominant group, and depersonalization. They have been marginalized by the academy, named and categorized by external authorities, and the subjects of experiments. Each of these groups has struggled to be heard and represented in its own terms. And being marginalized within the existing disciplines, they've created their extra or interdisciplinary spaces, rising to the status of being considered interdisciplinary fields of study, with working groups, journals, conferences, programs, departments, and in some cases, majors and minors. So while they are resisting being disciplined and challenging biological and medical fields, they are also forming disciplines, informed by the humanities and social sciences. Finally, the rise of each of these fields has depended on the fusion between the members of the groups and academics, meaning that these disciplines formed from direct experience.

The *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (*LCSH*) and Library of Congress *Classification* (LCC) were created during the Progressive Era in the United States. During this period, biomedicine legitimated the view that biophysical abnormality led to social abnormality or maladaptation, and to have a flawed body meant that people were incapable of adequate social participation. Homosexuals, non-white people, economically and socially impoverished people, and people with disabilities were labeled and segregated or institutionalized (Hughes 2002). As Mike Oliver (1996) states, "the oppression that disabled people face is rooted in the economic and social structures of capitalism which themselves produce racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism and disablism" (33). It all dovetailed with Foucault's "racisms of the state," the social Darwinism that promoted eugenics based on the belief that degeneracy was a biological, inherited trait. We are witnessing, in in our post-industrial society, a crisis in the structure of authority and in the very constitution and construction of knowledge as a result democratic involvement in knowledge production (Barnes, Oliver, and Barton 2002).

Women's Studies has been a well-documented challenge for classification and browsing. In 1992, Sue Searing (1992) described the practical consequences of subject classification. Should books on women in the military be shelved with other books on the military or with women? Libraries may shape disciplines, as their selection policies and allocation funds were based on the traditional disciplines as defined by the Library of Congress or Dewey classification systems. Where the classification system doubles as the framework for decisions about acquisitions, the traditional discipline-based knowledge structure is reinforced. According to Searing (1992), the case of Women's Studies suggests that libraries cannot support interdisciplinary research without revised subject terminology and more flexible classification systems..

Looking at the emerging field of Critical Animal Studies, we see the extent to which new interdisciplinary areas of study resist classifications. A January 2012 article in the *New York Times* reads, "Once, animals at the university were the province of science. Rats ran through mazes in the psychology lab, cows mooed in the veterinary barns, the monkeys of neuroscience chattered in their cages. And on the dissecting tables of undergraduates, preserved frogs kept a deathly silence" (Gorman 2012, para. 1). Over the last decade, Critical Animal Studies, informed by the social sciences and humanities has formed into an interdisciplinary field with courses, fellowships, a journal, and conferences. The Institute For Critical Animal Studies (2012, para. 5), founded in 2001 and renamed in 2007, "believes that in order to eliminate the domination and oppression of animals in higher education animal advocacy scholars must come together under one common field of study, similar to that of other marginalized fields of study." It's an interdisciplinary field bringing scientists, humanities, social sciences, and the arts together, with different methods and different backgrounds, but one cause in common. Animal studies presents particular problems for classification: Is there any way to classify or name them in their own terms? Is there any way to avoid having the "God's Eye" view? The various ways of classifying animals, from Aristotle to Linnaeus to our current cladist/ancestral system, taxonomies are all subjective: to eat, to worship, cloven hooves, mammary glands, dirty, clean, utility, proximity to human.

Ron Day wrote about the particular challenge animals present for classification two decades ago. Citing Nietzsche, who said "all knowledge has its roots in sense and begins in the company of "animals," Day (1996, 7) writes:

Within the philosophical tradition, humanism absolutely forbids the notion of inter-species language, community, or even more radically in

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Deleuze and Guattari's terms, "becoming-animal." There is, simply, no more important and transcendentally protected category than the human, and no more consumed and expelled category than the "animal" in Western culture... The animal must be thought in terms other than consumption, sacrifice, and a categorical exclusion.

Day argues (1996) that marginalized humans should be thought of similarly. Animal studies scholars also note their connection to these other externalized communities. Castricanno (2008, 11) compares her "Animal Subjects" to early feminist studies, with its hope and diversity of viewpoints. And she says that the politics of exclusion that enabled older formations of the humanities to disregard questions of gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, and class are still at play in the new fields of inquiry that disregard animals. Critical animal studies calls for "Role of empathy and compassion in the production of knowledge."

As Kari Weil, author of *Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now* (2012) has stated, referring to the gulf between animals and previous outsiders, "Unlike the other others, these others can't speak back or write back in language that the academy recognizes" (Weil, quoted in Gordon 2012). Day and Michael Buckland (1997) have made Suzanne Briet's notion of the antelope as document famous in our world. An antelope running wild on the plains of Africa should not be considered a document, she rules. But if it were to be captured, taken to a zoo, and made an object of study, it has been made into a document. It has become physical evidence being used by those who study it. The animal enters a field of documentation, as a subject to be controlled in the sense that Foucault described. What exactly is being documented and for what purpose? Buckland cites Day (1996) for suggesting that Briet believes that indexicality gives an object its documentary status. If we take indexicality to be the "quality of having been placed in an organized, meaningful relationship with other evidence" (Buckland 1997, 806), we see that animals are rendered a document by virtue of being classifiable. The various ways of classifying animals, from Aristotle to Linnaeus with his classifications based on reproductive features to our current cladist/ancestral system, taxonomies are all subjective. People have categorized animals according to their utility as sources of food, labor, or other resource, whether they have cloven hooves, mammary glands, whether they are dirty or clean, and their proximity to the human.

It is useful to look to animals, not only for their own sake, but because all of the groups that are forming interdisciplinary fields of study have been rendered unhuman or less than human. Sue Coe's (1995) visual rendering of slaughterhouse animals through her artwork allows for new taxonomic structures to form within the animal world and its relationship to human beings. Heather Dodge (2012), a librarian at Manhattan College in New York, says that Coe's artwork presents a kind of visual taxonomy, unlike traditional taxonomies that break down animals into categories of species, disciplines, or geographic areas. Dodge proposes the notion of "animal folksonomies," which allow for partial, if not incoherent, knowledge of animals. This alternative definition of animal taxonomy is unrelated to traditional Linnaean hierarchies and will, in fact, propose a disordered system of classifying the animal in an attempt to understand it incompletely. Here, the notion of animal folksonomy implies a camaraderie and shared understanding of one another. By contrast, Linnaean taxonomies, by classifying according to physical features, attributes, and behavioral characteristics, preclude the possibilities for individual animals of the same species to be unique. Dodge argues that, as we allow ourselves to "stand on all fours" with animals, we are able to recognize our similarities in suffering, in dying, and in wanting to be treated with respect. Coe's animals, made visible through this new knowledge of the animal as animal allows space for a new ethical taxonomic understanding of what it means to be an animal or a human in and aware of the world.

Even Haraway, who has been pivotal for her use of the cyborg to talk about the power of selves on the border of multiple identity configurations comprised of attributes such as race, gender, class, and ability, has moved from cyborg studies to animals studies. She now views "cyborgs as junior siblings in the much bigger, queer family of companion species" (Haraway 2003, 11). Haraway believes it comes down to the idea that partial knowledges from various positions is what matters, and that static taxonomies ignore the essential fact that we are always becoming with others, whether they be animals, other humans, or technologies. To try to classify and distinguish entities is to ignore the very entanglements that define our being.

Certainly, there are limits to tagging. As Capurro (1996, para. 28) warns, "How can we ensure that the benefits of information technology are not only distributed equitably, but that they can also be used by people to shape their own lives? I think that the tech-

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nologies of the self are an essential part of the answer to this question." Of course, social online technologies do not simply "allow us to cast off the shackles of hegemonic gender, race, class, or sexuality and redefine ourselves in any way imaginable," as categories of gender, race, species, and ableness are deeply embedded in all social interactions (Shapiro 2010, 124). Patrick Keilty's Ethics of Information Organization II conference presentation (2012) illustrated ways that discipline and policing happen in social spaces by the communities engaged in the creations of vocabularies about themselves. There is also the question of access, as within groups there are dominant voices and oppressed minorities, and those with access to online technologies speak over those who do not. Nevertheless, folksonomies, at the very least, provide opportunities for self-expression and community building through language, and hold potential for cross-disciplinary conversations.

Halberstam (2011) argues (following James Scott) that we may want antidisciplinarity, or knowledge practices that refuse form and content of traditional canons. "We may in fact want to think about how to see unlike a state; we may want new rationales for knowledge production, different aesthetic standards for ordering or disordering space" (10). It would seem that social tagging may be precisely the type of thing that Halberstam, Haraway, and Scott desire, with myriad voices from different perspectives coming together in a mostly undisciplined fashion.

Taken together, these emerging interdisciplinary fields are doing "identity work" and refuse to be disciplined. They are concerned with knowledge production, thus carrying critical implications for LIS. Questions of science, legitimacy, and rigor invariably arise in our interdisciplinary field. Perhaps ironically, information studies is also a field that refuses to be disciplined. Do information studies programs privilege certain voices over others, and is there a cost to this? As the organizers of materials from these identity-based disciplines, we must consider how to account for the diversity of perspectives and the implications of creating classifications for and about all of the others in the world.

Haraway (1988) argues "for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims" (589). She says the only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular, rather than seeing from above and determining order. This is in direct contradiction with the aims of library classifications, which were designed to organize the entire universe of knowledge according to disciplines. Library classifications may actually be impediments to cross-disciplinary conversations, as they situate various ways of knowing in ways that reinforce disciplinary norms and methods.

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