

See also Barbara Burris, "Technocracy and Gender in the Workplace," *Social Problems* 36 (1989):165-80; and Barbara Reskin, "Bringing the Men Back In: Sex Differentiation and the Devaluation of Women's Work," *Gender and Society* 2 (1986): 58-81.

32. Lorraine Code, *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 181, 219, 223, 232.

33. Langland and Gove, eds., *The Feminist Perspective in the Academy*, p. 5.

34. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1961), pp. vii-viii.

THE "FUCKING" TRUTH ABOUT LIBRARY CATALOGS

by Sanford Berman

Anyone who tries to find FUCKING in a typical library catalog will be disappointed. Not that there isn't relevant material in the collection. There may be a lot of it, but "fucking" won't lead you to it. Why? It would seem like just plain common sense to make sex (and health) topics easy to identify, particularly since many folks simply will not approach librarians for help in locating books, tapes, and films on "sensitive" subjects. So why no entry or heading for "fucking"? Well, the primary reason is that most libraries depend almost totally on the Library of Congress (LC) in Washington DC for the subject headings and cross-references they use in their catalogs. (They also rely heavily on LC for many of their catalog records.) And, while the LC subject heading scheme does include a heading for SEXUAL INTERCOURSE, it neither specifies nor recommends a cross-reference to that primary term from "fucking." The result: most LC-imitating libraries won't add that familiar and possibly helpful "see"-reference even though they *could*. No law, no statute prohibits them from doing it. Yet because LC doesn't sanction it, they won't let it into their own catalogs.

That widespread LC-dependence and lack of local initiative likewise account for much other sex-related material being hard, if not impossible, to find in library catalogs. For instance, Gary Indiana's 1989 novel, *Horse Crazy*, dealt with AIDS and gay men in New York City's Lower East Side. It cannot be located, under, say, AIDS—FICTION or GAY MEN—LOWER EAST SIDE, NEW YORK CITY—FICTION, in most catalogs for one exquisitely simple and perverse reason: the Library of Congress routinely assigns topical or genre headings to *collections* of fiction, poetry, or drama, but almost never to an individual novel, play or book of verse. And inasmuch as most libraries uncritically — in fact, automatically — accept LC cataloging-records without correcting or expanding them, the Indiana book would be accessible solely by author and title, for the LC cataloging record mandated to subject access points. Likewise with John Weir's 1989 *Irreversible Decline of Eddie Socket*, which focussed on AIDS and Manhattan gays. No catalog access except by author and title.

Similarly, Joseph Hayes' 1989 *Act of Rage*, in which "a lovely young woman of 28... takes her life in a charming Connecticut village for granted — until the September afternoon she is brutally raped by an unidentified attacker," cannot be located in catalogs under RAPE—FICTION or RAPE—CONNECTICUT—FICTION. Right, LC assigned no subject headings whatever. And, usually, library systems do nothing to enhance access to these works, although they *could* add a subject heading or two themselves.

The problem with single literary works is one thing. What happens to non-fiction is, as they say, "something else." For starters, even though there's no "policy" against assigning subject headings, LC often doesn't apply enough of them to fully represent what a work's about, or, frankly, assigns the wrong ones. *Tales From Times Square* is a case in point. It's possible, of course, that the LC catalogers didn't see the whole book, perhaps "cataloging" merely from a one-page form without even front matter, but it's still hard to imagine that someone didn't notice the several clues about what the work was really about. The Dewey classifier tagged it with 974.71, a "New York" notation. And the subject cataloger assigned 4 tracings (access points), an uncommonly generous number.

1. Times Square (New York, N.Y.)—Social life and customs—Addresses, essays, lectures.
2. Times Square (N.Y.)—Social conditions—Addresses, essays, lectures.
3. New York (N.Y.)—Social life and customs—Addresses, essays, lectures.
4. New York (N.Y.)—Social conditions—Addresses, essays, lectures.

So what's the Big Deal, since the title was explicitly *Tales From Times Square* (a 1986 Delacorte volume by Josh Alan Friedman)? Well, in this instance the LC treatment wasn't wildly wrong. It just wasn't very right. For instance, shouldn't an unequivocal "acknowledgement" to Al Goldstein, who published the triple-X tabloid, *Screw*, have hinted to the cataloger that maybe this wasn't a run-of-the-mill NYC history or travel tome?

And what about chapter captions like "After the death of burlesque," "Old flesh agents," "Inside the peeps," "Queen of the Gang Bang," "Pros and pimps," and "Castrate the bastards!" Don't they at least suggest some prurient, carnal content? They *should* have. Because that's what these non-fiction "tales" concern: S-E-X. Not architecture. Not Broadway theater. Not New Year's Eve celebrations. Just sex. But the natural readership for Friedman's opus will not find it by browsing Dewey's 300 sex-sequence nor searching the catalog entries under SEX and related descriptors. In effect: another case of bibliocide-by-cataloging. How might it have been done better? To begin, by alerting catalog searchers to the work's genuine substance and approach through a note:

PARTIAL CONTENTS: After the death of burlesque, -Old flesh agents. -Inside the peeps. -Queen of the gang bang. -The saviours. -Father Rappleyea's parish. -Cops and Skells. -Pros and pimps. -Castrate the bastards!

And then, in addition to LC's first two subject tracings (but without the since-nixed subhead, —ADDRESSES, ESSAYS, LECTURES), perhaps these:

3. Sex industry—Times Square, New York City.
4. Sex shops—Times Square, New York City.
5. Peep shows—Times Square, New York City.
6. Prostitutes, Female—Times Square, New York City.
7. Sex customs—Times Square, New York City.

That's the treatment *Tales* got at Hennepin County Library — plus a revamped Dewey tag: 301.417 (the "sexual behavior" notation from DDC's 18th edition.)

A second case-in-point: the Summer 1990 *Good Vibes Gazette* reported that "the Sexuality Library catalog has decided to carry Robert Mapplethorpe, a collection of the late photographer's work in a volume edited by Richard Marshall. Although... not entirely erotic in nature, we felt that these photographs have become a powerful symbol of the extent to which free speech and expression — particularly speech and art about sexuality — are endangered in America today." Well, courageous libraries

that actually bought the Whitney Museum tome probably accepted the LC cataloged record "as is," meaning that the work will be findable under only two subject headings:

1. Photography, Artistic—Exhibitions.
2. Mapplethorpe, Robert—Exhibitions.

Now, LC has PHOTOGRAPHY, EROTIC, and PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE NUDE in its heading arsenal. But they didn't assign them. And so there's no "erotic" or "nude" access to Mapplethorpe in most Anglophone libraries.

Hold on, sex-seekers, for the worst is yet to come. Bad enough that LC — and, by extension, nearly all other libraries — doesn't permit sex-related access to literature like fiction and drama. Bad enough, too, that many "sexy" non-fiction works are under-cataloged, their erotic aspects in effect being buried or hidden. The really astounding fact is that a whole battery of sexual topics that are indisputably represented in books and AV material don't appear in the LC subject heading list at all and thus are not used by LC itself or by most other libraries. Here's a selection of non-sanctified terms:

ADULT BOOKSTORES
 AIDS ACTIVISTS
 ANTIPORNOGRAPHY CIVIL
 RIGHTS ORDINANCES
 ANTIPORNOGRAPHY
 MOVEMENT
 BELLY DANCERS
 BISEXUAL COUPLES
 BISEXUALS
 CHILD SEX RINGS
 DECRIMINALIZATION OF
 PROSTITUTION
 EROTIC FILM ACTORS AND
 ACTRESSES
 EROTIC FILM INDUSTRY
 EROTIC FOLKLORE

EROTIC HUMOR
 EROTOPHOBIA
 FAMILY PLANNING (it's
 merely a "see" reference
 to BIRTH CONTROL)
 FEMALE DOMINATION
 (SEXUALITY)
 FETISHISM (SEXUALITY)
 GAY SADOMASOCHISM
 HETEROSEXUALITY (yes,
 Virginia, the list *does*
 include entries for
 BISEXUALITY and
 HOMOSEXUALITY)
 INTERRACIAL SEX
 LESBIAN SADOMASOCHISM

PERFORMANCE ANXI-
 ETY (SEXUALITY)
 PROSTITUTES' RIGHTS
 ROMANTIC LOVE
 SEX AIDS
 SEX-CHANGE SURGERY
 SEX CLINICS
 SEX GAMES
 SEX MAGAZINES
 SEX MANUALS
 SEX SCANDALS

SEX SHOPS
 SEX TOURISM
 SEXPLOITATION
 SEXUAL FREEDOM
 SEXUAL MASSAGE
 SEXUAL PRIVACY RIGHTS
 SEXUAL REVOLUTION
 SEXUAL SLAVERY
 TELEPHONE SEX
 VIOLENCE AGAINST
 ABORTION CLINICS

And not only that. Among existing forms, a few are so bizarre or antique that no one would look them up first — and research shows that making people look something up twice can sometimes be deadly. That is, they just won't do it and so "lose" or "miss" the information. Examples: SCOPHILIA (instead of VOYEURISM), SEX INSTRUCTION (rather than SEX EDUCATION), and NOCTURNAL EMISSIONS (instead of WET DREAMS). Lastly, even when LC does finally establish a needed heading, it's often scandalously late. For instance, CERVICAL CAPS became a *bona fide* subject heading in 1987, but Hennepin County Library (HCL) had been using it since 1981; LC first introduced (and started using) COHABITATION in 1986, while HCL had been employing it for ten years earlier; HOMOPHOBIA appeared in the LC list in 1988, 12 years after HCL had established it; LC apparently experienced its first MALE ORGASM and PREMATURE EJACULATION in 1989 (HCL: 1986); and it took LC five years longer to start employing STRIPTEASERS and 13 years for GROUP MARRIAGE.

Notes can be extremely useful to catalog-users, as illustrated in the *Tales From Times Square* example. These are a few more instances of notes that LC didn't include in its cataloging records, but *should* have:

Rubin, Lillian B.

Erotic wars: what happened to the sexual revolution (1990).
 PARTIAL CONTENTS: -Teenage sex. -Sex, gender and power. -Quest for relationships. -Sex and the coupled life.

White, Evelyn C., editor.

The Black women's health book (1990).

Includes contributions by Audre Lorde, Sheila Battle, Luciile Clifton, Angela Davis, Zora Neale Hurston, Pat Parker, Faye Wattleton, and Marian Wright Edelman on such topics as incest, teenage pregnancy, Black midwives, abortion, AIDS, prostitutes, Lesbians, and "beauty."

Sipe, A. W. Richard.

A secret world: sexuality and the search for celibacy (1990).

PARTIAL CONTENTS: -Celibacy and the sexual revolution. -Papal pronouncements and example. -Practice versus the profession. -Patterns of heterosexuality. -The homosexualities. -The masturbations. -Priests and children. -The sex drive. -When priests become fathers.

Okay, the catalog sex-scene is admittedly grim. But it can get better. Some of us on the "inside" are trying, by means of letters, petitions, and articles to effect basic reforms at LC. And you — as readers and library users — can help enormously in 2 ways. First, report "failed searches" and poor cataloging to your local library, asking them to pay more attention to how sexuality materials are cataloged and classified. And second, send a copy of this article to: Director for Cataloging, Library of Congress, Washington DC 20540, underlining these requests for LC to:

*make full or partial contents notes for nonfiction when such notes would significantly clarify the scope, tone, and substance of a given work.

*assign topical and genre headings (e.g. AIDS—DRAMA, SADO-MASOCHISM—FICTION, TOPLESS BARS—FICTION, GAY POETRY, LESBIAN DRAMA) to individual literary and artistic works, including novels, poetry, essays, letters, humor, plays, comic books, and photography.

*immediately establish and start assigning the earlier-listed subject headings, from ADULT BOOKSTORES to TELEPHONE SEX.

*convert SCOPOPHILIA to VOYEURISM, SEX INSTRUCTION to SEX EDUCATION, and NOCTURNAL EMISSIONS to WET DREAMS.

*create a cross-reference to SEXUAL INTERCOURSE from "Fucking."

For more reading:

Berman, Sanford: "If There Were a *Sex Index...*," in *Joy of Cataloging* (Oryx Press, 1981), p. 37-59.

Cornog, Martha: "Providing Access to Materials on Sexuality," in *Libraries, Erotica, and Pornography* (Oryx Press, 1990), 165-86.

Greenblatt, Ellen: "Homosexuality: the evolution of a concept in the Library of Congress Subject Headings," in *Gay and Lesbian Library Service* (McFarland, 1990), p. 75-101.