ventions that acknowledge and strategically deploy this analysis, an analysis that might productively engage users in their own critical engagement with OPACs and, by extension, other systems of linguistic discipline. In the final section of this article, I turn to a discussion of what these queer interventions might be.

Queer Interventions

The way a problem is defined has much to do with the solutions offered. When a problem is defined functionally, the proposed solutions will be functional. If bias in library classification and cataloging is merely a problem of failing to get things functionally correct, then the political solution will be to set things so: lobbying the Library of Congress to correct classification schedules and subject headings to reflect the truth. But if library classification and cataloging is seen as a coextensive process of identity representation as well as the production of identities, then such functional solutions begin to make less sense. A queer theoretical approach calls instead for queer solutions: shifts in analytical approach that take seriously the contingency of these apparently stable structures. If contingency is axiomatic for our understanding of library knowledge structures, then our interventions cannot undo or erase that contingency. Instead, they should highlight and make visible the fundamental paradoxes of classification and cataloging from a queer perspective: in order to be accessible to users, materials must be fixed in place and described using controlled vocabulary. However, this fixing is always fundamentally fictive; classification and subject heading decisions are always made in a context that is subject to change. Queer interventions will highlight and make visible the contingency of cataloging decisions.

The politics of correction advanced by Berman and others smoothes out the ruptures in the catalog that lay bare its contingencies, rendering the constructed quality of library classification and cataloging less visible to the user and, therefore, more difficult to apprehend and understand. When a user encounters an obviously biased classification decision or subject heading, the fact that the library knowledge organization structure emerges from an ideological perspective becomes easy to see. If gay and lesbian sexuality is classified as *Sexual deviance*, a user—especially a gay or lesbian user—can very quickly understand that catalogs reflect a particular point of view rather than an objective truth; such a categorization offends, and therefore becomes a site of resistance that can extend beyond the catalog itself. If, after all, such a categorization reflects a truth about the world (and in a time where gay men and lesbians continue to struggle for equal access to public rights like marriage), the library classification scheme can be seen as a productive site of truth-telling about the larger political world.

Contemporary cataloging activists respond to such ruptures of the apparent objectivity of library classification and cataloging with functional solutions: Berman continues to lobby the Library of Congress for changes, documenting his work on his website; Greenblatt

argues that corrected headings are critical to the work of library catalogers, and she advocates for expanded "funnels," cooperative structures for organizing petitions to SACO for new and revised headings (2011, 222); Freedman posts updates from her own and others' efforts to fix and LCSH on her blog, Lower East Side Librarian. These efforts have met with success, particularly in the area of modifying subject headings. In a 2003 study, Steven Knowlton found that 39 percent of Berman's suggested LCSH changes in *Prejudices and Antipathies* had been accepted as proposed by the Library of Congress, while an additional 24 percent were altered to take into account his concerns (2005, 127–28). Greenblatt's suggested changes to sexuality headings in her 1990 contribution to *Gay and Lesbian Library Services* have all been adopted (2011, 219).

While this work represents a critical disruption to the smooth hegemony of LCC and LCSH for librarians and scholars who engage in these activist projects, it erases that disruption in OPACs for users. Such work has the unintended effect of implicitly affirming the possibility that library classification and cataloging could be done correctly, once and for all, and outside of discourse or ideology. As Olson has suggested, this discursive work is "the important first step" in a project that "identif[ies] the limits" of classification systems (2001a, 21), but it cannot be where critical engagement with classification and cataloging ends. Instead, queer interventions can start at the same place—where the ideology of the knowledge organization structure is apparent, and therefore where the contingency of classification and subject description are most obvious—and inaugurate users into the same dialogue with the structure that Berman and others engage. Such work would, as Olson, has suggested, begin to "conceiv[e] ways to create breaches in the limit" (2001a, 21).

Rather than placing a correction at that exposed limit, a queer analysis suggests interventions that highlight that limit and invite the user to grapple with it. Information studies scholars and practitioners have suggested technical approaches to exploit the points where classification and subject headings founder on the shores of difference. Olson has suggested designing search interfaces that make related and broader terms visible to users so that they can understand how materials are linked in the knowledge organization scheme, as well as systems that allow users to enhance subject description through user tagging and mapping local thesauri to universally applied subject headings (2007, 533). In other work, Olson offers additional technological solutions, all of them locally applied, acknowledging the contingency of place: using local language in MARC records, exploiting notations to gather locally important materials, developing alternative local classification and cataloging systems built out of alternative thesauri, and varying citation order in order to vary the hierarchy of samenesses (Olson 2001b, 120–21). These technological approaches reveal points in the classification structure "through which the power may leak out" (Olson 2001a, 22), making apparent the otherwise invisible constructedness of classification and cataloging schemes.

Another compelling strategy lies in exploiting the ground laid by queer theory for understanding classification structure and subject language as discursively produced and inviting users into that discourse in the moment of encounter with our OPACs. This emphasis on the dialogical is apparent in some proposed technical solutions; user tagging, for example, makes material the stake users have in designing subject vocabularies. Discursive engagement is also a hallmark of public services librarianship: librarians meet users at the reference desk or in the library instruction classroom, teaching users how to navigate library knowledge organization structures. A queerly informed teaching librarian has the potential to transform these moments in the library use process into another point where the ruptures of classification and cataloging structures can be productively pulled apart to help users understand the bias of hegemonic schemes. For example, a user seeking information about identities that are not listed in LCSH but related to identities that are named—for example, *genderqueer* versus *transsexuality*, or *aggressive* versus *lesbian*—could be led to the general point in the classification where related materials could be found and engaged in a discussion of why the knowledge they come seeking by name is invisible in the structure. Such a reference interaction would both usefully direct the student to relevant materials and exploit the contextual clues offered by LCSH. Librarians who are themselves engaged with a queer approach to knowledge organization can teach the user how to understand what she sees when she searches the OPAC—and what she does not see—as directly related to the structure of the knowledge organization system she searches against.

Defining the problem of biased classification and cataloging as queer and analytic shifts the burden of engaging and struggling with that bias from catalogers to reference and instruction librarians working with patrons at the desk or in the classroom. Indeed, since the advent of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, teaching students to critically engage information sources is a critical part of the contemporary work of public services librarians: "The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system" (ACRL 2004). A queer approach to instruction would shift from simply teaching the user to navigate LCC and LCSH to a focus on dialogue with patrons that will help them tell the troubles of those schemes. Users can be invited into the discursive work of both using and resisting standard schemes, developing a capacity for critical reflection about subject language and classification structure. *Why don't I see myself in the subject vocabulary, and what does this tell me about the other ways I feel invisible?* This critical reflection—central to the work of Berman, Greenblatt, Foskett, Freedman, and others—can be encouraged in the work of our students as they are invited into dialogue, and not merely compliance, with the disciplining systems of the library. As Keilty has suggested, "correcting the hazards of classifying queer phenomena occurs not only when the structures of categorization are made permeable, but also when

scholars, practitioners, and activists form a critical engagement congruent with queer's intrinsic resistance to classification" (2009, 244). The work of correction therefore gives way to the work of building and expanding such engagement.

It is easier to imagine points of entry into critically teaching classification and controlled vocabularies if offensive subject divisions and subject language remain uncorrected. This is, after all, what inaugurated Berman's own political project: the shocking rupture of the apparent objectivity of the library classification structure occasioned by seeing "Kafir" in a Zambian context. The project of systematically removing evidence of bias from library structures makes that shock rarer for students to encounter and more difficult to demonstrate across the reference desk or in the classroom. A queer approach to the problem of library classification and cataloging demands that these reflections of ideology be left as remnants in the structure and that librarians be prepared to teach students how to read what they discover in the text that is the knowledge organization system itself.

Turning library access structures into pedagogical tools allows librarians to teach knowledge production as a contested project, one in which they themselves can engage. In her work on using Wikipedia in the library instruction classroom, Heidi L. M. Jacobs calls this "teaching the conflicts" (2010, 186), asking students to read Wikipedia not for the truth value of its explanations but for evidence of struggle over the right to tell the truth evidenced in the website's Talk pages. In the context of library cataloging, students might be asked to examine headings related to women in LCSH side-by-side with Marshall's *On Equal Terms* and to reflect on the assumptions that underlie each term. Greenblatt's historical study of LGBTIQ headings might be productively read next to Wolf's incendiary—and male-focused—activist texts from the early 1970s, and both could be read next to the current LCC and LCSH schedules for materials related to gay and lesbian sexuality. Classification structures and controlled vocabularies are thus introduced as contested and in flux rather than stable and objective, inviting users to engage with them critically on their own behalf. This approach asks users to begin to understand how structures and linguistic forms make certain ways of knowing and being articulable and therefore possible, a very queer goal indeed.

Conclusion

The problems of bias in library classification structures and subject language are, from a queer perspective, problems endemic to the knowledge organization project itself. If social categories and names are understood as embedded in contingencies of space, time, and discourse, then bias is inextricable from the process of classification and cataloging. When an item is placed in a particular category or given a particular name, those decisions always reflect a particular ideology or approach to understanding the material itself. This fundamental insight challenges the traditional approach of activist librarians who see as paramount the task of correcting classification and cataloging schemes until they become unbiased and universally

accessible structures. Such a project contains an inherent tension: correction can mask the inescapable contested ideological work performed by catalogers who must make these decisions every day.

Approaching the problem of library classification and cataloging from a queer perspective demands that we leave intact the traces of historicity and ideology that mar the classification and cataloging project. Such traces can reveal the limit of the universal knowledge organization project, inviting technical interventions that highlight the constructed nature of classification structures and controlled vocabularies. These traces also represent moments when the burden of undoing the hegemony of library classification and cataloging shifts from the back office to the reference desk and classroom, where public service librarians can intervene and emphasize the discursivity of classification and cataloging by engaging in critical reflection with users about what they do and do not see in the library catalog.

Queer theory challenges us to interrogate the processes and power relations that produce certain ways of knowing and being as correct and others as wrong, deviant, and less worthy of life. When brought into conversation with the literature of critical library classification and cataloging practice, queer theory informs new strategies for teaching the library catalog from a queer perspective. Beyond this narrow intervention, however, such an engagement offers other disciplines material ways to think and teach about discourses of power. Structures of power are often abstract and difficult to perceive or explain to students as real. For example, considered against the background of a dominant fantasy of equal opportunity, explaining the ways that choices and life chances are produced by mechanisms that precede the subject can be difficult. A queer reading of LCC and LCSH offers a concrete way of understanding the way these mechanisms work in time. The ideology that consigns gay and lesbian sexuality to the subject classification for *Sexual deviance*, or classifies sexuality of all kinds as *Social problems*, has ramifications beyond the library catalog for people who claim those identities. The text of the library classification and cataloging structure enables us to apprehend these ideologies directly off the page.

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