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Naming Subjects: “Paraphilias”

You who read me—are you certain you
understand my language?

—JORGE LUIS BORGES, “The Library of Babel”

The first and most important rule is not to
believe the statement that the patient was
attracted to the same sex since childhood.

—WILHELM STEKEL, “Is Homosexuality Curable?”

The catalog record for *Epistemology of the Closet* demonstrates the performativity of subject headings—the authorized terms by which we search for books. I ask you to reassume the position of a cataloger in 1990, and think now of a handful of key words and phrases that represent what *Epistemology of the Closet* is about. Bear in mind that, as a cataloger, you consider what your library patrons would be most likely to seek in the catalog if they were looking for books on the subjects you assign. Subject searches are performed as a gathering technique when readers do not know the titles and authors of the texts but have an idea of the topic they are looking for. If you were properly cataloging this book according to the rules, you would look to the Library of Congress Subject Headings to find the authorized forms of the terms. In 1990 the lists of headings would have been sitting on your desk in a massive five-volume set clothed in red covers. A significant amount of training is required, as is a solid grasp of the subject matter, to be able to apply the headings, add subdivisions, and encode it all adequately. For this text, catalogers chose to provide the major authors addressed by Sedgwick as subjects, as well as four topical subject headings. Recall again that the term “queer theory” had been coined just months

before the publication of the book, and it was not officially authorized as a subject heading by the Library of Congress until 2006. I leave this exercise off here and leave it to you to compare your own assessment of what *Epistemology of the Closet* is about (an impossibly absurd task, I realize) with what the Library of Congress chose for the 1990 edition. Next we move to the subject of “Paraphilias,” formerly called “Sexual perversion.”

Melville, Herman, 1819–1891. Billy Budd.
 James, Henry, 1843–1916—Criticism and interpretation.
 Wilde, Oscar, 1854–1900—Criticism and interpretation.
 Proust, Marcel, 1871–1922. A la recherché du temps perdu.
 Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, 1844–1900.
 American fiction—Men authors—History and criticism.
 Homosexuality and literature.
 Gays’ writings—History and criticism—Theory, etc.
 Gay men in literature.¹

The inspiration for this book arose out of my own struggles as a seeker of historical materials on homosexuality and bisexuality via the University of Wisconsin library catalog in 2009—as a disciplined subject, so to speak. I performed a keyword search to locate catalog records that included the term “homosexual” anywhere. Upon finding some entries of interest, I clicked on links to various author names and subject headings, and eventually my wanderings conveyed me to the record for the 1934 edition of Wilhelm Stekel’s *Bi-Sexual Love: The Homosexual Neurosis*, which brought my browsing to a halt. I noticed that the record contained no headings for bisexuality or homosexuality. Rather, the only two subject headings assigned to this book were “Neuroses” and “Paraphilias.” As the latter term was unfamiliar to me at the time, my first inclination was to think that it must have been a mistake—perhaps a medical heading, or a relic that somehow never got updated. I then clicked on the heading to see if it was applied to other works in the catalog and discovered that it was included in over three hundred bibliographic records.

Perplexed, I searched the Library of Congress’s catalog and WorldCat (a shared catalog across 72,000 libraries) and found that it was clearly a currently authorized subject heading.² I consulted the authority record for the heading in the Library of Congress authorities database, which indicated that “Paraphilias” was authorized in 2007 to replace “Sexual deviation” (see Figure 3). The record also revealed that the reasons for preferring this term were supplied by psychiatric literature. The 1934 Stekel book

was assigned this heading because of the technological application called “global” or “batch updating,” which allows a librarian to update automatically all catalog records that contain a given heading to the current form. Stekel’s book, then, which had originally been assigned the headings “Sexual perversion” and “Neuroses,” is now cataloged with “Paraphilias” and “Neuroses,” providing no heading for homosexuality, bisexuality, or any reference to this as a historical text.³ With the global update technology, “Paraphilias” replaced “Sexual deviation” in most catalogs, including that of the Library of Congress, without any human review of the catalog records. This means that, by virtue of automation, texts that were cataloged in the early part of the twentieth century retain formerly held attitudes that associated homosexuality and bisexuality with perversion, but now in anachronistic terms.⁴

While the story of my search is only one personal anecdote, I hope that it resonates with readers and illustrates a sense of being disciplined, which manifested in the jarring experience of struggling to understand my own identifications in unintelligible terms. It demonstrates how the disciplinary apparatus affects both the text and the reader. The classificatory mechanism inscribes a book’s subject in the catalog in a language that may be foreign to both the text and the person seeking the text, resulting in a range of effects and affects. I can also draw from other encounters: For example, when I deliver talks on this topic, I often begin by asking my audience if they’ve ever heard this term. Hands very rarely go up, and while this may have something to do with a risk of exposure, shyness, or disinterest, the regularity with which I face blank stares upon asking this question is notable. In conversation people generally require an explanation if I mention my research on paraphilias. And in my own personal interactions with popular culture, the only time I recall hearing the term is in an episode of *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*. These encounters lead me to surmise that this is a term that simply doesn’t carry meaning for the vast majority of people and is used only in certain circles, like law and medicine. Furthermore, and more important for the purpose of this study, what these

1898–1972	“Sexual perversion”
1972–2007	“Sexual deviation”
2007–	“Paraphilias”

Figure 3. Library of Congress subject headings, by period of authorization.

experiences demonstrate is the contrast between the language of people on the street, of humanities and social science scholars, and of psychiatric professionals and scholars. The consequences of the authorization and use of “paraphilias” are many, including the erasure of a whole range of materials, the misrepresentation of historical conceptions of perversion, and the silencing of voices outside of the medical sciences. Placing the term “paraphilias” at the heart of this chapter illustrates how a single Library of Congress Subject Heading serves to discipline sex and sexualities through the act of naming.

This chapter sets out to perform a history of the present practice of categorizing books on perversion with the heading “Paraphilias” and to seek an understanding of how this medicalized term has taken hold in the library catalog. The Library of Congress is in dialogue with and reinforces psychiatric norms in a conversation that silences would-be interlocutors, particularly from the humanities and the street. But perhaps more significantly, the history of these terms in knowledge organization practice provides a glimpse of how the Library of Congress participated in the development and refinement of categories alongside other federal bureaucracies that were trying to gain a conceptual mastery over perversion in order to define both desirable characteristics for citizenship and the deviations by which to exclude people from membership.

Subject Heading Practices and Procedures

The Library of Congress Subject Heading (LCSH) authorities database contains a half-million subject authority records, which designate the terms that can be used to catalog works by subject and how these terms are structured in library catalogs. LCSH is a syndetic system, meaning that it connects related terms, synonyms, or variants by using cross-references in a database within the catalog. Online library catalogs often provide links to “Use” or “See” references, so that patrons are directed to the authorized terms for their searches, charting the correct course that will lead readers to their books. For those who search a catalog by subject using a nonpreferred term—“Sexual perversion in literature,” for instance—the authority mechanism will redirect the seeker to the correct term—in this case it will say “See: Paraphilias in literature.” Not only is LCSH a controlled vocabulary, but the terms are authorized by a governing body that determines which terms are valid and the processes by which they become authority headings; in this case it is a committee composed of cataloging staff at the Library of Congress. The potential for reach of the vocabulary

has been expanded with the recent creation of the Library of Congress Linked Data Service, which “enables both humans and machines to programmatically access authority data at the Library of Congress.”⁵ LCSH and other vocabularies are part of the public domain and terms are accessible through uniform resource indicators (URIs).

Sexual perversion in literature

Titles: 0

Type: Library of Congress subject headings

See: **Paraphilias in literature**

The database also helps people find terms that are related to the topic of interest. They may be broader or narrower terms in a hierarchy, as with “Baby bonnets,” which is a member of “Hats,” or they might be topically associated, as “Baby bonnets” is related to “Infants’ clothing.” Figure 4 provides a map of the social network of terms most closely related to “Paraphilias.” Most are narrower terms: “Sadism,” “Masochism,” “Voyeurism,” “Lust murder,” “Bestiality,” “Fetishism,” “Exhibitionism,” and “Pedophilia.” One term is provided in the authority record as a “See also” term (meaning that related items might be found with another heading): “Psychosexual disorders.”⁶ The illustration also shows all of the narrower and related terms for that level, connecting terms that are considered related. One could easily carry this exercise on, extending related terms nearly endlessly, playing a game of “six degrees of paraphilias.”

One is likely to be struck by the presences, absences, and relationships produced by the network of authority records. Why, connected to “Fetish,” are there only the types “Foot,” “Boot,” “Sock,” and “Shoe”? Have books only been written on these fetishes, and why does it get so specific with regard to the extensions of the foot? The category “Psychosexual disorders” is a bizarrely exclusive collection of terms—that “Transvestism” is in this grouping is troubling, especially when displayed in relation to the other terms in this family of “disorders.” “Paraphilias” is two degrees from both “Sex crimes” and “Murder” via “Lust murder.” If we extend a map of “Sex crimes,” we see that the “Paraphilias” are not far removed from all sorts of criminal acts, and we see some disturbing notions of what counts as a sex crime (Figure 5).⁷

Aside from the medical and criminal associations, there is the concern about the terminology chosen for the concept. One of the Library of Congress’s principles states that it will create a new heading when it appears

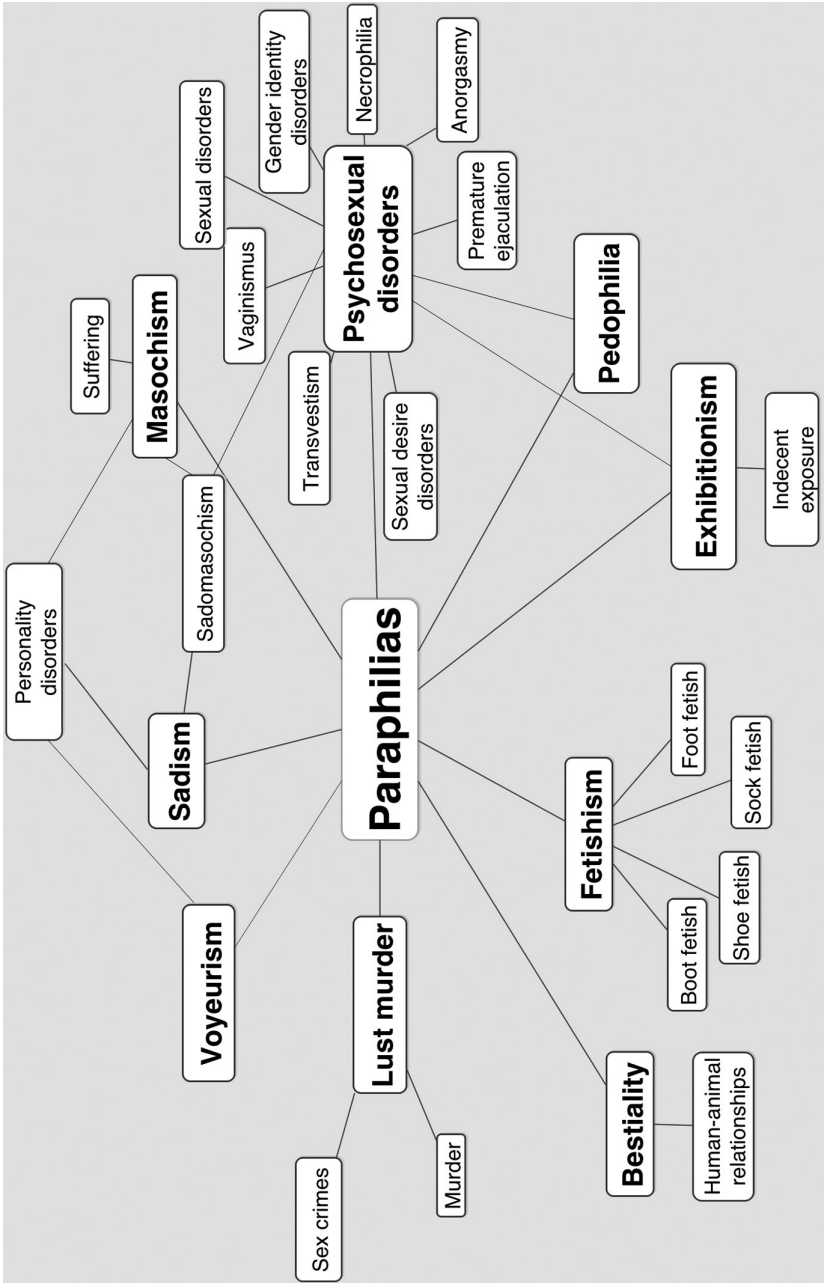


Figure 4. Terms related to “Paraphilias.”

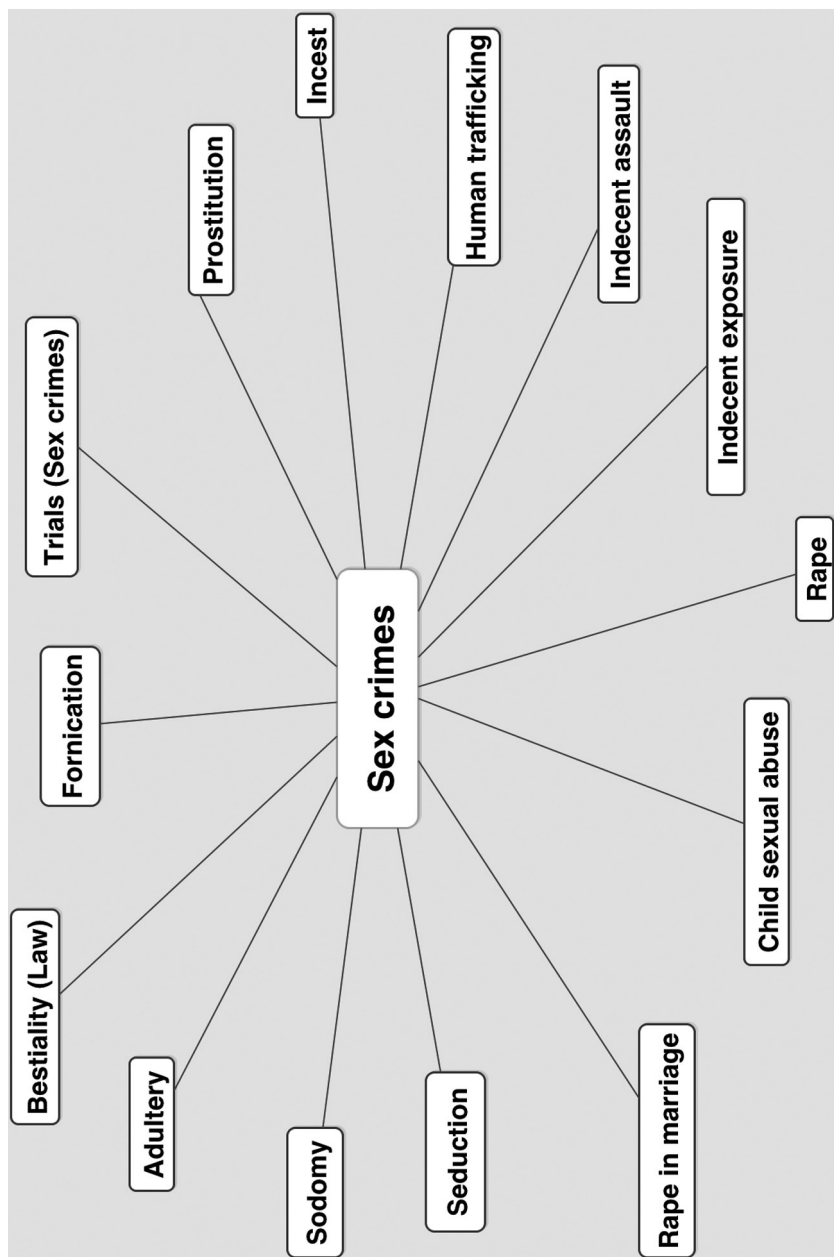


Figure 5. Terms related to "Sex crimes."

in the literature, but it also has a policy to authorize terms in general use, rather than jargon.⁸ The American Library Association and the Library of Congress endorsed a statement issued in 1975 stating:

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.⁹

Although “paraphilias” does not name a group or an identity category, it could be argued that the term refers to people and their sexual practices; it is a diagnostic category, and it would seem that such a diagnosis may carry the assumption that a person has a disorder or is disordered. The medicalization of a set of behaviors should not so readily be taken as given, however, and I would suggest that those who engage in, carry an identification with, or are curious about any of the practices that fall within this category should be considered in decisions regarding what they are called. In using medical jargon, the Library of Congress effectively marginalizes not only a set of practices but also those who engage in any of the acts or seek information about them. As Sedgwick so elegantly states:

To alienate conclusively, *definitionally*, from anyone on any theoretical ground the authority to describe and name their own sexual desire is a terribly consequential seizure. In [the twentieth] century, in which sexuality has been made expressive of the essence of both identity and knowledge, it may represent the most intimate violence possible. It is also an act replete with the most disempowering mundane institutional effects and potentials.¹⁰

In 2016, over 650 books in the Library of Congress collection are cataloged with the subject heading “Paraphilias” or with a heading that contains this word, such as “Paraphilias in literature.” Approximately 560 are unique titles, and 360 of those are originally written in or translated into English.¹¹ Searching WorldCat for the 360 unique titles written in English revealed that the total number of U.S. library holdings for these books approaches 50,000, with the majority of libraries being general academic libraries, followed by public libraries. Medical and law libraries comprise a relatively small minority of holding libraries.¹² It is likely that those libraries have cataloged the books in the same terms both because Library

of Congress Subject Headings are the primary mode of subject access for nearly all library catalogs in the United States and across the globe and because copy cataloging ensures a degree of uniformity across catalogs.

Researchers, practitioners, and the public have long disagreed on what counts as sexual perversion or a paraphilia, and the definitions of perversion have changed over time. Even the psychiatric community has not been able to agree on the definition and diagnosis of paraphilias. Charles Moser states that the “creation of the diagnostic category of paraphilia, the medicalization of nonstandard sexual behaviors, is a pseudoscientific attempt to regulate sexuality.”¹³ Further, he argues, “The equating of unusual sexual interests with psychiatric diagnoses has been used to justify the oppression of sexual minorities and to serve political agendas. A review of this area is not only a scientific issue, but also a human rights issue.”¹⁴ Laws and O’Donohue have described the controversy surrounding sexual deviance, suggesting that the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* presents an “institutional rather than a scientific resolution to the definitional problem,” which is value laden, created and negotiated by committees, and subject to personal and political influences.¹⁵

Similarly, Élisabeth Roudinesco argues that the adoption of “paraphilias” is of critical significance for the psychiatric and psychoanalytic community and a symptom of a wider shift in the field. In her view, “psychiatry claims to be abolishing the very idea that perversion might exist by refusing to pronounce its name,” a move that she believes will have deadly consequences.¹⁶ According to Roudinesco, the erasure of perversion occurred when the *DSM* abandoned the psychoanalytic approach to psychology and replaced it with behavioral criteria that made little to no reference to subjectivity. The *DSM* did away with human difference and rendered subjects as objects to be classified and diagnosed on the basis of disciplinary ideology. The designation of “paraphilia” means that anyone can be under suspicion, and even fantasies become subject to diagnostics. By denuding perversion of any substance, the psychiatric evaluation becomes one of screening and classifying for disease and disorder rather than one of treating the psychic, desiring life of subjects. It must be pointed out that the subject headings “Paraphilias” and “Paraphilias in literature” have both been assigned to Roudinesco’s book *Our Dark Side: A History of Perversion* (2009), in spite of her clear preference for the term “perversion” and her argument against the use of “paraphilias.”

Despite such controversies, the Library of Congress has chosen psychiatric literature for the sources upon which to base its subject heading. The LC authority record cites several titles that provide literary warrant for the

new heading, “Paraphilias,” including *Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)*, the *Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms*, at health.com, and *Human Sexuality: An Encyclopedia* (1994), which is quoted in the authority record for justification of the term:

Paraphilia is defined as an erotosexual and psychological condition characterized by recurrent responsiveness to an obsessive dependence on an unusual or socially unacceptable stimulus. The term has become a legal synonym for perversion or deviant sexual behavior, and it is preferred by many over the other terms because it seems more *neutral and descriptive* rather than judgemental.¹⁷

The term “Paraphilias” is arguably even more troubling (or at least differently troubling) than the headings that preceded it—“Sexual deviation” and “Sexual perversion.” Although the earlier headings were clearly drawn from the medical literature, the words themselves had further reach and would have been intelligible to a broad population, even if offensive or harmful to some. The texts written by “laypeople” during the early twentieth century engaged with the public and researchers by using the term “perversion” to disavow it, to advance cases against the inclusion of invert, homosexuals, and transvestites in the category of “sexual perverts.” In sharp contrast, “Paraphilias” is not only problematic because of its medical origins but because it obscures meaning, rendering the nonnormative sexualities invisible, carrying disciplinary force, and potentially prohibiting access to materials cataloged with this heading.

The very existence of “paraphilias” as the sole term for access to this concept in the library catalog relies on the assumption that nonnormative sexualities, in their various manifestations, are medical problems. It presupposes the notion that sexual variance is a medical condition to be explained, classified, and, when necessary, treated. Furthermore, what is considered a perversion or a paraphilia is subjective and differs from person to person, culture to culture, and over time. The assignment of the term to materials from the humanities, social sciences, and popular literature—to works that do not use the term and for audiences for whom this term does not resonate—is a blatant disregard of the language used by a range of authors and readers through the imposition of medical jargon, the use of which the Library of Congress has expressly indicated it avoids.

Moreover, if we consider the Library of Congress classifications to be tools for writing a national history, the terms authorized from 1898 through the present—“sexual perversion,” “sexual deviation,” and “paraphilias”—have all helped construct and preserve ideals about a national citizenry by

marking and pathologizing abnormal sexuality and opposing it to assumed norms. While the earlier headings created a binary distinction, “Paraphilias” nearly writes perversion out of public history and knowledge production by making it virtually invisible to all but psychiatric professionals.

Perversion—Deviation—Paraphilias

An account of “paraphilias” in the catalog would be incomplete without tracing the dialectical exchanges that contributed to the word and its meaning within the psychiatric community that uses it. Indeed, arguments dating back to the late nineteenth century continue to be at the root of some of the central questions regarding the identification, diagnosis, and treatment of paraphilias, even in the 2013 edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. We begin this investigation by looking to the ways in which “sexual perversion” was used by the sexological community and imported into the catalog. We find that the taxonomies in sexuality studies and libraries are, in fact, coextensive even as they shift over time, and they serve to reinforce dominant norms and ideas about sexuality.

Richard von Krafft-Ebing is widely regarded as the sexologist who in the late nineteenth century set the course for modern sexuality studies in Europe and the United States. As Henry Oosterhuis has observed, Krafft-Ebing was one of the first to synthesize medical knowledge about sexual perversion “by naming and classifying virtually all nonprocreative forms of sexuality.”¹⁸ His *Psychopathia Sexualis*, which was solely intended to be a reference text for lawyers and doctors, underwent twelve revisions between 1886 and 1903, with the first translation into English published in 1892. Krafft-Ebing was an assistant physician at an asylum and became one of the first expert witnesses for the Austrian and German courts. He collected case histories from his practice and court cases, which then went into his books. The first edition of *Psychopathia Sexualis* was a detailed, graphic account of forty-five case studies based on the lives and confessions of his patients. The preface to the first edition reads, “A scientific title has been chosen, and technical terms are used throughout the book in order to exclude the lay reader. For the same reason certain portions are written in Latin.”¹⁹ Despite efforts to keep the text out of the hands of laypeople, the publication was widely circulated beyond his intended audience and generated a huge response and correspondence. Krafft-Ebing used this material for subsequent editions, with the 1903 edition including 203 cases.

In providing physicians with a textbook and bringing rationalism to the legal treatment of sexual perversions, Krafft-Ebing gave impetus to

the degeneration theory of sexual perversion, broadly defining it as any nonprocreative sex, or otherwise put “pleasure without utility.”²⁰ He considered sex acts without procreative goals to be the result of a psychological and moral disorder and that they indicated overall degeneracy, and he believed that such defects were embedded in the body. Such ideas relied on a master discourse of evolution and classed populations, which ranked individuals from primitive to civilized. People could progress, become arrested and fail to reach maturity, or degenerate and slide to more primitive conditions. Heredity was a key to development, and class, race, nation, ethnicity, and religion were evaluated using measures of mental abilities, bodily configurations, and cultural productions.²¹

A key mechanism for assessing sexual deviance was the identification, classification, and cataloging of all deviant sex behaviors and physical characteristics that might indicate inversion or degeneration.²² Krafft-Ebing’s classification shifted and expanded over the editions but maintained the evolutionary framework, reiterating hierarchies of racial progress. For instance, in “primitive races,” perverse behavior might be characteristic of the arrested development of the entire group, but among “advanced races” it was considered to be pathological degeneration or individual arrested development. By discovering inversion and homosexuality in “primitive” societies, doctors and anthropologists argued that these were signs of evolutionary regression in “civilized” societies. As Lisa Duggan has noted, “The result was a hazy, unstable distinction in the text’s analytical framework between vice or immoral perversity, most characteristic of those lowest on the vector of development, and the condition of perversion, which might be found without hint of vice at the higher end of the vector.”²³ Women were also separately placed on the evolutionary hierarchy; even the most “civilized” women were less evolved than the men of their nation, race, and class. Sexologists struggled to figure out how to explain inversion in women and often contradicted themselves. Were they advanced because they were mannish; were they freaks; were they degenerate? According to Duggan, they eventually created expansive taxonomies that were flexible enough to deal with such contradictions.

Critically, for Foucault, the notion of perversity was entirely a game of medical and judicial qualification and came to “authorize the appearance of a range of manifestly obsolete, laughable, and puerile terms or elements in the discourse of experts who are justified as scientists.”²⁴ Foucault likens the textbooks of the late nineteenth century to children’s books, with their overly simplistic, disciplining terminologies that act as terms of translation across the medical and judicial fields, and he suggests that perversion

provided the ideal “switch point” upon which to regulate deviance. Foucault understood the criminalizing response to the pervert as a response to danger and asserts that “danger and perversion constitute . . . the essential theoretical core of expert medico-legal opinion.”²⁵

For most sexologists in the late nineteenth century, a small number of homosexuals were considered congenital invert, and the rest became inverts or engaged in inverted behaviors as a result of a compound of nature and nurture. Krafft-Ebing described this and other perversions in terms of a difference between *perversion* and *perversity*:

Perversion of the sexual instinct, as will be seen farther on, is not to be confounded with *perversity* in the sexual act; since the latter may be induced by conditions other than psycho-pathological. The concrete perverse act, monstrous as it may be, is clinically not decisive.

Perversion, for Krafft-Ebing, was a disease that could only be understood through an examination of the whole person, whereas a whole range of external factors might lead a normal person to perform a perverse act. The distinction between perversity and perversion continues to play out in present-day discussions and debates about the identification and diagnosis of paraphilias and, more broadly, about whether paraphilias are, in fact, disorders.

For the moment it is important to situate the creation of “Sexual perversion” as a subject heading at the Library of Congress in this late nineteenth-century sexological context. The Library of Congress Classification, which is the topic of the third chapter, actually cites the *Psychopathia Sexualis* in its HQ71 class as an example of books about “Abnormal sex relations.” There is no question that it was scientific sexological books that served as literary warrant for creating the heading “Sexual perversion” and determining how it would be applied in the catalog. This is especially significant when we acknowledge the fact that texts written by John Addington Symonds, Edward Carpenter, and others presented accounts of variant sexualities (primarily homosexuality and inversion) from the perspective of experience, repudiated pathologizing explanations, and actively rejected the label “perversion.” Books that disavowed the term were assigned the heading “Sexual perversion” from 1898 onward, and I would argue that this must be read as a disciplinary action with silencing effects.

Perhaps surprisingly, none of Freud’s works have been categorized as being about perversion in the Library of Congress catalog. Even his seminal *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, in which he elaborates an entire theory of perversion—one that has held as a prevailing frame for

analysis—was not assigned the heading “Sexual perversion.” His theories would become corrupted and adapted to various purposes, but their influence on sexological thought remains, particularly in psychoanalytic approaches to sexuality. Still, each edition held by the Library of Congress, including the German version published in 1910, is assigned only one barely descriptive subject heading: “Sex.”²⁶

Freud’s contributions are essential to understanding the development of the current situation with paraphilias. Foremost among these is his theory on the universality of perversion among humankind, writing that “there is indeed something innate lying behind the perversions but that it is something innate in everyone, though as a disposition it may vary in its intensity and may be increased by the influence of actual life.”²⁷ He believed all humans are *polymorphously perverse* in childhood, meaning that a child’s sexuality consists of partial sexual instincts that originate in various erogenous zones of the body. Relatedly, Freud also asserted that all human beings are innately bisexual. As Juliet Mitchell explains, the term “bisexual” is used today to indicate the sexual attraction to both sexes, but for Freud in the late nineteenth century, bisexuality had to do with the fact that “whatever one’s object choice, whether hetero, homo or ambi-sexual, somewhere one is, psychically, both sexes.”²⁸ Any of these inclinations can give rise to perverse or healthy behaviors in adulthood, and in his early theories, the distinction between normal and pathological depended upon whether the perverse desires were pursued to the exclusion of procreative sexual intercourse.

Although Freud’s work was not about sexual perversion in the eyes of Library of Congress catalogers, some of his followers’ publications were assigned the heading “Sexual perversion.” Among those authors was the inventor of “paraphilias,” Wilhelm Stekel, who coined the term in *Störungen des Trieb- und Affektlebens*, the second volume of which was translated into English in 1922 and entitled *Bi-Sexual Love: The Homosexual Neurosis*—the very text that set me off on this investigation!²⁹ The German *paraphilie* also appears in Stekel’s *Die Geschlechtskälte der Frau: Eine Psychopathologie des Weiblichen Liebeslebens* and *Die Impotenz des Mannes: Die Psychischen Störungen der Männlichen Sexualfunktion*, both published in 1920. The Library of Congress assigns “Paraphilias” to Stekel’s later volume, *Sexual Aberrations: The Phenomena of Fetishism in Relation to Sex*, first published in German in 1923 and translated into English in 1930. That book sets out to explain the psychopathology of fetishism by focusing on sadism and masochism. In it Stekel defines the following terms: “parapathia stands for neurosis; paralogia for psychosis; and paraphilia for perversion.”³⁰ Like other texts

of this era on sexual perversion, the sale and distribution of this book was restricted to medical professionals, psychoanalysts, and scholars.

The definitions of fetishism and paraphilias as provided by Stekel demonstrate the centrality of maleness and heterosexuality to definitions of normal sexuality. He wrote of the perverse human as if he can only be male (with a few rare exceptions), and he described homosexual fetishism as “a condition that can be totally explained as a retreat from the female, flight from woman.”³¹ As with Freud, who believed that perverse inclinations are universal, Stekel asserted that paraphilias are universal, and he distinguished pathological ones as those that take the place of heterosexual, genital intercourse: “We cannot sufficiently emphasize the fact that all these forms of paraphilia are a part of the make-up of all normal humans.”³² For Stekel, a “true fetish lover dispenses with a sexual partner and gratifies himself with a symbol,” whereas “normal fetishism aids the man in the conquest of the woman and even promotes his libido.”³³ He regretted the lack of studies on perversion and attributed this to “Freud’s opinion that paraphilia is something complete; that it is not reducible or analyzable to any further component elements.”³⁴ He believed that Freud’s theory on perversion was too simplistic, and contra Freud, he asserted that the paraphilia (perversion) can often be viewed as a positive of the parapathia (neurosis). Importantly, in a personal letter, Freud expressed regret about having initiated Stekel to psychoanalysis, and their relationship deteriorated over time.³⁵

Stekel further broke from Freud and the more progressive sexologists, including Magnus Hirschfeld and Havelock Ellis, in his radical assertion that homosexuals were diseased, incapable of real love, and required treatment. He believed that homosexuality in men resulted from pathological families with strong mothers and weak fathers and that homosexual men’s dread of women is rooted in a form of sadism. Stekel accused Hirschfeld, who firmly believed homosexuals ought not to be treated as criminals or psychiatric patients in need of curing, of creating homosexual propaganda, and he claimed he could cure the willing patient of homosexuality with two to three months of treatment.³⁶ Jennifer Terry has suggested that this kind of rhetoric supported the U.S. “War on the Sex Criminal” launched in 1937. J. Edgar Hoover later stated in 1947 that the most rapidly increasing type of criminals was the degenerate sex offender.³⁷ Increasingly, as postwar homophobia spread, the fear of conspiracies and infiltration and uncontrolled sex perversion led to the passage of laws to police “perverse” acts and bodies at the federal and local levels.

Indeed, the Library of Congress Subject Headings reflect a change in discourses during and after World War II, with the addition of

“Homosexuality” to the lexicon of subject headings in 1946. Until then, homosexuality had been subsumed under the heading “Sexual perversion,” along with a variety of uncataloged sexual practices. “Homosexuality” was first applied as a heading to an Italian book entitled *Homosexualismo em Medicina Legal*, by Antonio Bello da Motta, and was added to the printed list of headings in 1948.³⁸ When it first appeared in LCSH, it was cross-listed with “Sexual perversion” (a reference that would remain until 1972) and given a “see also” note to “Sodomy.” The call numbers assigned to it were defined as “Social pathology” and “Medical jurisprudence.” Further direction was supplied to patrons regarding the heading: “Works on the criminal manifestation of homosexuality are entered under the heading Sodomy.”³⁹ It was around this time that the Library of Congress began to more formally codify subject cataloging, while its authority with the wider library community was beginning to grow.⁴⁰

A few speculations regarding the motives and consequences of this addition seem conceivable. It may be the case that the increase in subject specialists at the Library of Congress around this time contributed to the added heading. It may also be that J. Edgar Hoover’s “War on the Sex Criminal” had brought heightened attention to homosexuality, calling for more precision within the broad category of perversion. Or it may be viewed as part of the larger federal sexual policing project that wrote new knowledge about sexual perversion into policy, in effect “helping to produce the category of homosexuality through regulation.”⁴¹ Perhaps the heading served to bring visibility to the form of perversion perceived to be most dangerous at the time. It also seems reasonable to think that this categorization helped propel homosexuality into mainstream discourses about sex, granting it a status of recognition and providing access to literature while maintaining the dominant attitude toward homosexuality as one of disdain and the perception of homosexuality as pathological and deviant. In the final analysis, it seems likely that all of these conditions brought the heading into being and significance. We will see in the next chapter that the addition of “Homosexuality” as a subject heading coincides with addition of sex crimes in the HQ71 and HQ72 sections of the bibliographic classification—the classes designated for abnormal sex relations (and subsequently sexual deviation).

Six years after the publication of the printed list of LC subject headings that included “Homosexuality,” the first edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* of the American Psychiatric Association was published, with a brief section on “sexual deviations,” categorized as a “sociopathic personality disturbance.” The 1952 *DSM* advises: “Individu-

als to be placed in this category are ill primarily in terms of society and of conformity with the prevailing cultural milieu, and not only in terms of personal discomfort and relations with other individuals.”⁴² In this early edition, psychiatrists seem to have recognized deviations as having more to do with social norms than with biological conditions. This was a progressive stance, but according to De Block and Adriaens, the writers of the *DSM* would grow increasingly interested in pursuing a theory-neutral or an atheoretical nomenclature with subsequent editions.⁴³ Indeed, John Noyes demonstrates that the 1980 *DSM-III* indicated that cases concerning disturbances between individuals and society must be understood as social problems and should not be grounds for diagnosis. Rather, the *DSM-III* was to focus on “behavioral, psychological, or biological dysfunction.”⁴⁴ Noyes is quick to point out that such distinctions break down once we recognize the political and cultural underpinnings of the *DSM*, including its reliance on and universalization of heteronormative ideals. The *DSM-IV* goes even farther in its distinction by drawing a line between “real” and “simulated” sadist and masochistic acts, failing to recognize the view established in psychoanalytic circles that understands masochism as aiming to unsettle precisely these boundaries. It would seem that the diagnosis is also an annihilation of the masochistic subject.

Although the term “sexual deviation” had long been the predominant and preferred term with the American Psychiatric Association (since 1952), the Library of Congress did not authorize it to replace “Sexual perversion” until 1972, by which point a growing body of literature supported the notion that sexual deviations are socially constructed. Although the Library of Congress trailed the American Psychiatric Association in its adoption of “deviation,” it was ahead of the APA in its removal of “Homosexuality” from that category. When the authorized heading changed from “Sexual perversion” to “Sexual deviation” in 1972, the Library of Congress also cancelled the inclusion of “Homosexuality,” placing it with the more general (or normal) sexual relations (see Figure 6). This preceded the removal of homosexuality as a sexual disorder in the *DSM* and in the *Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)* and resulted in part from the activism of gay and lesbian librarians. The Task Force on Gay Liberation of the American Library Association—the first gay and lesbian professional organization in the United States—was instrumental in changing the terms by which we access LGBTQ materials in libraries.⁴⁵

Barbara Gittings, the coordinator of the Task Force on Gay Liberation from 1972 until 1988, was a prominent lesbian activist whose testimony before the American Psychiatric Association with Frank Kameny contributed

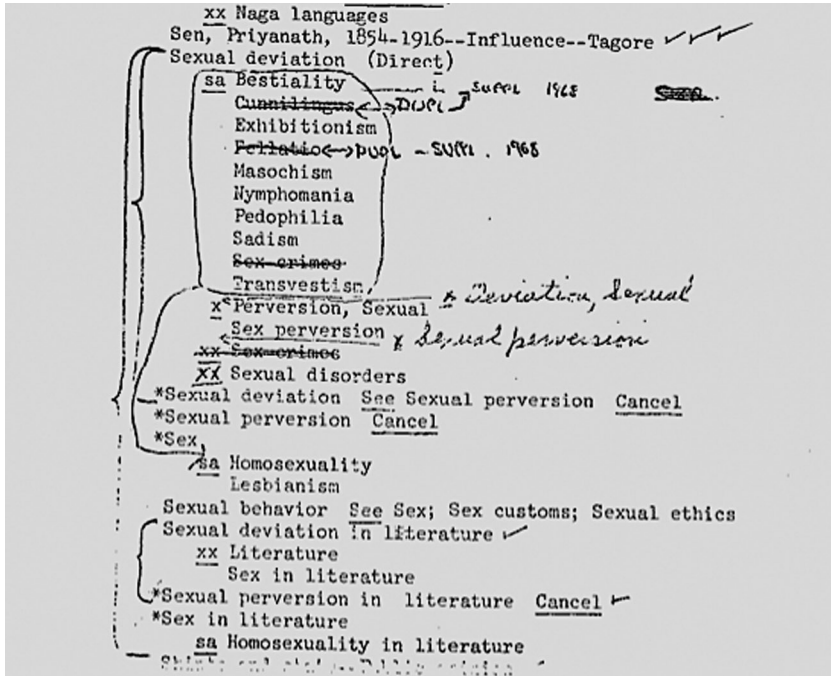


Figure 6. LCSH Weekly List, with handwritten changes to Sexual deviation and its cross-references, 1972. Source: American Library Association Papers, University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign, 31/48/5.

to the removal of homosexuality from the *DSM*. Although not a practicing librarian herself, Gittings believed that access to information and reading materials was vitally important for gays and lesbians and the movement. The Task Force on Gay Liberation successfully organized a number of campaigns, including one to improve subject headings and classifications, an annual Gay Book award (now called the Stonewall Book Awards), and annual releases of bibliographies of gay-positive titles to assist in library selection. Sanford Berman and the Task Force on Gay Liberation were extremely effective in eliciting changes in Library of Congress subject headings and classifications for materials on homosexuality in the 1970s and 1980s. Petitions signed by librarians and scholars were submitted to the Library of Congress to demand new headings in place of or in addition to existing headings. Not only were pathologizing links to sexual perversion eliminated, but new terms were also added to the vocabulary to provide access to materials that had formerly been rendered invisible or perverted by inadequate cataloging. Indeed, that activist work toward making gay

and lesbian literatures available and visible in American libraries is arguably one of the more significant and effective long-term projects in pulling LGBTQ materials out of the categories of perversion and deviation and into the hands of readers.⁴⁶

This movement among librarians was deeply tied into the larger push to remove homosexuality as a disorder from the *DSM*. Robert Spitzer, the APA psychiatrist who led the *DSM* revision project, was emphatic in his belief that a diagnosis depended on the definition of “disorder,” and he determined that, in order to be considered a mental disorder, a condition must cause “subjective distress or regularly be associated with some generalized impairment in social effectiveness or functioning.”⁴⁷ According to De Block and Adriaens, it was this definition of “social effectiveness or functioning” that would distinguish homosexuality from the other sexual deviations. They suggest that the retention of deviations other than homosexuality in the 1973 *DSM* was largely political, pointing out that even Spitzer was not convinced that all sexual deviations were mental disorders according to the distress and disability model.⁴⁸ However, the removal of homosexuality fit within the gay liberation agenda, which may have been compromised if other behaviors were accepted as normal. It was the political action of activists that motivated the removal of homosexuality, and with a lack of an equivalent movement lobbying for the removal of other deviations, the APA went to lengths to maintain the placement of the more general category “sexual deviations” in subsequent editions of the *DSM*.

While psychiatrists debated the meanings and diagnoses of disorder and deviation, library collections grew to reflect the expansion of sexuality studies to fields outside the medical and psychiatric disciplines, where normative ideas of sexuality were becoming highly contested. Looking to the broad spectrum of literatures assigned “Sexual perversion” and then “Sexual deviation” in the 1970s, we witness a decline in the pathologization of sexual deviations as well as a decrease in the number of books on homosexuality assigned to the category. But we also find that it is increasingly difficult to find common threads among the books, as those written by psychiatrists were primarily concerned with sex offenders, a number of books offer historical and literary accounts of sexual deviations, and others provided social analyses of sexuality. Corresponding to the diminished pathologization of homosexuality was the advancement of other perspectives, particularly that of sociologists, who promoted Howard Becker’s and Erving Goffman’s theories of deviance and increasingly distanced themselves from making ethical judgments. This served to legitimize a wider range of perspectives on sexual variance by bringing more voices from

and to different areas of the academy and the public. Vern Bullough stated that historians had been silent until the 1970s, and he argued, "A major obstacle to understanding our own sexuality is realizing we are prisoners of past societal attitudes toward sex. . . . I have accepted the notion that no form of sexuality is against nature, and although I find some expressions of sexuality more distasteful than others, I have tried to avoid condemnation."⁴⁹ Some of the texts written at the beginning of this shift, like those by Bullough, published in the mid-1970s, discuss homosexuality at length as part of an argument to remove it from the stigmatized position of sexual deviation.

By this time, library activists had also gained visibility. Sanford Berman had built an extensive network of librarians who petitioned the Library of Congress to revise its biased headings, including those for gay and lesbian topics. Having already persuaded the Library of Congress to change "Sexual perversion" to "Sexual deviation," it was around this time, in 1975, that the American Library Association and the Library of Congress issued the statement that advocated creating headings in terms that groups or communities prefer for themselves. At least in part as a result of Berman's massive petitioning efforts, which included headings for a huge range of marginalized and excluded subjects, the Library of Congress formed the Subject Authority Cooperative Organization (SACO) in the 1990s, allowing librarians to propose new headings if they can demonstrate that the terms do appear as main topics in published literature. Participating librarians submit formal proposals for new headings and classes, which then go to a Library of Congress committee for approval. SACO currently includes over eight hundred institutional members and has contributed thousands of new headings and classifications since its inception. As of 2015, over 63,000 new headings, 14,800 heading changes, and 26,600 new class numbers have been authorized through the SACO program.⁵⁰ Today the vocabulary includes hundreds of terms for subjects that (had they been written about) would have formerly been subsumed under the broad heading "Sexual perversion." For instance:

- Lesbian nuns
- Lesbian mothers
- Lesbian motorcyclists
- Lesbian rabbis
- Lesbian students
- Lesbian libraries
- Lesbians, Italian American

Lesbians on postage stamps
 Lesbian photographers
 Lesbian physical education teachers
 Lesbian police officers . . .

. . . You get the idea. Since around 1990 we have witnessed a huge increase of headings for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender subjects. “Paraphilias” seems not to have been affected by these developments, however, nor have the relations among categories like sadism and masochism to paraphilias been challenged. Even as libraries have become havens for some LGBTQ subjects and patrons, certain topics remain to this day under the broad pathologizing (and potentially obliterating) category of “paraphilias.”

Authorizing “Paraphilias”

The American Psychiatric Association, in keeping with its scientific, theory-neutral approach, introduced the term “paraphilias” in the 1980 *DSM-III* to replace “sexual deviations,” arguing that “it correctly emphasizes that the deviation (para) is in that to which the individual is attracted (philia).” Such a description focuses on the sexual object rather than the sexual aim, indicating the position of the APA, which also defines “paraphilias” on the basis “that unusual or bizarre imagery or acts are necessary for sexual excitement,” with “sexual objects or situations that are not part of normative arousal-activity patterns and that in varying degrees may interfere with the capacity for reciprocal affectionate sexual activity.”⁵¹

John Money was a key figure in the revival of the term “paraphilias,” bringing it into common practice among psychiatrists.⁵² Money promoted the use of the word on the basis that it best represents the biomedical nature of sexual abnormality. Comparing it to other terms and their uses, he wrote, “Kinky and bizarre are the popular words for paraphilic sexual fantasies and practices. Legally, they are called perverted and deviant.”⁵³ Motivated by his belief that paraphilias—particularly those sexual activities that cause harm to others—can be understood and treated through science, as well as by his interest in the “sexual rights” of humans, Money wrote a popular text to support the identification and treatment of paraphilias. Following the course of previous influential sexologists, Money created an elaborate classification, assigning forty paraphilias to one of six categories: “sacrificial/expiator; marauding/predatory; mercantile/venal; fetishistic/talismanic; stigmatic/eligibilic; and sollicitational/allurative.”⁵⁴ Particularly in the 1980s, Money published widely on the topic of paraphilias

in professional journals, popular literature, and reference texts. The term took hold among psychiatrists but has yet to become part of the vernacular of the general public.

Again, as Freud had similarly asserted, the APA recognized that paraphilias could play a part in a healthy relationship, and so what distinguished a disordered behavior from an acceptable one “was its exclusivity and/or repetitiveness in arousing sexual excitement.” Indeed, the “DSM-III seemed to follow Freud’s characterization of the paraphilias here, thereby ignoring its very own definition of mental disorder, which it *did* use to legitimize the removal of homosexuality.”⁵⁵ The diagnosis had to do with the belief that the paraphilias impair people’s ability to have normal, loving, reciprocal relationships with others, whether or not the individuals regard themselves as ill or distressed. This almost disarmingly recalls Stekel’s view that homosexuals and other perverse individuals were incapable of love. What’s more, John Noyes observes that the *DSM-III*’s definition of sexual masochism is inherently heteronormative, as it describes dysfunction in biological terms or in a refusal to seek pleasure in the reproductive act itself.⁵⁶ The APA repeatedly revisited certain distinctions, puzzling over questions concerning the boundaries between criminality and illness, with some of these determinations falling along lines of perversion and perversity, fantasy and acting on fantasy, and cultural situations.⁵⁷

Although the Library of Congress did not directly cite the *DSM* as a source for literary warrant when it authorized “Paraphilias” in 2007, it did use other encyclopedic texts in psychiatry. It would have been from the fourth edition of the *DSM* that these other sources (and by extension, the Library of Congress) would have drawn their definitions. It is worth quoting the *DSM* here for its definition of the term:

The Paraphilias are characterized by recurrent, intense sexual urges, fantasies, or behaviors that involve unusual objects, activities, or situations and cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. The Paraphilias include Exhibitionism, Fetishism, Frotteurism, Pedophilia, Sexual Masochism, Sexual Sadism, Transvestic Fetishism, Voyeurism, and Paraphilia Not Otherwise Specified.⁵⁸

According to a lead cataloger at the Library of Congress, the 2007 heading change was intended to “reflect contemporary medical and psychological thinking and usage.”⁵⁹ In light of the psychiatric community’s ongoing disagreement on the meanings of “deviation” and “paraphilias,” however,

the LoC's simultaneous deference to the psychiatric literature and claim to authority over knowledge is particularly fraught.

A reading of all of the works held by the Library of Congress and assigned this heading from 2007 to the present reveals that, although it may reflect current *psychiatric* usage, it does not at all represent usage in the majority of texts whose catalog records bear this name.⁶⁰ By deferring to the psychiatric literature as the authority and by medicalizing nonnormative sexualities, it seems that the Library of Congress has effectively made it much harder to find information on this topic, committing the act of “bibliocide”—a term Sanford Berman assigned to practices that annihilate material through poor cataloging. While librarians and the authority record state that this term is preferred because it is neutral, the truth is that the term is anything but, as it is a term authorized by the *DSM*, which pathologizes certain sexual behaviors. Indeed, Dean Spade calls for an examination of “systems that administer life chances through purportedly ‘neutral’ criteria, understanding that those systems are often locations where racist, sexist, homophobic, ableist, xenophobic, and transphobic outcomes are produced.”⁶¹ One might speculate that the neutrality here derives from the fact that people aren't familiar with this term and therefore it is rendered meaningless. If this is true, then it is a clear case of censorship by cataloging, which, according to Berman, is pervasive in libraries. He suggests that sex is one of the most highly censored subjects, “particularly if it's in the form of photos or film or deals with beyond-the-pale topics like anal intercourse or S&M.”⁶² Among these techniques is the “inadequate, if not outright erroneous cataloging, as well as restrictive shelving practices, rendering much material inaccessible even though it is in the collection.”⁶³ Relatedly, the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom stated in a white paper, “we must conclude that the interpretation of the Paraphilias criteria has been politically—not scientifically—based.”⁶⁴ The striking lack of materials on these subjects on mainstream library shelves observed by Berman may be both reflective and productive of this silence.⁶⁵ It is true that relatively few contemporary library books touch on these subjects with a nonclinical or popular approach, despite suggestions that such materials should be collected and made accessible in public libraries for those who are curious or need to know safe practices, without confronting shaming techniques.⁶⁶

The fifth and most recent edition of the *DSM* (2013) again revised its stance, this time by distinguishing between “paraphilias” and “paraphilic disorders.” Now a person can act on or fantasize about nonnormative

objects without being disordered. Additionally, the paraphilias have been moved out of the section on “Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders” to their own section. To be considered a disorder, the paraphilia must be one “that causes distress or impairment to the individual or harm to others.”⁶⁷ The current method of diagnosis is complicated: There is, first, the identification of a paraphilic activity or object choice, and, second, there is the determination of whether there is harm to the individual or others. These two criteria vary in language depending upon the paraphilia in question, but the example of sexual sadism disorder illustrates the logic and course of diagnosis:

- A. Over a period of at least 6 months, recurrent and intense sexual arousal from the physical or psychological suffering of another person, as manifested by fantasies, urges, or behaviors.
- B. The individual has acted on these sexual urges with a nonconsenting person, or the sexual urges or fantasies cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

For a diagnosis to be administered, both criteria must be met. Therefore, the person can be a sexual sadist without being disordered if the activities and fantasies are not causing distress and are carried out with consenting adults.⁶⁸ Although the distinction between disordered and nondisordered (normal?) paraphilias is widely regarded as progress, many view the existence of the diagnosis at all to be a problem, particularly for its reliance on repronormative and heteronormative frames. In agreement with Noyes’s assessment of previous editions of the *DSM*, Lisa Downing maintains that the fifth edition continues to privilege heterosexuality and reproductive sex: “The logic subtending the pathologization of ‘paraphilic disorders’ remains consistent with that underlying the ‘paraphilias’ in earlier editions of the Manual.”⁶⁹ Indeed, the current model still sorts normal and abnormal subjects, and arguably, a person’s diagnosis may be based in institutional logics that produce and measure “disorder” and “harm.”

Certainly, all of this should carry new meaning into library catalogs, which presently do not distinguish between nonpathological and pathological paraphilias. Over the ten years since the Library of Congress adopted the term, it has already taken on new meaning, rendering the heading differently inaccurate, even according to the psychiatric community. As we will see in the next chapter, the arrangement of paraphilias on the shelves is one that places texts on sex crimes and consensual kinky sex in the same space.

The normalizing effects of the medical professions are at work in the Library of Congress collection and catalog, as they seem to have great influence on subject authorization and knowledge organization. Although “paraphilias” is intelligible to psychiatrists and may be useful for them in finding materials, the term is rarely used by other disciplines. However, the works assigned this heading tend to be aimed at a multidisciplinary audience, and these books are held by a wide variety of libraries—not just medical libraries. It is particularly curious that the Library of Congress would choose a highly medicalized term for a subject that serves a general audience, including literary scholars, social scientists, and the general public, given that the United States has a National Library of Medicine that serves the psychiatric community and has its own controlled vocabulary.

The Perversely Presentist Catalog

Taxonomic discourses for sexual practices and identities are constantly changing, expanding, reappropriating, offending, and refusing to be pinned down, presenting a challenge for the Library of Congress, which strives to describe its literature in contemporary terms. The goal of fitting phenomena neatly into categories for information retrieval is in direct conflict with the elusive, expansive, and shifting nature of perversion—and, for that matter, all of sexuality. While granting that it would be impossible for a library catalog to get at the complexities and nuances of texts on sex and sexuality, I would argue that the reduction of literatures on nonnormative sexual expressions to “Paraphilias” is loaded with problems derived from disciplinary norms and assumptions. Moreover, the effects of assigning this name are to render some texts invisible to their potential readers and to render other texts perverse—even as they themselves reject such a label—not to mention that a majority of works are caught by the trappings of time. What we have is a motley mix of texts from different eras and perspectives all brought together under this heading.

Presentism is a persistent historiographical dilemma for anyone trying to explain the past by using current terminologies that did not exist or have significantly changed in meaning since the period under investigation. Historians of sexuality are keenly aware of the changing nature of taxonomies and the inherent struggles in understanding past sexual practices, identities, and concepts in the context of the present and conveying them in intelligible terms. The work of sexuality scholars depends on and contributes to the study of how categories have emerged, expanded, disappeared, and changed over time as well as how these categories have been

explained and defined in terms of identities, behaviors, conditions, and difference.

“Perverse presentism,” as proposed by J. Halberstam, is a methodology that attempts to account for and overcome the problems of presentism by denaturalizing the present as a point toward which all of history is moving and improving and applying “what we do not know in the present to what we cannot know about the past.”⁷⁰ Using present-day terms and definitions to describe the past greatly oversimplifies and distorts the historical record. When speaking of subjects in sexuality studies, it may inaccurately or unfairly render certain acts and identities as essentially perverse, carrying pathological connotations derived from psychiatry. However, an awareness of the limitations of language and the capacity to know the present and the past, as well as efforts to learn about the past in its own terms, expands the opportunities to interpret the historical record. Halberstam uses this methodology to study nineteenth- and early twentieth-century same-sex desire among women, taking care not to use “lesbian” as a blanket term to describe women who desired women during an era when “lesbian” did not exist. Halberstam argues that considering women who desired women as lesbians or protolesbians erases their histories and the specificities of such identities and activities as tribades, female husbands, and a whole range of expressions.

At stake in the case of “Paraphilias” is not only whether the term is useful or intelligible today but also the kind of descriptive power it carries with regard to older works. In both senses, the perversion of meaning carries implications for access to texts across space and time as well as the broader disciplinary effects on knowledge about sexuality. One could certainly argue that the catalog should retain certain associations of the era in which a text was produced. Situating older texts on homosexuality with texts on perversion would maintain a degree of historical integrity. But things get very interesting and mixed up when we see a variety of time periods intermingled in the catalog under a single term. The use of the term “paraphilias,” which carries historically and culturally specific denotations and connotations, erases the prevailing attitudes and beliefs of previous eras by imposing new definitions and terms on past meanings. We know that homosexuality was considered a perversion or deviation for most of the twentieth century, so it is unsurprising to find such terms used to describe works that promoted such points of view. But something is seriously altered and confused when an automatic replacement occurs in bibliographic records, applying the new term “paraphilias” for such varied works as *Sexual Feeling in Woman* (1930), *Venus Castina: Famous Female Im-*

personators, *Celestial and Human* (1928), *The Invert and His Social Adjustment* (1929), *Sex Variant Women in Literature* (1956), *The Case Against Pornography* (1972), and *The Erotic Minorities*.

Exceeding "Paraphilias"

The remainder of the chapter is devoted to highlighting a handful of cases for which the assignment of "Paraphilias" fails to apply. It might be thought of as a very abridged catalog of works that are underserved by this heading. Much is left unaccounted for, but the cases presented below stand out as some of the most remarkable.

ANOMALY

While most late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century sexologists were intent on diagnosing, classifying, and treating various behaviors and desires, there were some scientists, as well as humanists and "laypeople," who objected to the idea that inversion, homosexuality, and transvestism should be considered perversions.⁷¹ These voices have been persistently ignored by library catalogers, and to this day, catalog records for their works carry a stigmatizing notion of perversion, but now in a vocabulary that would have been completely foreign to these authors. The voices that opposed the pathologizing explanations tended to identify as inverts or transvestites themselves and often wrote as advocates, as in the case of *The Invert, and His Social Adjustment*, written under the pseudonym Anomaly in 1929. Such texts tried to advance an understanding of their experience as human beings rather than as patients or case studies, and they served as a means of resistance to dominant authorized discourses. Anomaly was well aware of his position and justified his own merits in his second chapter, entitled "By What Authority":

It is my wish to outline briefly some of the social factors of inversion which, naturally enough, are not dealt with by those whose interest lies in the symptoms of neurosis. My views will suffer discount because of the "the phenomenon known to psychologists as 'rationalization,' especially the so-called 'defence reaction'" . . . Critical readers will ask by what authority I presume to offer advice on a subject which has been dealt with, in many of its aspects at least, by men of eminence whose names carry the weight of scholastic approval. . . . I make no apology for concentrating on the personal note, for what value this book may

have will lie in the fact that its based on personal experience and first-hand knowledge.⁷²

Texts like *Anomaly's* provide critical evidence of the human suffering that came at the hands of medical professionals, and they offered practical advice for others who might share similar experiences or may want to learn about those who do. That books written from the personal experiences of homosexuals and inverts rank among those most widely held in American libraries, as this one does, suggests that a significant number of libraries held books that represented the voices of those who would be diagnosed alongside the medical texts doing the diagnosing.⁷³ It does seem that the Library of Congress disregarded their language from the start by choosing sexological/medical terminologies for subject headings, even when inverts, homosexuals, and transvestites clearly didn't accept the label "sexual perversion." This means that, from the earliest headings, the Library of Congress engaged in the disciplining of nonnormative sexualities. What's more, the term "Paraphilias" was not in use when this text was written, so the application of the recently adopted, highly medicalized term grossly distorts the meaning and accessibility of the work.

LESBIANS

"Lesbians" was added as a Library of Congress Subject Heading in a 1974–1976 supplement, indicating that the LoC finally recognized lesbians as people. Prior to that the LoC only named a condition with the heading "Lesbianism," which was authorized in 1956. Before 1956, anything about lesbians would have been found by looking for the heading "Sexual perversion," or if it was published between 1946 and 1956, it might have been assigned "Homosexuality."

In contrast to the medical texts of her day, Katharine Bement Davis wrote about marital hygiene from a less clinical standpoint, arguing for rational sex education, women's sexual rights, and access to safe contraception. Davis belonged to a minority of scientists who "saw single women, including lesbians, as key sources of information for determining what made women happy."⁷⁴ Davis's study began in 1920 (the same year as ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment) in the wake of key historical developments and shifts, including women entering the paid workforce and obtaining college educations, lower birth rates, increasing divorce rates, and the promotion of women's rights.

Studies like Davis's initiated the sociological analysis of sexuality, considering individual traits and behaviors through empirical methods and

statistical analysis to find variance. Such methods contrasted with clinical models that studied “abnormal” individuals based on assumptions about what constitutes “normal.” Davis studied the “normal” woman because she felt that sex, other than in its pathologized forms, was an unexplored science, but she defined “normal” as a woman who was “capable of adjusting satisfactorily to her social group”; same-sex desire among these women was not uncommon.⁷⁵ Davis conceptualized lesbianism as a continuum of variations and believed it was much more common than previous sexologists thought. For example, among her findings were the following: Half of the unmarried women experienced intense emotional relations with other women, and over one-quarter said that a relationship was “carried to the point of overt homosexual expression.”⁷⁶ Davis concluded that sexual satisfaction depended on knowledge and was an important factor in the well-being of normal women.

Given that the study intentionally sought out “normal” subjects to gain an understanding of healthy marriage, it is curious that the 1929 edition of the published account, *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-Two Hundred Women*, was assigned the heading “Sexual perversion” and today retains the updated form “Paraphilias” in the Library of Congress catalog. The other headings, “Women—Health and hygiene” and “Marriage,” in their overgeneralizations are only marginally descriptive of the contents of this text.⁷⁷ Interestingly, the more general “Sex” was not applied. The author herself did not consider these women’s actions to be generally perverse, but clearly a cataloger did, and this attitude continues to be reproduced and modernized by cataloging technologies.

Thirty years later, Jeanette Howard Foster published *Sex Variant Women in Literature*, the catalog record for which is displayed in Figure 7. The pathbreaking guide to lesbian references in literature (written by a Kinsey Institute librarian) was originally assigned “Sexual perversion in literature” because it was published ahead of the authorization of the headings “Lesbians” or “Lesbianism” or “Lesbians in literature.”⁷⁸ Those terms would also have been subsumed under the broad “Sexual perversion” at that time.

In fact, there are no words for lesbians or homosexuals anywhere in this record.⁷⁹ Later editions of the book are cataloged with more “appropriate” headings, including “Lesbians in literature.” Even this might be a case of perverse presentism, though, according to Halberstam, as the Foster book discusses same-sex desire among women from its earliest appearance in literature to Foster’s present. Additionally, Foster’s use of “sex-variant” is ignored. In a similar vein, *Diana: A Strange Autobiography*, a memoir published under a pseudonym in 1939, is also currently assigned

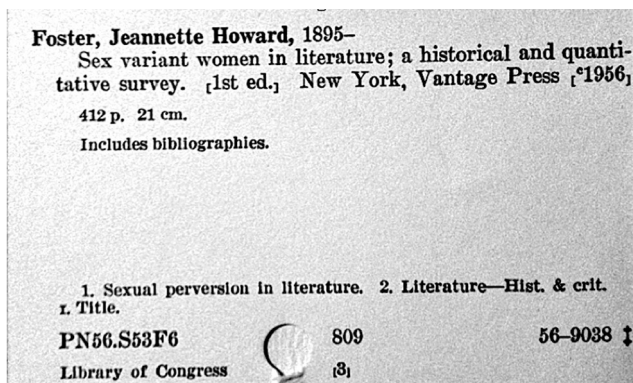


Figure 7. Catalog card for *Sex Variant Women in Literature*, obtained from University of Wisconsin–Madison Libraries.

“Paraphilias,” as is Marion Zimmer Bradley’s 1960 *Checklist: A Complete, Cumulative Checklist of Lesbian, Variant, and Homosexual Fiction, in English, or Available in English Translation, with Supplements of Related Material, for the Use of Collectors, Students, and Librarians*.⁸⁰

SEXUAL DEVIATION/DEVIANCE

Leading up to the change from “Sexual perversion” to “Sexual deviation,” attitudes about sexual deviations had shifted quite dramatically, particularly in the years after World War II, and the literature reflects this change. For instance, one of the more widely held books cataloged with “Paraphilias” in U.S. libraries, Frank S. Caprio and Louis S. London’s *Sexual Deviations*, is almost entirely about homosexuality and intended for a general audience. Published in 1950, the authors followed the contemporary approach to studying sexual perversion (again, primarily homosexuality) as illness. As the book was written with the belief that marital troubles stem from misinformation and a need for laypeople to know the “sexual deviate” to prevent sexual perversion, the frontmatter reads, “The prevalent lack of understanding toward sexual problems—coupled with the growing public concern over sex crimes—make this book an invaluable guide to the layman.” Although the Library of Congress acquired and cataloged the book after “Homosexuality” was approved as a subject heading, catalogers did not see fit to assign the term to this book. In fact, the bibliographic record does not include any reference to homosexuality, even as a keyword. It was simply given the heading “Sexual perversion,” and the full suite of disci-

plinary apparatuses discussed in the present study was enacted on this text: It was shelved with books on perversion in HQ71, and at some point it was locked away in the postwar Delta Collection.

Alternatively, deriving from symbolic interactionism theory in sociology, the edited volume *Sexual Deviance*, published in 1967, states that deviance is determined by social practices. Gayle Rubin regards the book as a landmark in shifting the way we study sexuality.⁸¹ Its editors, John Gagnon and William Simon, trained at the University of Chicago and hired by the Kinsey Institute, “virtually reinvented sex research as social science,” reframing homosexuality as normal and ordinary and challenging heteronormative assumptions that led to the pathologization of homosexuality.⁸² According to the editors, interactions of institutionalized norms that produce definitions of “normal” and “deviance” should be understood in terms of social structure, social situation, and the character of the actors:

A form of behavior becomes deviant when it is defined as violating the norms of some collectivity. Usually, the collectivities that are relevant are those formally empowered to sanction deviant behavior in general, though for certain forms of sexual behavior only informal and covert sanctions are applied by selected collectivities. . . . Deviance exists in social systems as a necessary complement to conformity . . . to speak of one is to imply the other.⁸³

Still, as with the 1950 example, what is key to our understanding of cataloging practices is the complete absence of terms in the catalog record referring to the actual topics covered in this text: homosexuality and prostitution. In this later case the authors interrogate the inclusion of these two categories within the broader category of sexual deviance by studying the role of norms within “deviant” communities. Nevertheless, the original bibliographic record was assigned only “Sexual perversion” as a heading, and there are no terms referring to homosexuality or prostitution that might turn the record up in a keyword search. Such an absence is striking, given that both concepts were well established in LCSH at the time this book was cataloged. It may be because of a lack of effort, or it could have been an instance of active bibliographic censorship. Perhaps the oversight could be explained as a case of inadequate expertise of the cataloger, who may have simply read the title, *Sexual Deviance*, and applied “Sexual perversion” as a heading (publication of the book preceded the subject heading’s change to “Sexual deviation” by a few years). If the cataloger had turned to the introduction and table of contents, however, she would have seen that the book gives an overview of theories of sexual

deviance and then applies these specifically to homosexuality and prostitution. She might have surmised that the authors were in fact distancing the work from the psychiatric profession and its terms.

One observes a related problem in the record for the Swedish psychiatrist Lars Ullerstam's *The Erotic Minorities*. When published in English in 1966, the book was assigned "Sexual perversion." In *The Erotic Minorities*, however, far from pathologizing behaviors, the author of the book advocates a greater appreciation for sexual deviance, condoning and at times celebrating acts that fall under the category of perversions: "Should we not rejoice," he writes, "that we have been provided with various potentialities for the experience of joy, and help each other to achieve it in our various ways, even if these should happen to be of a sexual nature?"⁸⁴ In fact, the author explicitly states that "perversion" is a "poison label," and he advocates for social policy that allows a wide range of sexually deviant behaviors. Writing in Sweden, the author found homosexuals to be in an enviable position, with clubs and leniency in law and society. He wanted to see similar accommodations for people with deviant desires and inclinations, such as bestiality, fetichisms of various sorts, paying for sex, and pornography.

Overwhelmingly, authors writing in the 1960s and 1970s used the term "perversion" only in a historical or critical sense. Extremely few works include the word "paraphilias," and that term occurred nowhere in the social sciences and humanities literatures. A number of the texts avoid using terms "deviation" or "perversion" altogether, or like James Henslin, they may redefine or clarify "deviance." He writes in his *Deviant Lifestyles*, "my use of the word deviant to modify lifestyle does not mean bad, sick, perverse, or even undesirable. . . . These terms simply mean nonnormative or departing from generalized expectations, often in such a way that negative sanctions are the typical result."⁸⁵ These texts ushered in studies of the social construction of gender and sexuality and preceded Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, which, incidentally, is given the single subject heading "Sex customs—History."

"PARAPHILIAS IN LITERATURE"

One of the more blatantly spoken-over fields is literature and literary studies, with the heading "Paraphilias in literature." This is perhaps the most absurd of all the cases, as the heading medicalizes the literary study of sexual perversion and annuls the literary voice as well as temporal and spatial dimensions. Literary scholars simply don't include the term "Paraphilias"

in their texts. Book titles include *The Sodomasochistic Homotext: Readings in Sade, Balzac, and Proust*, *Ovidian Myth and Sexual Deviance in Early Modern English Literature*, and Jonathan Dollimore's core text, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault*. The very idea of condensing a work of literature into its "aboutness" or its critique into a few terms chosen from a vocabulary authorized by a national authority is laughable.

DRAG

The heading "Sexual perversion" had been associated with the narrower and related terms "Exhibitionism," "Homosexuality," "Lesbianism," "Masochism," "Nymphomania," "Sadism," "Sex crimes," and "Transvestism."⁸⁶ When "Sexual perversion" changed to "Sexual deviation" in LCSH in 1972, all cross-references, except for one to the related "Sexual disorders," were eliminated, but apart from "Homosexuality" and "Lesbians," most of these and other headings would slowly reappear as cross-references in subsequent editions. "Transvestism" was the first of the sexual behaviors or phenomena to reenter the hierarchy under "Sexual deviation" in 1980, along with "Sexual disorders." "Transvestism" was also associated with "Impersonators, Female," a heading whose 1988 scope note indicated: "Here are entered works on men impersonating women. Works on women impersonating men are entered under the heading Impersonators, Male. Works on impersonation of the opposite sex as a manifestation of sexual perversion are entered under the heading Transvestism."⁸⁷ "Transvestism" first appeared as a subject heading in 1948 (decades after the Library of Congress acquired Magnus Hirschfeld's 1910 *Die Transvestism*), and "Transvestites" was added in 1989.⁸⁸ Because the terms "transvestism" and "transvestite" have become identified with the language of psychopathology, many people who cross-dress have come to prefer terms other than "transvestism." Indeed, the Library of Congress still links "Transvestism" (but not "Transvestites") as a narrower term under "Psychosexual disorders."

Even in recent years the Library of Congress has continued to resist honoring requested changes to "Transvestites" and related headings.⁸⁹ Sanford Berman proposed the heading "Drag queens" on August 24, 2005, and other librarians followed suit, including staff at the Tretter Collection in GLBT Studies at the University of Minnesota. In a 2006 letter to Berman, Barbara Tillett expressed that "Drag queens" was among the headings the Library of Congress was evaluating for approval.⁹⁰ Berman was pleasantly surprised that this was under consideration, noting that previously Tillett "unequivocally stated that 'The term 'drag queens' is an

upward see reference to “Transvestites,” which we continue to feel is appropriate.”⁹¹ Berman seemed to find it curious that Tillett so quickly had a change of heart. Whether she truly did have a change of heart remains unknown; “Drag queens” was not authorized in 2006 and has not been adopted as of this writing.⁹²

In the years since the Berman/Tillett correspondence, very little has changed. “Transvestites” is still the preferred term for cross-dressers, “Female impersonators” remains the preferred term for “Drag queens,” and “Male impersonators” is used in place of “Drag kings.” The Library of Congress now distinguishes between female/male impersonators and transvestism based on whether the act of dressing in the manner of the opposite sex is for entertainment or for psychological gratification. The scope note for “Female impersonators” reads: “Here are entered works on men who impersonate women, generally for purposes of entertainment or comic effect.” “Transvestism” and “Transvestites” have identical scope notes: “Here are entered works on the practice, especially of males, of assuming the dress and manner of the opposite sex for psychological gratification.”

Although “Transvestites” is no longer a narrower term under “Paraphilias,” and “Female impersonators” never was, the 1934 edition of *Venus Castina* is currently assigned “Paraphilias” as the sole heading in the Library of Congress catalog. The inclusion of “Paraphilias” in that record reveals that the prevailing attitude toward the type of female impersonation written about in *Venus Castina* was that it was a perversion, but again, it comes through in anachronistic language. Perhaps ironically, the record for the earlier 1928 edition includes only the heading “Female impersonators.” And so, while the refusal of the Library of Congress to adopt “drag” is troubling, in the case of *Venus Castina*, the term “Female impersonators” is arguably more suitable, as it is more appropriate for the time period. The term appeared in the book and in other literature of the period.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY—REINVENTING “PERVERSION”

Applications of “Paraphilias” after the heading was authorized in 2007 reveal another set of problems. The book description for the 2011 *Part-Time Perverts: Sex, Pop Culture, and Kink Management* explicitly states what the author sets out to do, which is to distance herself from the psychiatric community and talk about kink and alternative sexualities in nonpathologizing language.⁹³ The author even proposes a new way of classifying “perversion management”:

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. Our involvement, Dr. Lauren Rosewarne contends, is universal, but our management strategies cover a spectrum of behavioral possibilities from total repression to total immersion. It is those strategies that she examines here. Drawing on her own experience, as well 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, and charts the diverse strategies we use to manage, and perhaps enjoy, exposure.⁹⁴

Rosewarne's book is woefully undercataloged, with only the headings "Paraphilias" and "Sex customs." There is nothing about feminist critique or popular culture. Fortunately, the title provides key terms that are likely to be found by a patron conducting a keyword search.

Similarly, the subject headings for the book *The Other Side of Desire*, written by Daniel Bergner, are "Paraphilias—Case studies" and "Compulsive behavior—Case studies." Nothing in this record indicates what the book is truly about: It is a collection of case studies about foot fetishism, acrotomophilia (sexual interest in amputees), sadism, and a man's desire for his stepdaughter. Its pairing of "Compulsive behavior" with "Paraphilias" resembles the association of "Sexual perversion" and "Neuroses" in the record for the much earlier Stekel text.

Interestingly, this title is held by more public libraries than academic libraries, with the total number of holdings in the United States exceeding four hundred. Perhaps this signals a shift in public librarians' collection development policies and attitudes as well as a broader societal curiosity about perversion. In her review of the book, Lori Gottlieb tells readers that it altered her frame of mind, causing her to question her own beliefs about perversion.

After reading Daniel Bergner's unsettling but riveting new book, *The Other Side of Desire*, I'm no longer sure where normal ends and abnormal begins. Take the people Bergner, a contributing writer for *The New York Times Magazine*, introduces us to: a devoted husband with a foot fetish, a fashion maven who's a sadist, a man who becomes sexually

attracted to his young stepdaughter (Woody Allen, anyone?) and an advertising executive who lusts after amputees.

Are all of them deviant? None of them? Or is deviance a matter of time and place, the way that a century ago, fellatio and cunnilingus were regarded as perversions in some psychoanalytic circles? I'll ruin the ending for you right now: these questions are unanswerable, but that's precisely what makes the asking so engrossing.⁹⁵

This reviewer recognizes precisely the issues brought forth by my study, but unfortunately, libraries are not supplying this type of information to their patrons. Rather, the book is effectively hidden by undercataloging and by the use of a term by which few public library patrons are likely to search. If they do locate it by way of the catalog, they receive the pathologizing message carried by the headings. Other recently published titles that might be said to defend or explain "perversion" are Jesse Bering's *Perv: The Sexual Deviant in All of Us* (2013) and James Penney's *World of Perversion: Psychoanalysis and the Impossible Absolute of Desire* (2006). I have already mentioned Roudinesco's critique of "paraphilias" and the application of the term to her book *Our Dark Side: A History of Perversion*. Perhaps the question is, then, whether the Library of Congress should readopt "perversion" to describe and reflect these perversion-positive texts as well as all of the others—particularly in the humanities—that use this term. Or as I will suggest in Chapter 5, perhaps there is something to be said for the inscrutability of perversion within the normalizing hierarchies of the Library of Congress's classificatory systems.