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Rainbow Flags and Donor Tags: Queer Materials at the Pride Library

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Author

Cooper, Danielle Miriam

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In insisting on the value of apparently marginal or ephemeral materials, the collectors of gay and lesbian archives propose that affects – associated with nostalgia, personal memory, fantasy and trauma – make a document significant. (Cvetkovich, 2003, p. 243)

Located in a small corner of the D. B. Weldon Library at Western University in London, Ontario, Canada, the Pride Library provides access to materials by and about the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community. Although the Pride Library is housed within D. B. Weldon and the library materials circulate through Western University's online library catalogue, the Pride Library maintains independence through a separate mandate from the Western University library system, volunteer-based staffing structure and primarily private financial and material donation funding structure.¹ The Pride Library's status as a near-autonomous, LGBTQ-focused information organization reflects the organization's queer orientation to library services, including a striking, LGBTQ-themed aesthetic throughout the space, emphasis on community building, and the collection of information materials relevant to the LGBTQ community in London, Ontario. The Pride Library approach to information services provides a case study for how unique LGBTQ community information needs can be incorporated into academic library contexts.

Based on ethnographic research conducted at the Pride Library between January and April 2011, this paper explores findings pertaining to library's approach to materials, including object care and organization, acquisitions policies, and donor relationships. In the following article, I present a literature review on LGBT information issues and queer theory, a description of my research methods and setting, and report on my findings relating to the Pride Library's materials, donor policies, and donor relations. My findings demonstrate that the Pride Library not only treats its materials as informational containers, but also as aesthetic, symbolic, and affective artifacts. As the opening quote from Ann Cvetkovich (2003) reflects, the marginal status of queer communities, and by extension, the marginal status of the materials affiliated with their activities, leads to highly ephemeral and affective queer information collecting strategies such as collecting objects and privileging the documents of "everyday" or "regular" people as opposed to famous figures. Following the archival turn in queer theory and cultural studies from the past decade has explored the queer and often affective dimension to LGBTQ information organization; however, these works primarily focus on LGBTQ archives and "archives" in a more metaphorical sense (cf. Cvetkovich 2003; Halberstam 2005; Halberstam 2011). The Pride Library

¹ The Pride Library's official mandate can be found on the Pride Library website, see "Primary Sources" in References section of this article for a full citation.

case study, therefore, demonstrates the existence and viability of distinctly queer library practices.

Literature Review

In contrast to the Pride Library case study which represents a grassroots, community-driven approach to LGBT information needs and activities, pre-existing literature on LGBTQ information issues in Library and Information Science (LIS) focuses on exclusively professional and institutional contexts and more individualized LGBTQ information behavior. Professional recognition of LGBTQ information issues traces back to the social justice movement in librarianship, most notably the creation of the American Library Association's (ALA) Social Responsibilities Roundtable (SRRT) and affiliate group, the Task Force on Gay Liberation. Founded in 1970, the task force was the first professional association for gays and lesbians (Rayman, 2013).

During the early 1970s, librarians also produced pioneering works critiquing professional and institutional library practices utilizing social justice frameworks that often included anti-homophobic components. For example, Sanford Berman's (1971) *Prejudices and Antipathies* examined bias in the Library of Congress subject headings towards social groups based on various attributes including race, class, gender and sexuality. Similarly, Celeste West and Elizabeth Katz's (1972) essay collection *Revolting Librarians* (1972) included a chapter by Bianca Guttag addressing homophobia in LIS education. These works, therefore, included LGBT information needs and issues within the larger spectrum of librarianship and social justice.

More recent LIS works addressing LGBTQ issues continue the discursive legacy addressing how professional and institutional library practice relates to LGBTQ information needs. For example, Cal Gough and Ellen Greenblatt's (1990) *Gay and Lesbian Library Service* is the first-ever monograph dedicated to library services for the LGBTQ community and includes information on a variety of topics, including collections development, reference materials, library exhibits and bibliographic control. Other works, such as Norman Kester's (1997) anthology *Liberating Minds: The Stories and Professional Lives of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Librarians and Their Advocates* and James Carmichael Jr.'s (1998) anthology *Daring to Find our Names: The Search for Lesbian and Gay Library Services* provide experientially-based insight into LGBTQ-based institutional library activities and identities. The most recent contributions to this discursive branch include Hillias Martin Jr. and James Murdock's (2007) *Serving Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Teens* and Ellen Greenblatt's (2010) anthology *Serving LGBTQ Library and Archives Users*.

Reflecting an increased attention in LIS toward understanding information seeking and use, the largest branch of inquiry of LGBTQ issues within LIS examines the information needs and activities of LGBTQ individuals and communities. Works from this branch include earlier studies by Janet Creelman and Roma Harris (1989) and Alisa Whitt (1993), which focused on lesbian information seeking. Other contributions reflect different components of the LGBTQ spectrum, including work by Jami Taylor (2003) on the transgender community, work by Steven Joyce and Alvin Schrader (1997) and Judah Hamer (2003) on gay men and Paulette Rothbauer's (2004a; 2004b; 2007) more recent studies on lesbian reading activities. Rothbauer (2007) concludes, however, that these studies suggest that although LGBTQ individuals often initially seek out information from institutionalized libraries, their needs are "consistently unmet" (p. 104) when compared to alternative information sources, such as specialty bookstores.

LIS research on individuals' LGBTQ information needs demonstrates LGBTQ information organizations' ongoing relevance because the studies identify a conflict between conventional libraries and the information needs of LGBTQ patrons, despite increasing attention to these issues within the library profession. For example, Rothbauer (2007) argues that public library theory and practice fails LGBTQ patrons by remaining heterosexist: "by positioning the library as a safe, anonymous, and private place, place of solace, a place that affords hiding for LGBTQ patrons [public library policy] re-inscribes the values of the homosexual closet" (p. 106). Similarly, while examining book clubs for gay men in Wisconsin, John Pruitt (2010) found that these clubs deliberately choose meeting settings outside public library settings due to their members' perceptions that public libraries do not support LGBTQ social movements. By discussing how conventional institutions fail to create meaningful spaces for queer people, studies such as Rothbauer's (2007) and Pruitt's (2010) illustrate why there is a continued need in the queer community for maintaining alternative information-based organizations.

In contrast to LIS literature on LGBTQ issues, which focuses on identifying and remedying LGBTQ representational gaps within professional library contexts, queer theory highlights LGBTQ information activities outside of conventional institutional bounds. Queer theory is a multi-disciplinary critical framework that examines social and cultural activities through an outsider or queer perspective. The term "queer" does not relate to a specific identity category, but rather, the failure of fitting into an established set of societal expectations (Turner, 2004). Due to the Pride Library's grassroots history and operational mandate, queer theory provides useful orienting information about the Pride Library's motives and qualities. Most notably, Cvetkovich's (2003) *An Archive of Feelings* includes an entire chapter on queer LGBTQ archival organizations and

activities (pp. 239-272). According to Cvetkovich (2003), these organizations have a distinctly emotional orientation because they are mandated toward documenting areas of experience—“intimacy, sexuality, love and activism”—that “are difficult to chronicle through the materials of the traditional archive” (p. 241). By extension, Cvetkovich argues that these institutions have an “emotional” and “idiosyncratic” (245) approach to information, such as locating their collections in warm, home-like environments and collecting information that is expressly nostalgic and ephemeral in nature. As will be explored in the findings below, the Pride Library extends Cvetkovich’s concept of queer information practice through the practices of blending aesthetic and informational material, rendering books into artifacts and placing a strong emphasis on donors.

Setting and Methods

I conducted the research for this study under the auspices of a Master’s thesis at the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto with approval from the research ethics boards at both the University of Toronto and Western University. The aim of the thesis was to articulate the activities and context of the Pride Library, which necessitated the holistic, rich-descriptive research approach. Ethnography facilitates such an approach by emphasizing participant observation which enables the researcher to immerse themselves in the community (Bernard, 2006, p. 244).² Due to ethnography’s orientation as an emergent method, I did not have a specific hypothesis, but rather, guiding research questions such as: Who uses the library, how, and to what ends? What types of labor activities are performed at the library and by whom? How do those affiliated with the library perceive the organization?

Within Library and Information Science ethnography is an emerging method that is becoming increasingly valued for producing research that is more patron-focused in contrast to more traditional LIS research methods such as: surveys, gate counting and bibliometrics (Asher, Duke, & Green, 2010). Nancy Fried Foster and Susan Gibbons (2007), for example, conducted a large-scale ethnographic study at the undergraduate library at the University of Rochester

² Oral history shares considerable methodological overlap with ethnography, particularly within LGBT and queer studies (for more on this topic, see Boyd, N.A., 2008. Who is the subject? Queer theory meets oral history. *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 17(2), 177-189.) My work here, however, is more strongly oriented towards ethnography because I rely on participant observation of current activities in addition to interviews in order to develop a rich narrative account. A marker of my participant observation is that I include excerpts from my fieldnotes as part of the data shared in the Findings section.

towards the library's renovation project. Another recent project, "Ethnographic Research in Illinois Academic Libraries" (ERIAL), utilized a large team of anthropologists and librarians to investigate the library activities at five Illinois universities towards developing improved services (Asher, Duke & Green, 2010). Recent ethnographies in archives, most notably Sue McKemmish, Anne Gilliland-Swetland and Eric Ketelaar (2005) and Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens and Elizabeth Sheppard (2009) also provide precedence for researching community-based information organizations.

The Pride Library is a site particularly amenable to ethnographic study because of the library's emphasis on LGBT community information needs. The library originated as personal collection of gay and lesbian books made available to students by Western University Professor James Miller's in the early 1990s. Western University is considered one of Canada's top research-intensive universities and consistently performs highly in university rankings (Mayne, 2009). Professor Miller initially made his collection of books in his office at the university available for his course on gay and lesbian studies in the early 1990s (the first course of its kind offered at the university) after determining the university's pre-existing materials were inadequate; however, the collection quickly became publicly available due to high demand. The Pride Library achieved official recognition as a research facility at the university in 1997, and over time, the collection has expanded due to private donations from a reading room housed within Professor Miller's office to a collection of over 5,000 circulating books, over 1,000 non-circulating rare books, and the Richard Hudler Archives based within the D. B. Weldon Library. D. B. Weldon is the largest of Western University's eight "information hubs": the collection contains over eight million items in print and microfilm and is considered the fourth largest academic library in Canada. The Pride Library moved to a seventeen hundred square-foot area within the D. B. Weldon Library in 2006 thanks to a generous, one-time donation from Western University. In conjunction with this move, materials are now catalogued by donation by the Western University library system at a rate of ten titles per month.

Despite the Pride Library's location in the D. B. Weldon Library and the cataloging donation, the organization remains largely autonomous from the Western Library system. For example, the Pride Library relies exclusively on private donations of both money and materials to build their collections and the library makes these materials and the library space available to those without university affiliations. With the exception of about two to four work-study students that work on special projects, the Pride Library is also staffed entirely by about twenty volunteers under the supervision of volunteer head Professor James Miller.

Due to the Pride Library's reliance on volunteer labor, I conducted my research as a participant observer primarily by volunteering at the library for two full days a week over the course of a sixteen week semester. My self-identity as a lesbian also helped me gain access to the setting and develop connections with others affiliated with the library. While volunteering at the library my duties included: 1) supervising the library; 2) answering research questions at the Queries desk, and 3) working on special projects, such as creating a box list for the Hudler Archives' London Lesbian Film Festival.³ My research activities also involved conducting nine semi-structured interviews and taking a series of photos as per John Collier and Martin Collier's (1986) photographic inventory technique. My research produced data in the form of field notes, memos, interview transcripts and photographs, which I subsequently coded and analyzed following Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw (1995), allowing meaningful themes to emerge as per the grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). My research produced a series of findings relating to space and place, materials and labor, and patron activities.

Ethnography not only pertains to the research approach but also format for writing the final research product. The following section presents some of my key findings in the form a rich, narrative tale that follows Emerson, Fretz and Shaw's (1995) *fieldnote-centered* approach. Unlike an argumentative essay, a fieldnote-centered ethnography does not provide a set of examples towards proving a thesis, but rather, allows themes to emerge through an unfolding narrative through content that alternates between rich descriptions of activities within the field, observations from the researcher and analysis informed by over-arching disciplinary concerns. While I use the pseudonym "Aidan" to render the informant discussed below anonymous, it is important to note that Professor Miller could not be rendered anonymous because his expertise on the Pride Library and his highly visible status within the organization renders anonymity undesirable and ultimately impossible.

Limits of the Study

The primary limit to this study was that its purpose as Masters-level thesis put strict limitations on the size and scope of the research project. In contrast to a more traditional ethnographic methodological approach where several years may be spent in the field I was only able to spend several months in the field. It is important to emphasize, however, that my interdisciplinary background in LIS, feminist, LGBT and queer studies orients my scholarly agenda towards

³ A box list is a list of content housed in one or more containers for archives storage without including any further description of the content.

problematizing the traditional hallmarks of what constitutes ethnographic research, including the importance of maintaining distance between the researcher and the subject both while in the field and in terms of how the field in and of itself is defined.⁴

While I remain committed to challenging what constitutes appropriate fieldwork I acknowledge on a practical level that greater time in the field would have enabled me to capture even more activities within and experiences of the Pride Library. Most notably, the findings in this paper rely primarily on my key informant Professor Miller's perspectives on donors and the donation process in part because no donors visited the library over the duration of my relatively short study and it was deemed beyond the scope of my project to conduct interviews with donors. A finding from my thesis that is not included in this article that further contextualizes why Professor Miller is privileged in this study is that Professor Miller is the "heart" of the Pride Library, meaning he has a central and pervasive influence on all of the library activities. (Cooper, 2011, pp. 57-60) Arguably another limit of my study is that Professor Miller was also at the study's "heart" and therefore I sometimes emphasized his perspective on the library over other perspectives.

Findings

Blending Aesthetic and Informational Material

The Pride Library has an aesthetic strategy that marks the space as distinctly queer, including a distinct olive and orchid color scheme, vintage furniture and an art display. Distinct and diverse colors are often important components of queer signification, ranging from the tradition of colored handkerchief codes for cruising to the reclaimed pink triangle and rainbow flags

⁴ Here I am drawing from the lineage of critical interventions into anthropology that originates from the discipline's "post modern reflex turn" in the 1990s. This turn was characterized by encouraging greater researcher accountability and by extension challenging commonly held epistemological assumptions in anthropology particularly around conceptualizations of the other. For further information on the post modern reflexive turn in anthropology, see such seminal works as J. Clifford and G.E. Marcus (Eds.). (1986). *Writing culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press; G.A. Olson and E. Hirsch (Eds.). (1995). *Women writing culture*. New York: SUNY Press; and D. Kulick and M. Willson (Eds.). (1995). *Taboo: Sex, identity, and erotic subjectivity in anthropological fieldwork*. New York: Routledge.

as symbols of gay liberation.⁵ In addition to being symbolic, the Pride Library's color scheme also operates as a queer signifier because the colors contrast with more sedate color scheme found within the D. B. Weldon Library. As Professor Miller explained his choice of the library's orchid and olive color palate:

The color scheme of orchid and olive, which is nowhere in the Weldon library, nowhere... this really is distinctive. Also, just historically, purple and lavender and pink have had queer associations, for a very long time, right back to the 19th century. It's actually the color scheme favored by the aesthetes in the 1890s.

The Pride Library continues this aesthetic strategy of cueing and notifying the visitor to the queerness of space by transforming "regular" information content into Pride Library-specific artifacts. An excerpt from an early fieldnote where Professor Miller instructed me on the art of "flagging" circulating books with rainbow swatches along their spines highlights how part of the transformation occurs:

Sitting across from each other at the Queeries desk, Professor Miller explained that newly catalogued books must first be "flagged" with rainbow stickers on their spines before being placed on the shelves. One by one, we cut out pieces of "flag" from rainbow strips and sealed them to the books with glue and clear tape. Professor Miller was very particular about having the flags' placement uniform - purple is always down and the flags must be placed directly below the call number labels - this creates a consistent look along the shelves. He also observed that he likes the way the book spines with their flags on the shelves look, suggesting that they lead up to the Closet Collection and thereby heighten the contrast between "closeted" and "liberation."

The Closet Collection is a vast holding of pulp novels, periodicals, and personal photographs with explicit LGBTQ subject matter collected by one individual in London, Ontario. In the excerpt above Professor Miller is commenting on how the rainbow flags on the spines of the circulating books not only enriches the books with queer symbolism but also creates meaning in relation to the Closet Collection display. As will be discussed later on, the Closet Collection is also imbued with aesthetic meaning by being approached as an art installation in addition to a book collection. Flagging the circulating books also reflects dual purpose. During the incident described above I also noted that Professor Miller had a functional motivation behind flagging:

⁵ For further information on the history and context of queer aesthetic see Meyer, R. (2013). *Inverted histories: 1885-1979*. In C. Lord and R. Meyer, *Art & queer culture* (pp. 17-28). Hong Kong: Phaidon Press Limited.

Professor Miller said that the Pride Library introduced the rainbow “flags” because a few titles every month had been mistakenly sent up to the D. B. Weldon stacks and he wanted to prevent that from happening. The books also have other markers, such as a unique beginning to their call numbers and a “Q” on the part of the book with barcode.

The book flagging process at the Pride Library suggests that materials are marked as different much in the same way as the Pride Library’s space is different from the D. B. Weldon Library proper. On a purely functional level, the Pride Library needs to mark their books because the D. B. Weldon Library’s circulation department handles the Pride Library’s book circulation. As a result, marks such as rainbow “flags” and unique CombiTag design (see Figure 1) help ensure that Pride Library materials are not accidentally re-shelved in D. B. Weldon.



Figure 1. A close-up of the rainbow strips used to flag Pride Library book spines and the CombiTag with the Pride Library’s signature Q

In addition to their functional purpose, the book flags and CombiTags also reinforce the Pride Library’s aesthetic strategy. Note, for example, an almost militant attention to detail – “purple is always down” to ensure that the Pride Library’s aesthetic remains consistent. The markers also utilize decoration for highly symbolic purposes: Professor Miller hints at this with his comments about the contrast between being closeted and being liberated. Physically marking books with rainbows reinforces the symbolic value of the Pride Library’s collection and the Pride Library more generally as a part of the gay liberation movement (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. All Pride Library books are flagged with rainbows on their spines to create a consistent look with symbolic significance.

The Pride Library also transforms informational materials into aesthetic objects through the Closet Collection display. As I documented from a conversation with Professor Miller in my fieldnotes, Professor Miller approaches the Pride Library's Closet Collection as an "art installation" by housing the books in half-length bookshelves with glass fronts with a purple exterior. Above the shelves are a series of enlarged images from the covers of the books from the collection (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. The Pride Library's Closet Collection

Through the Closet Collection, with rainbow book flags and CombiTags, the Pride Library reinforces information materials with visual cues of significance. These practices reflect the Pride Library's strong emphasis on developing a distinctly queer aesthetic generally throughout the space, meaning an aesthetic that utilizes queer symbolism and color to mark the objects and overall setting as different and queer. The Pride Library queer aesthetic is therefore not only a strategy to render information materials decorative and visually dynamic but also is an informational strategy to visually communicate the significance and meaning of the Pride Library as a queer space and space for queers. Queer aesthetic, therefore, emerges as a central strategy for the Pride Library to convey its mandate as an autonomous LGBT information organization.

Books as Artifacts

The Pride Library not only includes aesthetically transformed information materials but also creative descriptive markings to convey additional information about the collection. For example, when discussing the Pride Library's previous cataloguing system, which utilized a modified version of the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme adopted from the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA), Professor Miller noted: "This classification scheme can still be seen on some of the books in the Pride Library collection, we decided just to keep it as part of the history of those particular volumes that had been there since the beginning." Professor Miller is referring to the Dewey Decimal call numbers that remain on the spines of many of the Pride Library books. In 1999, the Pride Library transitioned from their self-directed cataloguing process to integration within the Western University library system, including Library of Congress call numbers generated for the Pride Library by the Western University Library Cataloguing Department. Professor Miller's comment suggests that evidence of previous cataloguing practices represents a significant historical marker for Pride Library books and therefore is worthy of preservation. These marks transform books from mere containers of important information into significant artifacts of how a collection was created and expanded. Unlike more conventional conservation and display practices, however, the Pride Library's books continue to be used as circulating books and are blended into the greater collection within the regular stacks. These earlier/older, unobtrusive markers exist as a form of subtle documentary to the Pride Library's varied history.

Pride Library history is also documented by including book donor names inside the book covers (see Figure 4).

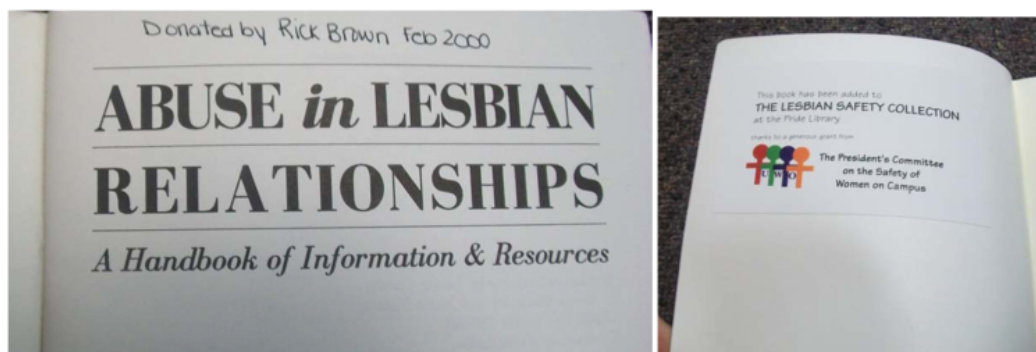


Figure 4. Donated Pride Library books are regularly inscribed with donor names.

In an interview, Professor Miller provided the following explanations about this practice:

First of all, I like the idea of people coming to the Pride Library, opening up the book and seeing that it came from somebody, not from some anonymous

acquisitions office. And it's a way of honoring the donor, that we recognize that this is still their book in some way, they've given it to us but it's part of the history of the book that it belonged [for example] to Jearld Moldenhauer.

Professor Miller's comments are similar to his earlier explanation about why the Pride Library keeps Dewey Decimal call numbers on book spines: physically inscribing books with donor information creates a tangible record of the book's, and by extension, the Pride Library's history. This practice also renders each book a unique artifact of the library that cannot be simply replaced by buying a new copy. Note how Professor Miller creates a contrast between collecting books through "some anonymous acquisitions office" and donations by specific individuals. The Pride Library differs from conventional academic libraries because books, in addition to all other materials, are acquired exclusively through donation. The Pride Library places greater value on circulating books than other libraries because each title represents a donation that directly contributes to the library's existence. The Pride Library's practice honoring donors through book inscription hints at a much larger emotional connection between the Pride Library and the Pride Library's materials, facilitated through an exclusively donations-based acquisitions policy.

"It Really is the Donors"

Book donations from external sources are fundamental to the Pride Library's existence because the library receives no regular funding from Western University. As Professor Miller highlighted in an interview: "There's always going to be donors, I mean the Pride Library is donor driven...It really is the donors – that's where the impetus is." The practices discussed in this chapter's previous sections, such as recording donor's names inside book covers and aesthetically incorporating donations into the library's architecture also reflect the central role of private material donation to the Pride Library's existence. Similarly, the Pride Library records donations through their books' online cataloguing entries, which are integrated into the greater Western University library catalogue. During an interview, Professor Miller explained this practice as follows:

There's a donor line in the catalogue entry, so the donor's names are recorded for posterity...their name is immortalized on the catalogue entry and then functions as a search term, so under "keyword" you can write "Moldenhauer" and limit the search to "Pride" and up will come all the books that Jearld Moldenhauer has donated...and I like this because I know some donors keep a close eye...and then they see the number of books catalogued from their gift increasing—that encourages donations.

Pictured in Figure 5 is a screenshot of a specific catalogue record found through Professor Miller's search strategy. The record, and Professor Miller's comments illustrate the multi-faceted and central relationship between the Pride Library and those who donate materials to the library. Echoing the Pride Library's procedure for inscribing donor names into books, including donor names in catalogue records reflects that donor identity represents an important form of information for the Pride Library. In other words, by including donor identity as an entry line in the catalogue, the Pride Library transforms donors into a fundamental informational component of the book, on the same level as author, title, or subject. It acts as an invocation of posterity suggests that this information is not only useful for researchers, but also, more abstractly, for memorializing purposes. Including donor information in the catalogue also reflects the continuing importance of material donation to the Pride Library's existence and the role that visual representation and recognition plays in this process. As Professor Miller notes in the quote above, donors watch their contributions increase through increases in their online catalogue entries and this inspires them to donate in the future.

The screenshot shows a library catalogue interface. At the top, there are navigation buttons: New Search, Request Item, Add to My Lists, Mark Items, MARC Display, Back to Results, Modify Search, Find Similar Items, and Search London Public Library. Below these is a search bar with the keyword 'jearld moldenhauer' and a dropdown menu set to 'Pride Library'. A search button is on the right. Below the search bar, it says '154 results found. Sorted by relevance | date | title .'. There are 'Previous' and 'Next' buttons for navigating results. The main record details are as follows:

Title	The Leading edge : an anthology of lesbian sexual fiction / edited by Lady Winston ; introduction by Pat Califia.	
Edition	1st ed.	
Publisher	Denver, CO : Lace Publications, c1987.	
Location	Call Number	Currently
PRI stack	PS648.L47L38 1987	IN LIBRARY
Export to RefWorks Send via Text Message		
Description	xii, 211 p. : ill. ; 22 cm.	
Series	Lady Winston series.	
Donation Statement	Jearld Moldenhauer donation (2009): PRISTK copy 1.	
Subject	Lesbians -- Fiction. Erotic stories, American. Lesbians' writings, American.	
SUBJECT	Lesbian literature - short story, poem, erotica	
Alternate Author	Winston, Lady, 1952-	
ISBN	0917597095 (pbk.) :	

Figure 5. A screenshot from a Western University Library catalogue record acknowledging Pride Library donor Jearld Moldenhauer

Various other representational features of the Pride Library can also be read as strategies for facilitating an organization maintained through donation. For example, the Pride Library's decorative exterior stained glass window incorporates the Homophile Association of London (HALO) Ontario's insignia to reflect the importance of HALO's records donation to the Pride Library. Professor

Miller made the following comments about the Pride Library renovation process in conjunction with the library's move into the Weldon Library:

[It was] very important that this not only be a designated space, but it would be space that people would want to go to, even if they weren't in the university. Because even from the start, I always envisioned the Pride Library as a community library in the broadest sense of the term, partly because of the addition of the HALO Library from the community and their community library.

Professor Miller's comments underscore the idea that the central role of donors has led the Pride Library to adopt a strong strategy of donor recognition in all of their policies and practices. In the quote above, Professor Miller suggests that the Pride Library's physical space and their underlying operating mandate, which enables individuals outside of the UWO community to utilize the materials and the space, were designed for broader community appeal, specifically because donors have such strong involvement with the library.

Echoing Professor Miller's earlier comments that including donor information in catalogue entries inspires future donations, creating a library space that is visible and thereby accessible to donors helps encourage future donations. Professor Miller noted while discussing the Pride Library's various locations: "[With] every space along the way, as the space has expanded, there has been a boost to donations. The space and the donation rate are really relevant." Similarly, my informant Aidan, a Pride Library volunteer and Western University student observed:

...because we have the archives and we have the AIDS Committee of London *fonds* here and we have the London Lesbian Film Festival collection here as well, we get people coming in from there as well who are not students or anything like that, they're just people who are either accessing the archives or who come in and give donations... And they do go through the stacks as well, they go through and check out the space.

Aidan's observations highlight how the Pride Library's publically accessible policies are informed by and facilitate ongoing donor relations. Some donors visit on a regular basis to "check out" the space, and by extension, "check out" the progress of the organization they are donating to. In addition to checking out the space, however, donors also use the space for their own research. By facilitating community research the Pride Library is able to demonstrate the viability of the organization and thereby ensure future donations.

Unique Materials

The Pride Library not only places such a strong emphasis on donors because donations simply enable the library to exist, but also because the donors provide unique materials that makes the Pride Library collection a dynamic resource. Aidan explained in an interview:

If we were under the jurisdiction of the [D. B.] Weldon [Library] fully, I'm sure they would...require us to adhere to their collection policies and along with all the bureaucracy that goes along with that, we wouldn't be able to pick all the books that we have...it would be a lot more constrained in what we could have what we are required to have, which wouldn't work with the space, it would destroy the space.

Aidan suggests that relying exclusively on donation enables the Pride Library to exist outside of more conventional library acquisitions processes and create a collection specially attuned to the needs of both the LGBTQ community and those studying LGBTQ topics. His comments also reveal how the Pride Library's materials help render the Pride Library into a compelling space for patrons.

Patrons highly value the Pride Library's unique resource collection. For example, I recorded the following activity in my fieldnotes: "A girl came into the library and asked for my help finding a specific book. She mentioned that this is the only place in and around London, Ontario that has it." Similarly, Aidan made the following comments about the collection: "A lot of these books are hard to find, you can't go into any library and pick these up, not only on our own campus but on other campuses as well, because I know we get plenty of interlibrary loans." Aidan's observations and my own encounter with a patron demonstrate that people are drawn to the Pride Library's materials because they cannot be found in other library collections. Although the collection is acquired and managed through individuals with no background in formal collections development, including Professor Miller, an English professor with no LIS education, the Pride Library's collection is popular and in high demand with students at Western University and beyond. The D. B. Weldon Library workers have also observed the popularity of the Pride Library's materials. In my fieldnotes I included the following activity: "A worker from Weldon comes to return a large stack of books—she remarks that the circulation is very high at this time of year, but also that the Pride Library has high circulation generally." I later learned that the worker was able to make these observations because D. B. Weldon generates the circulation statistics for the Pride Library's annual report.

The Pride Library collection's high circulation, as compared to other libraries at Western University, suggests that collection development based on community donations is an effective method for acquiring books about a marginalized community. Unlike the Pride Library's more institutionalized library counterparts, the Pride Library collects outside of rigid, conventional collections

development policies that have traditionally been slow to recognize the value of LGBTQ materials. Recall that the Pride Library's began with Professor Miller making his personal collection of LGBTQ related books available to students in 1991 after realizing that Western University did not have sufficient materials to support a pioneering course on gay and lesbian issues. My findings above demonstrate that twenty years later, the Pride Library continues to be at the forefront for collecting LGBTQ materials, arguably because the materials are still acquired through those directly involved in the LGBTQ community.

Conclusion

This article has highlighted how the Pride Library's approach to materials creates a dynamic information-based environment based on a queer aesthetic. The Pride Library's approach to displaying materials is highly aesthetic and demonstrates that the library utilizes visual display to maximize materials' informational qualities. Materials are also inscribed with additional informational value, creating a Pride Library-specific artifact culture. The Pride Library's material practices are due to donations' fundamental role in creating and maintaining the collection. Reliance on donation instead of an acquisition budget/strategy also explains the unique character and subsequent popularity of the library's collection contents.

The Pride Library is not only a noteworthy example of how LGBT grassroots information organizations develop queer information contexts, but also how these contexts are developed in conjunction with other public, information-based institutions. R. David Lankes' (2011) concept of *new librarianship* emphasizes the importance of collaborative, community-driven approaches to developing library mandates and services. The Pride Library's evolving relationship with the Western University provides a case study for the kinds of relationships Lankes is advocating: the Pride Library provides a service that directly responds to the LGBT community at Western and beyond and Western University provides support for this service without compromising the Pride Library's autonomy. My findings, in conjunction with Lankes (2011) new librarianship model, suggest that librarians should continue to embrace new methods for community collaboration in all aspects of institutional library activity. These projects need not be exclusively geared towards LGBTQ communities, indeed, the Pride Library's queer approach to what constitutes library services has applicability far beyond collections with LGBTQ subject matter because queering above all involves asserting the validity of non-normative perspectives and imagining possibilities for future ways of being that cannot yet be fully articulated or known. (Halperin, 1995, p. 8; Muñoz, 2009, p. 11)

While my research points to the ways in which institutional libraries can incorporate community activity in non-normative ways, far more research needs to be done on the challenges and opportunities involved with these collaborations. As university archives and libraries are increasingly creating partnerships with LGBTQ grassroots archives and libraries, I wonder: what are the responsibilities of university libraries and archives towards these organizations with whom they have relationships? To what extent will LGBTQ grassroots libraries and archives that collaborate with university libraries and archives be able to maintain their autonomy - and to what extent is autonomy a beneficial aim? In other words, how can the benefit of relative autonomy for LGBTQ grassroots libraries and archives affiliated with university archives and libraries be balanced against the detriment of non-intervention by information professionals?

Towards these ends, my future research will focus more closely on the relationships developing between LGBTQ information organizations and academic libraries and archives. Crucially, this research will take a multi-sited ethnographic approach in order to compare the partnerships developing between different institutions and communities and to get a more holistic perspective on the current and evolving LGBTQ information organizational landscape. This work will inform other research on LGBT information organizations by providing an in-depth analysis into how LGBTQ information organizations change over time - queerly or not. As LGBTQ information organizations are just one example of community-based library and archives activity, another future goal is to develop research that extends to include other forms of community-based libraries and archives and derive insight from the commonalities and differences between them. Developing comparative research on community libraries and archives more broadly will demonstrate their importance when considering the landscapes of information organizations and institutions, and will provide new ideas for engaging communities in more institutionalized library and archives contexts.

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Author

Danielle Cooper is a doctoral candidate in the Graduate Program in Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies at York University and a founding editor of *Feral Feminisms*, an independent, inter-media, peer reviewed, open access online journal. She is also a librarian and holds a Masters of Information degree (M.I.) from the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto in collaboration with the Mark S. Bonham Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies. She focuses on LGBT information organizations and queer information-based activities and her research is featured in *Feminist and Queer Information Studies Reader* and forthcoming in *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies*.