“Finding the Lines to My People”: Media History and Queer Bibliographic Encounter

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Abstract

This article examines the materiality, construction, and circulation strategies of LGBTQ information interfaces within a longer genealogy of media practices that troubles the Internet’s predominance in understandings of queer self-formation. It focuses on a particular bibliographic project: The *Gay Bibliography* (1971–1980) produced by lifetime activist Barbara Gittings in her role as coordinator of the American Library Association’s (ALA) Task Force on Gay Liberation. The article examines the role of bibliographies in the gay liberation movement’s broader information activism, and develops a longer history of “queer bibliographic encounters” that connects these older practices with paper to theorizations of queer youth and online media in the present. Methodologically, the paper analyzes a collection of several hundred letters sent to Gittings to request the bibliography, in order to examine the affective economies of information interfaces in LGBTQ contexts. The article argues that the prevalence of bibliographic encounters across a range of “old” and “new” media provides a model for understanding how information interfaces construct the subjects and stakes of social movements across time, and for imagining new forms of knowledge mobilization that expand the terms of movement participation.

Keywords: media, information, social movements, queer youth, Barbara Gittings, libraries

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"Finding the Lines to My People": Toward a Media History of Queer Bibliographic Encounter[1]

A familiar scene takes place across queer coming-of-age narratives from before online search retrieval: going to the library to look up the thing you suspect you might be, or might desire. This everyday excursion becomes a palm-sweating event when the information sought is also the locus of shame and a host of other bad feelings: the thing you have been called or the thing you fear. The bibliographic encounter is anxious, exciting, and often remembered as a decisive moment, one where mediation is key.[2] Bibliographies, card catalogs, and reference texts are some of the most common interfaces through which coming into one's self is narrated, though they are rarely remarked upon as media. Nonetheless, the bibliographic encounter's prevalence points to the importance of information, and the interfaces providing that information, in histories of gender and sexuality.

Heather Love outlines precisely this history in a recent *Public Books* essay (2015). Taking the reader back to her dorm room in the 1980s, Love describes an undergraduate search for any materials she could get her hands on about the feminist porn wars as information retrieval that brought her into proximity with something she desired but feared: "…my point of access to the feminist sex wars was through print culture. I was not a sex radical—I just read about them in the library." Love's search through journals, magazines, pamphlets, and anthologies is set at a slower pace from the bibliographic encounters she imagines today: far faster and more efficient than "the clandestine pursuit of subcultural belonging through analog mechanisms… search engines can do a lot of the detective work for young queers these days, and far more efficiently" (Love 2015). Online search retrieval, prevalent in developmental narratives about "millennial" LGBTQ youth, remediates older practices involving paper information interfaces, though with differences of speed and ease (see Bryson and MacIntosh 2010).

This article examines the materiality, construction, and circulation strategies of bibliographies within a larger geneaology of media practices, a genealogy that troubles the internet's predominance in understandings of information access for precarious populations. I focus on a particular bibliographic project: The *Gay Bibliography* (1971–1980), produced by lifetime gay-liberation activist Barbara Gittings in her role as coordinator of the American Library Association's (ALA) Task Force on Gay Liberation. Philadelphia-based Gittings (1932–2007) was a leader in the homophile and gay liberation movements, and a white, middle-class activist more comfortable with the term "gay woman" than the feminist-leaning "lesbian."[3] The *Gay Bibliography* she produced was a simple, eight-page document published in six editions and distributed widely using the postal service. The document was designed to be easy and inexpensive to photocopy and mail, in order to reach users in locations where gay-friendly libraries, bookstores, and social services did not exist.

The *Gay Bibliography* is one of many print bibliographies and subject indexes produced by and for the gay liberation era of the 1970s and 80s. Printed materials such as fiction and non-fiction books and specialty periodicals on gay and lesbian subjects were being published at an unprecedented rate during this period, but remained difficult to find, particularly for those without access to sympathetic bookstores or libraries, whether for financial, geographic, or privacy reasons. These bibliographies ranged widely in their production value; some were inexpensive DIY or small-press affairs that sought to redress movement elisions of race or women's issues, such as JR Roberts' *Black Lesbians: An Annotated Bibliography* (1981); others were more professional and costly, and sought to maintain the status quo. The *Gay Bibliography* included its own "Bibliographies and Directories" section, providing users with information on how they might access other more specialized or in-depth listings. Listed information resources

ranged in price from “free” or the cost of postage, to $10, and extend beyond print media, providing listings of lesbian-feminist organizations, gay bookstores, and the “Gay Airwaves: List of Regular Gay Broadcasts in U.S” (Task Force 1975a: 2). Gittings kept abreast of other amateur bibliographers’ work and made letter-writers aware of this work when it was relevant; in her response to a 1977 letter that requested a guide to gay bookstores, Gittings tells the writer about Ms. Lee Lehman’s often revised Gay Bookstores List, and includes Lehman’s corresponding address (Gittings 1977a). Though the *Gay Bibliography* was one of many activist-generated reference documents, it was unique in its low cost and its significant circulation.[4]

The bibliography’s price-per-copy varied over its years of publication, but was generally about 25 cents, adjusted over time to cover the base cost of postage and production with discounts for bulk orders. Through a grassroots distribution model, the document was sent to service organizations; a range of institutions including government agencies, schools, and prisons; social workers; and libraries and archives on their request. According to Gittings’ own records, more than 30,000 copies of the 1975 edition of the bibliography were distributed (Task Force 1975). Though institutional contexts made up the bulk of the bibliography’s circulation, Gittings responded to hundreds of requests for the document from individuals, sent to the Task Force’s Philadelphia P.O. Box. By design, the *Gay Bibliography’s* distribution model required bibliography-seekers to write to Gittings to request a copy of the document, either using a standard order form printed in the backs of many gay and lesbian periodicals of the time, or by writing a letter of their own.[5]

Gittings’ archive at the New York Public Library contains dozens of these letters, most of which tell personal stories that exceed simple requests for information. I analyze Gittings’ archive of letters to argue that the LGBTQ bibliography is much more than an everyday genre or

research tool. Rather, the document mediates between users and the vital public culture those users anticipate and long for. Bibliographies promise connection and support while shaping the "proper" subjects and stakes of social movements. They do this most obviously by judging and putting forward a field of "good" reference texts, but as this paper argues, bibliographic interfaces also shape *how* information resources might be accessed: the routines, locales, and potential relations with others presented by a trip to the library, an online search, or a mailed request for a print document. Encounters with print bibliographies have a slower pace when compared to online search, and greater vulnerability comes along with the personal request that is the first step in getting one's hands on a copy of the document.

These important differences notwithstanding, certain aspects of the bibliographic encounter transcend the specific forms information interfaces take. As Brenton J. Malin has argued, historicizing how cultures have negotiated their concerns about mediated emotion, from one technological form to another, can trouble "less thoughtful or reflexive kinds of conversations" about *new* media (Malin 2014: 26–27, emphasis added). This article understands the persistent argument that "The Internet Saves (sad) Queer Youth" as one of these less reflexive conversations in need of historicizing.[6]

This article begins by theorizing the bibliographic encounter in late 20th century biography in order to frame the act of asking for information as a significant trope through which the political and emotional economies of information are understood within LGBTQ contexts. The next section relates these encounters in biographies to scholarship that has considered LGBTQ youth information-seeking in print and digital contexts. This section outlines how a focus on bibliographic encounters provides a framework for thinking about queer information interfaces across different forms. In the third part of the paper I turn to a close examination of the

Gay Bibliography situated within the gay liberation movement's broader information activism and "single-issue" politics. Here I consider how information interfaces operate as social movement technologies. Finally, I read the collection of request letters sent to Gittings in order to examine the affective economies that circulate alongside information interfaces in LGBTQ contexts. I argue that the prevalence of bibliographic encounters across a range of "old" and "new" media provides a model for understanding how information interfaces construct the subjects and stakes of social movements across time, and for imagining new forms of knowledge mobilization that expand the terms of movement participation.

The Bibliographic Encounter

Momentarily putting aside the speed and precise forms an information interface takes, we can see similarities across the archive of queer bibliographic encounter. Using a library or other information source for the first time is a trope in LGBTQ biography, and represents a common developmental narrative through which youth is retrospectively described by adults (Curry 2005: 65; see also Greenblatt 1998: vii). By theorizing the bibliographic encounter as an often-reproduced narrative device, I do not wish to speculate as to whether stories about these encounters are "authentic" or merely reproductions of readerly expectation; rather, by pointing to the ways this story about information is shared, or sometimes fails to be shared, I signal how the information interface is a broad discursive formation shaped by users, makers, and movement-based identity politics. Information activists like Gittings make and circulate bibliographies toward particular ends that are imagined within these discursive conditions. Expectations users and makers have about interfaces can be both limiting, circumscribing what counts as a "good"

encounter and who counts as a "good" bibliographic subject, and generative, facilitating intergenerational exchange and shaping social movement labor.

Biography, and in particular memoir, is a revealing genre for considering the encounter as trope, because it asks adult narrators to remember and make sense of their own youthful identity formation. Adult writers often recount a series of events that are recognizable to the coherent adult-self they present to readers, and also recognizable to those readers whose potential shared identifications with these writers may have brought them to the text in the first place. For example, in *Fun Home* (2006), a young Alison Bechdel—future star of queer comic-art—searches for "lesbian" and "homosexual" in reference materials, fiction, and card catalogs at the public library near her home in rural Pennsylvania; 200 miles east and about 25 years earlier, the protagonist in Audre Lorde's autobiographical *Zami* (1993 [1982]) forges permission notes from her mother so the local public library in Harlem will allow her to read books about sexuality kept in the closed stacks. In 1980s Buffalo, Leslie Feinberg's semiautobiographical Jess of *Stone Butch Blues* (1993) does library research that inspires the historiographic reflection: "We haven't always been hated. Why didn't we grow up knowing that?" (271). Adult Jess laments young people's lack of access to positive bibliographic encounters, invoking a politicized "we" (trans people, lesbians, trans-masculine folks?) across generations through the potential persistence of accessible information. Crossing over into the realm of academic research and its affects, Gayle Rubin (2011 [2004]: 348–49) remembers discovering the world of lesbian bibliographies through a sympathetic librarian and interlibrary loan request while an undergraduate student at the University of Michigan. The self-affirming aspects of this bibliographic encounter lie in the infrastructural support they promise for a career doing sexuality studies.

While the examples above point to the persistence of bibliographic encounters across a range of texts, encounters are not always remembered as generative confrontations with one's "authentic" self. Two additional examples explored in more detail exemplify the varied affective trajectories of coming to information:

Scene One: David Wojnarowicz in Midtown, ca. early 1960s.

Cynthia Carr's 2012 biography of the New York queer visual artist and AIDS activist Wojnarowicz depicts the young artist at fourteen roving the streets of New York City, having sex with men for money without a name for what that might mean. For all kinds of reasons, home was not a safe place for Wojnarowicz and he often found himself living on the street or crashing with friends, doing sex work and odd jobs to get by. Remembering this period for Carr in the early 1990s, Wojnarowicz describes the following scene from his childhood: "I tried to get information in the local library about what a 'fag' was" (Carr 2012: 36) And, in a deadpan Carr relates as characteristic, "the limited information I found depressed me" (ibid.: 36).

Scene Two: Barbara Grier in Cincinnati, 1945.

Twenty years earlier, in 1945, the lesbian-feminist activist Barbara Grier did something similar at her local library in Cincinnati, Ohio. She tells this story in her contribution to the edited collection *The Coming out Stories* (1980), a title that suggests certain expectations about information's role in identification. Always the bookish type, 12-year-old Grier felt different from the other girls at school and went to the library to research what she called, in her query of the card catalog, "female homosexuality." She came home and told her mother that she was a lesbian. Though her mother disagreed, Grier was convinced. Adult Grier would go on to edit *The*

Ladder, the first U.S. lesbian periodical, stewarding its book review section, *Lesbiana*. Bibliographic activism became Grier's lifelong focus. She wrote a field-defining bibliography for gay and lesbian studies, *The Lesbian in Literature* (1967), the very text Rubin ordered through interlibrary loan (Rubin 2011 [2004]: 348). [7]

Though they are both white, Wojnarowicz and Grier could not be more different in their geographies, time periods, gender, class mobility, and even political leanings. But faced with early adolescent feelings of confusion and uncertainty about their sexualities, they both do the same thing: they go to the library to look for information that might tell them something about why they feel different from everyone else. Grier ends up affirmed, able to name her sexuality for herself, articulate it to her mother, and ascend along a lifetime path of bibliographic activism that provides these encounters for others, at least as she remembers it. Wojnarowicz, on the other hand, ends up feeling depressed, deflated by the lonely feeling of a failed search for information, having turned up a version of "fag" he did not recognize. His bibliographic encounter is a failure in the sense that it does not reproduce generic expectations of what it means for LGBTQ youth to seek out and find information; Wojnarowicz does not readily occupy the trope because the information he finds does not fit. While Carr's account is unclear about why, exactly, a search for "fag" left the artist with "depressing," "limited" information, it is possible, during the early 1960s, that he confronted a bad interface: a card-catalog shaped by Library of Congress subject headings that associated homosexuality with pejorative terms such as "sexual perversions" (Berman 2008: 5–11). The suggestion in Carr's text, however, is that the information Wojnarowicz found about gay life did not reflect the particular expert knowledge he held as a young sex worker and bourgeoning artist already living a queer kind of life outside the library.

Regardless of the good feelings, the bad ones, or simple ambivalence articulated to these encounters, a structure prevails across stories of finding information for the first time: query –> information interface –> resolution. This resolution generally takes the form of coming into identification or politics in a way that is remembered as significant in retrospect; for example, Audre Lorde's youthful research on sex takes on new weight given her focus on the erotic as a black feminist practice later in life (see Lorde 1984). The term "bibliographic encounter" thus has a doubled valence. These are, on the one hand, encounters with reference materials—lists, websites, encyclopedias, card catalogs, online databases, and actual librarians for the truly brave. On the other, they are also encounters with whatever forms of recognition the bibliography promises on its other side; the possibility that there are other present and historical porn-loving lesbians (Heather Love), young lesbians of colour thinking about sex (Audre Lorde), working-class, transmasculine writers (Leslie Feinberg), "homosexuals," (Alison Bechdel) or "fags" (David Wojnarowicz). Gittings describes this moment in a 1990 reflection on her work with the gay bibliography: "For some who write to us [for the gay bibliography], it's their first contact with a gay/lesbian group. The 'information' they often need is more than finding gay reading—it means finding other gay people" (qtd. in Gittings et. al. 1990).

The Interface

While bibliographic encounters may have different temporal plots depending on how they are narrated, my focus here is on the act of asking for information as the initial site of encounter. Youth feel supported and affirmed by information services when encounters with librarians are non-judgmental, discreet, and gather "well selected materials about coming out and other related topics that may support 'queer' youth" (Mehra and Braquet 2006; see also Curry

2005: 66; Joyce 2003). Because of *The Gay Bibliography's* letter-mail ordering system, the encounter with this bibliography began with the act of writing to Gittings—this is the crucial "first contact" with "other gay people," made possible by the guide to "gay reading" that gives shape to a request, and to the larger social movement ("gay/lesbian group") offering access to the interface. Across print and digital forms, the bibliographic encounter begins with asking for or seeking out the interface itself, whether through a visit to the library, an online search, or a request letter sent away in the mail. Thinking across print and online interfaces considers the broader information strategies of LGBTQ social movements, including how they understand, produce, and provision access to information interfaces as political work, for better or worse.

While LGBTQ coming-of-age narratives suggest that the bibliographic encounter might be a potentially primal scene of self-formation, scholarship on LGBTQ youth is critical of the narrow developmental terms these narratives offer. David Buckingham (2000: 12) has argued that childhood and adolescence are often premised on adult investments in the proper development of children into normal, healthy adults. The assurance that normative development is possible rests on its ancillary; what Daniel Marshall describes as the queer youth "victim trope," which "undermine(s) or de-emphasize(s) queer youth agency by universalizing understandings of the queer youth as a subject who needs to be saved by external (often institutional and adult) agents" (2010: 65). Information is a prominent tool used by external agents to do this saving. Recently, studies of digital queer youth celebrate the Internet's pathfinding potential, where online media is one avenue through which young people learn about and explore sex and gender identities (see Bryson and MacIntosh 2010; Driver 2007; Gray 2009). Through search, youth leverage the Internet's potential as a developmental tool, looking for information and representations with which they feel affinity (Bryson and MacIntosh 2010:

108). But as Mary Bryson and Lori McIntosh warn, the prevalence of positive search encounters in understandings of youth and information interfaces leaves little room for the persistent *un*belongings that can productively reveal and trouble structural social issues (110): "failed search" stories, like Wojnarowicz's, might offer nuance to the easy affinity and identification promised online.

When bibliographic encounters are remembered positively, they narrate an initial moment of recognizing potential kinship with others. Less positive recollections such as Wojnarowicz's relate what might be a disidentificatory moment, to borrow José Muñoz's (1999) term; the young artist's desiring encounter with "fag" was based in a developing attachment to the term that did not map onto the representations he found, and required an oppositional reading practice to resolve. Theorizing unbelonging and failed search in the context of youth and information queries, Mary L. Gray argues that youth disidentify with normative online texts and experiences in ways that critique "The Powers of the Internet" and "attenuate claims that political strategies of gay visibility and recognition have brought us *universally* to the brink of a 'post-gay' moment" (2009: 4, emphasis added). This literature suggests that going online to find information has been overdetermined as a radical transformation in LGBTQ life narratives. A media historical approach addresses this problem by considering some of the specific ways that digital interfaces remediate print practices: media history must map "millennial queer youth narratives" onto older, print-based information interfaces in order to trouble the articulation of these claims exclusively to the newness of online media and information.[8]

Several key aspects of the bibliographic encounter can be theorized across both types of interfaces. Both online search and the act of sending away for a print bibliography provide a certain level of anonymity valued by LGBTQ information seekers. This anonymity can be

compromised by a lack of autonomous access to technology; many letters written to Gittings stress that she must mail her response under cover to disguise contents within shared, family mailboxes, just as browser search history or the need to use public library computer terminals can deter would-be users (Curry 2005). LGBTQ users wanting anonymity are more likely to search online for information than ask a librarian, a practice also evidenced by *Gay Bibliography* seekers who are often either afraid to try their local libraries, or have found no resources of use there (Powell 2015: 13). Connection with other information seekers and makers is provided by both kinds of interfaces, and is perhaps as important as the information itself in both cases, particularly for *Gay Bibliography* users who must follow up their initial encounter with the interface by finding or purchasing access to the print resources listed therein.

Just as letter writers seeking *The Gay Bibliography* often share personal stories about their lives in order to build a personal connection with Gittings and the Gay Liberation Movement, marginalized users who connect with community-built online information sources are also finding connection with others who care enough to create or assemble those sources in the first place. As Jane Sandberg argues, this is particularly key for trans communities, whose rich online information worlds, first established in the earliest days of the world wide web, support "transgender organizing and activism" and continue to address cis-normative aspects of libraries, for example, library card applications that ask users to identify as either male or female (2015: 47–8). Sandberg's work suggests a final commonality between print and digital bibliographic encounters: the ways interfaces are designed and provisioned can provide political incitement from the earliest stage of encounter, where users judge the tone of interface-makers, and the organizational structure and language choices used to classify materials, before they judge the materials themselves. Made outside the confines of traditional library systems, yet

within the purview of a Task Force on Gay Liberation that was critical of ALA policies and practices, the *Gay Bibliography* could organize and provision access to information using non-traditional strategies.[9] Yet the print bibliography was still assembled by Gittings and the Task Force, working to represent a larger movement; it did not provide the technical capacity for folksonomic classification, annotation, and sharing characteristic of online forums.[10]

Across print and digital forms, bibliographic mediation's complex emotional economy of recognition or failed recognition challenges value-neutral definitions of information interfaces. When an information-starved user confronts what they were looking for but did not even know was out there for the first time, they do so through the mediation of an interface whose formal qualities matter. Interfaces have specific technical operations that shape the kinds of information encounters they facilitate. As Anne Friedberg and Lori Emerson have both argued, under ideal conditions, interfaces disappear; invisibility is a hallmark of their "smooth" operation (Emerson 2014; Friedberg 2009). Interfaces come into view most prominently when they fail; when a search for information does not return results that reflect what a user is looking for, the construction of the online index or print bibliography becomes frustratingly apparent. Media studies questions the apparent invisibility or neutral status of information interfaces, accounting for both the labor, maintenance, and repair that goes into making an interface appear invisible, and the ways in which interfaces are shaped, often at a technological level, by everyday inequalities that stratify access (Nakamura 2008: 28; Hedstrom 2002: 21). The selection and classification of library materials in the card catalog, for example, did not map on to Wojnarowicz's status as a precarious, poor young person having sex with men for pleasure, but also money. Like any social movement document, LGBTQ bibliographies emerge from specific

historical conditions and can reproduce the normative values and expectations of movement publics, politics, and leadership.

For example, the *Gay Bibliography* shored-up its neutrality through the rubric of "accuracy," drawing on vague yet value-laden concepts such as "good" and "better" to describe what qualified materials for inclusion in the listing. The bibliography was introduced with a single sentence on the cover-page referencing the terms for inclusion: "This selective non-fiction bibliography features materials that present or support positive views of the gay experience, that help in understanding a gay-related issue, or that have special historical value" (Task Force 1975: 1). Backmatter on the last page of the bibliography further elaborated and contextualized the project's mandate and operation in relation to social movements, and provided readers with instructions on how to order more copies. The 1975 draft edition of the bibliography reads: "We work to promote the creation, publication, and dissemination of more and better materials on gay people and the *gay liberation movement*, and to raise within the library profession, issues of discrimination against gay people both as librarians and as library users" (Ibid, emphasis added). In the draft manuscript for this edition, included in Gittings' papers, the word "liberation" has been struck out in pen (Task Force 1975b). It was not included in the final print edition of the bibliography: "gay liberation movement" becomes the decidedly less toothy "gay movement," disassociating the bibliography's work from the explicitly ideological contexts of social movement discourse and its visible, direct-action protest aesthetics. This strategy was perhaps aimed, in part, at making the bibliography seem like a more legitimate tool for librarians using it as evidence to argue for equity-seeking collection expansion within hostile conditions.[11]

Far from inconsequential when situated in Gittings' larger political approach, this edit represents a process of stripping the bibliographic tool down into a "neutral" interface for

conveying "positive" information; it was up to users to make political use of what they subsequently found. As Lisa Nakamura (2008) has shown, information interfaces may promise neutrality but always formally shape user experience in ways that stratify access and shape what users can do with the tools they are offered. And in fact, Gittings' *Gay Bibliography* hoped to produce positive encounters geared at recognition and imagined a reader whose subjective investments might line up with the materials listed in the bibiliography. She affectionately called this subject "The Hungry Gay Bookworm" (1983). This ideal bibliography user might be recruited to a less demanding, more assimilationist gay liberation movement. An apparently "neutral" *Gay Bibliography* attributes potential unbelongings within the predominant gay-liberation information economy to an individual's lack of fit, rather than the social movement's particular framing. In order to remain neutral and invisible, the bibliography must work to maintain and repair its status as a smoothly functioning, neutral interface, seamlessly bringing the "best" information to users' fingertips.[12] This maintenance work includes Gittings' labour to contextualize the bibliography in the right way, in contexts such as the document's backmatter. Neutrality also manifests in the selection of materials and their organization, where a positive stance and clear pedagogical value—materials "that help in understanding a gay-related issue"—justifies inclusion or exclusion. The bibliography contains a wide range of materials, and ethical, theological, and psychological focuses are emphasized in what was no doubt strategic balance to more politically engaged materials: in the Books section, titles such as *Is Gay Good? Ethics, Theology and Homosexuality* (1971) and *The Lord is my Shepherd and He Knows I'm Gay"* (1972) appear alongside Jane Rule's *Lesbian Images* (1975) and *Lesbian Nation: The Feminist Solution* (1973) (Task Force 1975a). Another part of Gittings' repair work—the focus of the second half of this paper—is the letters themselves. Gittings' responses to letter-writers frame

and maintain interpretations of the bibliography that support its mandate, but the letters also perform a reparative function in their present-day role as archived documents. Together these letters make up a *selected* archival fond, chosen to introduce and evidence the effects of Gittings' bibliographic work for researchers in her papers.[13] The letters make a claim to represent the interface's generative effects, especially on youth, via the bibliographic encounter.

LGBTQ Information Activism

Bibliographies are commonplace reference tools for learning, research, and scholarship. They provide pathways through large, obscure, or otherwise difficult to navigate bodies of literature, and are organized around a specific subject that is of interest to a larger public. Though bibliographies as a genre evoke a bygone print-culture era, they are still common activist tools for assembling and educating emerging publics today; for example, the Black Lives Matter movement's "Ferguson Syllabus" is actually an online bibliography of resources on anti-black racism built collaboratively using the hashtag #fergusonsyllabus (Chatelaine 2014). Bibliographies persist as collaborative activist technologies even as tailored information is most efficiently available via individual, online database-enabled searches.

Gay bibliographies organized emerging publics by assisting in outreach and defining a field. Gay liberation-era bibliographies were similar to the guides to literature published earlier within the mid-century Homophile movement. This assimilationist pre-cursor to Gay Liberation's more protest and equal rights-oriented activism was explicitly organized around providing access to "good" literature (Meeker 2006). As Martin Meeker (ibid.) has shown, both these movements sought to facilitate contacts across geographically dispersed gay and lesbian

communities. And Gittings bridges them.   An active and visible leader within the homophile movement, she had served as a regional leader in the Daughters of Bilitis (1958–68), and, like Grier, did a stint editing *The Ladder* (1963–66) (Ibid: 98). The Task Force on Gay Liberation was a special interest group of the (ALA), founded in 1970 by gay and lesbian librarians working within this larger professional association (Task Force 1974). The *Gay Bibliography* was among the specific materials the Task Force created. Run by a small governing board of advisors, the Task Force received modest funding from the ALA and was coordinated by Gittings, who was not a professional librarian. The Task Force organized around the role that libraries and librarians might play in providing informational support for the Gay Liberation Movement, mediating between newly forming gay and lesbian publics and the growing body of published information about their lives. They advocated for Library of Congress subject-heading reform, supported librarians experiencing workplace discrimination, and advocated for collection revision and expansion, all of which aimed to make the public libraries welcoming and accessible to gay and lesbian users, who experienced limited access to many public spaces.

Most bibliographies produced under the auspices of "gay liberation" primarily served gay and lesbian users. Trans-specific information resources were made and circulated through public libraries in the 1970s and 80s, for example, by Reed Erickson and his Erickson Educational Foundation (Devor and Matte 2007: 55). Aware of some of this work and its relevance to some users, the *Gay Bibliography*'s listings did include some material that addressed transgender issues, and bisexuality. In general users seeking these materials were left to parse "gay" bibliographies for their narrow relevance, as the occasional presence of bisexual and transgender letter writers in Gittings' archive attests. Bibliographies were, in other words, one of the ways gay liberation remained focused on gay issues.

What appears in the bibliography, and how it is described, matters for understanding how the document imagined and engendered a particular public. The document itself deserves some close analysis. The *Gay Bibliography* took the form of a large-format, offset-print pamphlet closer in resemblance to a periodical. The bibliography was typeset, and at its longest, included more than three-hundred entries. The alphabetized listings were organized into sub-sections: Books, Bibliographies and Directories, Articles, Pamphlets, Periodicals, Audio-Visuals, and Special Collections. Ordering or subscription information was provided for each item listed, along with cost when available. Annotations were not provided, except in the case of Audio-Visual materials, introduced with the following pre-amble: "We recommend that non-gay audiences who use these A-V materials do so with knowledgeable gay persons present to answer questions" (Task Force 1975a: 6). Each film then includes an annotation aimed at assessing quality. For example, the annotation for a film titled *The Invisible Minority: The Homosexuals in our Society* (1972) reads: "Though dated in parts, this is a good general introduction to gay people, the gay movement, gay issues. Remarkable for the number and diversity of gay individuals portrayed. Poor treatment of transsexualism and transvestism. Excellent sequence of a college student's dialog with her hostile father" (ibid). On the one hand, these annotations provided users with details that would allow them to decide if the resource might be of use prior to purchase. On the other hand, Gittings also evaluated materials and issued judgment about quality and potential offense. Bibliography materials are categorized and described in ways that frame shared understandings of materials for users who become part of the bibliography's public by anticipating or departing from these interpretations; how one ought to feel about "transsexualism," or familial homophobia.

Gittings re-framed the bibliography over the course of six editions, showing that the document was open to revision, along with the social movement politics it indexed. The *Gay Bibliography* was an in-process document, edited each year and re-compiled from a shifting stable of index cards Gittings maintained and updated. These cards amounted to hundred of individual "documents" that could be removed, modified, and then organized and output in a number of different ways. Releasing new editions of the bibliography allowed Gittings to ensure information was up-to-date. This proved particularly crucial in the case of periodicals, which were precariously produced and often went out of print. In advance of each new bibliography edition, Gittings would circulate a survey to periodical publishers asking for publication descriptions, ordering information, and subscription rates (Gittings 1975). Publishers and distributers who knew of Gittings' bibliography alerted her to new print and audio-visual resources, and Gittings also wrote personally to authors and publishers who she knew had forthcoming titles.[14] To keep the bibliography current, Gittings could update her index cards with new information. She could also re-sort her existing collection of cards to produce a more specialized bibliography on a sub-topic. Three hundred listings only allowed Gittings to scrape the surface of the resources available by the mid-1970s, and so she and the Task Force produced a series of small, more specialized mini-bibliographies: sub-indexes grew to include "Gay Books in Format for the Blind and Physically Handicapped" (1976), "Gay Resources for Religious Study," "Gay Materials for Use in Schools," "Gay Aids for Counselors," "A Short Lesbian Reading List" (all 1978), and "Gay Teachers Resources" (1979) (Gittings, Lahusen and Cunningham 1990).[15] Sub-bibliographies responded to demand from librarians, requests from letter writers, and broader pressures on "the gay movement" to expand how it imagined its constituencies.

Bibliographies are worlding technologies that produce and enforce community norms, laying out what kinds of literature, topics, political investments, and gay and lesbian lives were valuable enough to list. The *Gay Bibliography's* information pathways are generative, but they are particular kinds of paths towards information deemed "good" or "better" within Gittings' and the American Library Association's assessment rubrics. As Sara Ahmed has argued, books are potential objects of queer phenomenological inquiry—they have the potential to present willful, pathfinding deviations from norms. These deviations are "premised on hope: the hope that those who wander away from the paths they are supposed to follow leave their footprints behind" (Ahmed 2014: 21). LGBTQ bibliographies were designed for "personal use" by individuals—the wanderings of one—but they were also conceived as bodies of evidence for rights-based claims made of the state and its institutions—the paths of many. The *Gay Bibliography's* connection to libraries through the American Library Association further expanded the document's role as an evidentiary support for activist-librarians advocating for catalog expansion. Bibliographies are premised on a simple hope: providing access to the right kind of information might support more livable lives for those marginalized from popular information contexts, including reference materials, libraries, and bookstores. Bibiliographic encounters position information interfaces between users and a nascent LGBTQ public that is "out there," needing only the right information pathways to materialize.

Asking for It

My analysis of the *Gay Bibliography* has focused on how information interfaces are constructed in ways that reflect and reinforce social movement politics. Turning toward circulation and reception in the remainder of this article, I consider what might be the bibliographic encounter's

primal scene: the moment of asking for the document and all the anxiety, hope, shame, embarrassment, and vulnerability that comes along with making that request. What happens when the bibliography finds its users, who are also the emerging "gay movement" public it imagines? Gittings' archive of request letters documents the political and emotional valences of this moment. These letters usually explain why the writer, often a teenager, needed information in the first place: generally to find their way along paths they sought but could not seem to find on their own. Through Gittings' archive, bibliography-making and distribution emerges as a form of care-work, or affective labour, articulated to such promises as "finding other gay people," as Gittings put it. Following from Michael Hardt, I consider affective labour to describe laboring processes that produce collective subjectivities and sociality (1999: 89). As Melissa Gregg has shown, affective labor is gendered (2013: 54); these particular provisions of care are entwined with Gittings' role as a woman and lesbian devoted to public-facing activist work. In a request-based distribution model, the affective labour of assembling and distributing bibliographies becomes explicit as information-makers interact directly with users.

Gittings' archive is housed at the New York Public Library. The collection is hers and her longtime partner's—gay liberation photographer Kay Lahusen—and contains a wide range of documents covering a lifetime of activist work, as well as some personal correspondence. Building on Michel Foucault's work in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, scholars such as Ann Stoler (2010) and Kate Eichhorn (2013) have shown that archives are epistemological technologies organizing information through various techniques of collection management that reflect broader political and ideological conditions. The ways records are selected or ordered within a single folder, box, or larger fond can point the way towards particular interpretations of those documents. Accordingly, the Gittings letter archive suggests a certain American

exceptionalism in understanding the liberal role of information. Gittings' collection of approximately two hundred letters is contained within two folders, one of which is explicitly labeled "Correspondence: Gay Teenagers," though both folders contain letters from youth. The letter collection represents selected requests sent to Gittings during the 16-year period she was coordinator of the Task Force (1971–86). A poem introduces the collection, handwritten in red ink by Gittings' friend Marjorie Greenfield, who was a medical librarian and Task Force member. Greenfield prepared the collection of letters for acquisition by the NYPL and included this poem, ostensibly to explain her selections. The poem lays out some of the stakes of the bibliography's distribution strategy, emphasizing the document's ability to cut across a wide range of religious affiliations, and educational institutions serving young people:

> In weeding Barbara Gittings' correspondence,
> I did not save all foreign
> correspondence to
> Ms. Gittings over the
> years, but just want
> to note here that
> she received requests from
> all over the world (even
> from behind iron curtain)
> for her bibliography of booklists,
> and from every level of religious belief +
> demonstration, as well as from a
> wide variety of schools,
> colleges, universities, libraries (of course)
> and social agencies — plus every level
> of many governments, including our military.
>
> She received so much gratitude
> from isolated individuals
> plus people in the helping +
> education professions
> that one wonders
> at the ideological revolution
> that she certainly

> generated (Greenfield N.D.).

Greenfield's *wonder* at the "ideological revolution" Gittings might have inspired through her work with "isolated individuals" is not an open-ended form of speculation; the stakes of Gittings' work as Greenfield saw it are laid out in the poem, which tells a liberal story of gay and lesbian rights achieved through ideals of U.S. sexual exceptionalism (Puar 2007) that locate homophobia elsewhere, specifically "all over the world (even, or perhaps especially, behind the iron curtain)." Here the bibliography as information interface claims the potential to stage liberating encounters for subjects coded as non-Western, and thus in particular need of access to information.

The letters Greenfield chose also form a clear genre. They contain what the NYPL finding aid describes as "short personal narratives" and likely represent what Gittings found most vital about her work, given that she emphasized them elsewhere in her writing and public speaking (Karas and Malsbury 2011/14: 9). Most letters begin with a sad story about isolation or familial abandonment and secrecy, described as a problem to be remedied through access to better information about what it really means to live a public life as gay or lesbian. A letter dated March 17, 1977, sent by a teenage girl in Houston, Texas, exemplifies the type of problem the bibliography might address:

> I've never written a letter that meant as much as this one does…. It's taken me two weeks to get up enough courage to write you. You see, I just found out I was a lesbian last September when I fell deeply in love with my best friend, [name redacted]. I love her and need her so much, and she loves me, too. But I *know* that if I told my parents, the most understanding reaction I'd get is for them to say "You're just going through an adolescent phase in which you think you love everything." Ms. Gittings, they *hate* lesbians, all homosexuals (Anonymous in Houston Texas 1977).[16]

Letters, including this one, often praise Gittings' work, ask for advice, and somewhere along the way, request a copy of the bibliography, sometimes asking that the document be sent "under

cover" to protect anonymity. In the above-mentioned letter, the requisite bibliography request appears mid-way through the writer's story about her family: "If you still send out the bibliographies of books and periodicals on homosexuality, I would greatly appreciate your sending me a copy in the envelope enclosed. My girlfriend, [name redacted], will also be grateful, as she cannot partake in correspondence with you or anyone at the present time. Her mother opens and reads all of her mail" (ibid). Through this problem —> request structure, the reference tool is constructed as the remedy for isolation or lack of access to information, whether because of age, familial homophobia, or other reasons. Gittings actively promoted the bibliography's affective and pedagogical role by quoting often from these letters in her published writing (Karas and Malsbury 2011/14: 9; c.f. Gittings, Lahusen, Cunningham 1990).

As Greenfield's poem describes, Gittings received letters from many different kinds of people, whose identifications transcended the "Gay" (and we might assume lesbian) stakes of the bibliography's title. There are letters from men and women, trans people, teenagers, bisexual people, teachers, librarians, many incarcerated people, and a wide range of education levels and socio-economic positions. Attesting to the *multi-media* aspects of LGBTQ information economics, many of these letter-writers explain that they learned of Gittings and her work from her 1971 appearance on PBS's *David Susskind Show*, in an episode titled "Women Who Love Women – Seven Lesbians." Through her appearance on this show, Gittings became a kind of caring, approachable, and trustworthy figure for questioning young people. Susskind's program often featured controversial, social-justice or equity-oriented topics, but as an "educational" PBS program, its discursive frame made it possible to watch inconspicuously in front of one's parents, as Muñoz (1999) relates.[17] Despite all these differences amongst letter writers, the predominance of the revealing, emotional request is likely a result of the kind of letters Gittings chose to save

and Greenfield chose to select; straightforward exchanges of 25 cents and address information likely seemed without archival value to both women. In preparing Gittings' collection, Greenfield went as far as to highlight passages from letters she thought were exemplary of the kinds of stories referenced in her introductory poem. There are also occasional marginalia in Greenfield's hand, generally short exclamations such as "Amen!" and occasionally longer comments such as "Interesting articulate coming-out story from small town. MG. ♀♀" (annotation on letter from Stranger in a Strange Land N.D.) Letter writers included in the collection tell stories of being achingly in love with a friend who does not know their secret (Anonymous 1973a), transitioning gender and falling in love for the first time (Anonymous 1973b), living celibate or secrete lives into old age (Anonymous N.D.), or dealing with a homophobic college roommate (Anonymous 1974).

Some letters come from situations with very limited access to information: a federally incarcerated gay man in Colorado who works as a clerk in his prison library explains that because of the prison's "current administration," the "librarian cannot get the books we would like to add to the library" (Anonymous 1981). He requests the bibliography so that the "40–50 gays" imprisoned there might pool their personal resources to select books the library would not buy (ibid). Here the bibliography's role is articulated to the carceral conditions of sexual and gender minority lives, including the overrepresentation of queer and trans people in the prison system, the lack of support for their needs within these institutions, and the attendant "political connections between lesbian and gay activists and prison inmates" that Regina Kunzel (2008: 12) describes as an "underrecognized feature of the gay liberation movement of the 1970s." The presence of letters from prisoners in Gittings' collection evidences this understudied aspect of gay liberation politics in the specific context of access to information; Gittings' bibliography not

only reached prisons but further supported the needs or incarcerated users by providing information in its periodicals listing on subscription discounts for incarcerated subscribers.[18]

Information economies shape the "what" and "who" of social movement concerns, depending upon and crystalizing a subject in need of information in the first place, who is also the subject of the social movement itself. Imagined across Gittings' selected letters, this subject emerges from a discursive intersection that includes the pedagogical role of public libraries, the work of social movement organizations such as The Task Force on Gay Liberation, and the newly visible (white, middle class) gay and lesbian citizen-subject exemplified in this period by movement celebrities such as Kate Millet and Gittings herself. Lisa Duggan's history of the homophile and gay liberation movements describes Gittings as a "single-issue activist," and raises the question of the extent to which her work, and the idea of libraries, depended on a politics of assimilation (Duggan 2002: 181). Critiques of liberalism within queer studies argue that sexual minorities sometimes passively abandon more radical political concerns in exchange for the limited freedoms offered by institutional support, including perhaps, affirmation in library collections (See Eng 2010: 2–3; Manalanzan 2005: 142). A related argument has been made regarding online information interfaces and projects such as Dan Savage's "It Gets Better," which narrowly conceives of young queer people's experiences online in ways that celebrate white, "urban, neoliberal gay enclaves" (Puar 2011: 151). Gittings work on the bibliography played both sides, using information to navigate respectability politics on the one hand, while breaking with this typology at other times.

Gittings' clear vision of information's role in an emerging gay and lesbian liberalism was based in a particular understanding of libraries and their users that mostly re-enforced, but occasionally exceeded within the letter archives. In her role as Task Force coordinator, Gittings

wrote articles outlining what libraries ought to do for gay liberation (Gittings 1983). She imagined a liberal role for information services and institutions, providing plurality and offering access to multiple perspectives from which users could pick and choose without having to take a singular stance. Libraries would be democratic, American institutions because they provided users with the opportunity to choose (Turner 2014), as facilitated, for example, by the wide range of perspectives taken by materials included in the bibliography. The ideal "Hungry Gay Bookworm" who would use these interfaces was always-already either "gay" or "lesbian," and might use the bibliography to explore and accept their "true" selves. While this subject dominates in Gittings' archive, there are occasional breaks with the typology; one letter requests the bibliography to support what we might describe today as a form of queer non-monogamy, in which the woman writer wants to accept her male partner's ongoing sex with other men while learning "how to open up all the feelings I have" (Anonymous N.D.b). Letters from prisoners, who represent deviance from norms simply by being incarcerated in the first place, challenge the ways in which gay liberation is remembered as a movement aimed at assimilating upstanding citizen-subjects who "just happen to be gay." Gittings saved these letters, and Greenfeld selected them for the archives, demonstrating that prisoners and women "with feelings" married to gay men might also share Hungry Gay Bookworm status.

Occasionally, Gittings oriented bibliography users explicitly away from particular political horizons. Gittings helped to perform this work herself by disarticulating her activism from more radical feminist projects within her writing more broadly.[19] Though the letter archive includes very few of Gittings' mimeographed responses to bibliography requests, a notable exception is her take-down of a requester who outlines a lesbian-feminist, separatist, anti-rape position. Gittings writes back: "In my experience, most gay women are not really interested in

dwelling on how downtrodden and oppressed they are, or in being reconstructed according to some group-think ideology, or in engaging in sexual-politics warfare. And in my view these are the weakest grounds for an appeal to reach a diversity of lesbians" (Gittings 1977b). Her commitment to gay liberation over and above feminist causes reflected her own particular pathways to activism in the first place. In interviews and published writings, Gittings seemed unable to reconcile women's liberation-era feminist causes with "gay rights," and insisted that sexuality and gender were fundamentally separate concerns with little to learn from one another (Baim 2015: 56). "I think there are plenty of women in the world that can be tapped to take care of women's issues and I have not patience or time for dealing with…schooling, child care and other issues that might be dear to the hearts of feminists. I'm interested in gay issues because that's where it hurt the most for me. I had no trouble being my own person as a female growing up, but I did have a lot of trouble coming to grips with being gay" (Gittings, Lahusen and Cunningham 1990).[20] Gittings' words evoke Frederic Jameson's axiom "history is what hurts" (1981), taken up more recently by Lauren Berlant to describe how the most difficult emotional experiences often lead us to our most profound political scenes (Berlant 2011: 120–126). Through her design and circulation of print information interfaces, Gittings recreated entries to these particular political scenes for others. As a supposedly neutral tool, the *Gay Bibliography* had no room for what Gittings dismissed in her response to the feminist bibliography-requester as "rape," "rage," and "oppression," and yet the bibliography lists many resources that fall within the rubric of lesbian-feminist publishing (Gittings 1977b). Though the bibliography made a show of neutrality, it made possible scenes that potentially exceeded the interface's gay liberation frame. "Asking for it" is not a singular act that looks the same amongst all users; even as the

interface structures, information might be taken up in various ways, or worked upon through digressive “queer browsing practices” (Drabinski 2009/2010).

Conclusion

Each letter to Gittings poses a problem the bibliography might solve through its pathfinding content, including practical concerns such as building a better library collection or finding research for a term paper. The bibliography might also satisfy a desire to be seen and acknowledged by a broader information culture, and moreover, by Gittings herself. Receiving a response from Gittings meant receiving a significant provision of care, another horizon of the bibliographic encounter. To receive a response points the way not merely to a book or newsletter, but also to the assurance that information is out there, as are other people who might be “like me.” A short letter from a teenage girl, dated October 26, 1972, provides a representative example:

> Dear Miss Gittings,
>
> I am a young girl-woman, 19, discovering that all is not heterosexual with me and that the only person I’ve loved at all has been a woman. I need information, more information and a belief that there are others like me with a need for other kinds of love stories.
>
> In other words please send me *A Gay Bibliography: Basic Materials on Homosexuality.*
>
> Sincerely,
> [Name Redacted]
>
> P.S. Do you have any info on how I could get in contact with other young lesbians, bisexuals, or am I knocking on the wrong door? Like many others I admit I’m lost at this kind of tracking down, though *I’m slowly finding the lines to my own people* (Anonymous 1972, emphasis added).

To this reader, the bibliography seemed to promise the kind of care that involved finding kin. While the letter quoted above is ultimately hopeful about coming into relation with others as a sort of inevitability, many letters Greenfield selected emphasize lack of access to information as a desperate, unrelenting condition. A teenage letter-writer opens his 1978 request with an address that imagines his letter's participation in a broader genre of isolation and desperation. This letter writer is self-conscious about reproducing what they expect must be a trope: "I'm desperately in need of the kind of help which you can give. This line has probably opened more letters to you than you care to remember. But try to believe that this one is meant in all sincerity" (Anonymous 1978). Here the "queer youth victim trope" and the remarkable "powers of the Internet" critiqued within contemporary studies of queer youth online are articulated to print media.

Historicizing the information economies of LGBTQ bibliographic encounters examines the mediated conditions that make public forms of queer relationality possible. In her recent collection of writings, *Deviations*, Rubin reflects on her early encounters with Gay and Lesbian bibliographies as a tour through the "sedimented layers" of "queer knowledges" (2011 [2004]: 355). For Rubin, bibliographies are one technology through which "succeeding generations…ensure that such sedimentary formations are identified, excavated, catalogued, and utilized to produce new knowledge" (Ibid). Notably, Rubin's excavation metaphors evoke the turn to "media archaeology" within media studies, which has sought to uncover media-related phenomena as historical epistemologies, and reads "old" media against and alongside "new" media" in order to trouble linear progression (Ernst 2013: 42; Emerson 2014: 121–22). In both the media archaeological metaphor and Rubin's sense, excavation is an ultimately productive methodology, pursuing a useful history that might offer "new knowledge" about both media and queer strategies of generational transfer. Through this kind of "excavation," Gittings' archive

demonstrates how familiar tropes about information, queer ascendency, and self-formation pre-date digital media forms; however, the *Gay Bibliography* does not merely evidence that these processes took place much earlier than expected. Rather the bibliography suggests that the knowledge mobilization strategies of social movements might continue to learn from a rich and growing archival record of earlier LGBTQ media practices. The productive "unbelongings" of *Gay Bibliography* users who exceeded the project's discursive frame provide methods for searching out and making space for similar unbelongings in present-day digital research methods. Queer histories of encountering vital information interfaces reflect the longer information economies of LGBTQ social movements, as much as they might attest to the technological specificities of media.

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Notes

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2 Barbara Gittings, whose work forms the subject of this article, described such an early encounter in 1989 oral history interview: "…when I first wanted to find out what it meant to be gay, after I first put the label on myself, being a reasonably well-educated girl, I thought, oh well, I'll go to the library. Ha, ha, ha. Famous last words. I went to the library and I went to another library, and yet another. And I found very little information and most of it was false. It rang false. Even if I knew it was me they were talking about it didn't ring true. There was nothing about love. And it was all so strange. Clinical sounding, very clinical. And then later I found the novels of homosexuality and they made me feel a lot better, because even though these were fictional characters, they were more like real people" (1989).

[3] In her recent biography of Gittings, Tracy Baim (2015: 56-58) expands on Gittings' often-antagonistic relationship to lesbian-feminism, in spite of which, she worked to hold gay liberation activism accountable to women's issues.

[4] Before 1975, single copies were sent out for free and a nominal payment was requested for quantities, but the bibliography expanded a great deal both in terms of size and demand. By 1975 the bibliography had a list price of 25 cents. $1 bought five copies at this time (suggested donation). 6-30 copies cost 15 cents each, 31 + copies cost 12 cents each. See Task Force (1975a: 8).

[5] These periodicals included widely circulated publications such as *Out*, *The Advocate*, and *Gay Community News.*

[6] The article brings a media historical approach into dialogue with other scholars who have problematized this "save our youth" story (Bryson and McIntosh 2010; Puar 2011; Nyong'o 2010).

[7] Grier also ran Naiad Press, one the leading lesbian-feminist presses during the 1970s and 80s.

[8] "Millenial Queer Youth Narratives" is borrowed from Bryson and McIntosh's (2010) title.

[9] On the Task Force's critique of ALA policies see Johnson 2009: 661–663.

[10] Folksonomy describe community-based tagging schemes for classification, as opposed to taxonomy, which begins with a pre-determined vocabulary specified from above.

[11] Gittings describes this aspect of the bibliography's role, along with the Task Force's broader mandate of supporting gay librarians and building better libraries in "Feeding the Hungry Gay Bookworm" (1983).

[12] On processes of technological repair and maintenance see Jackson 2014.

[13] Fond is an archival science term for materials that originate from the same source, i.e. the Barbara Gittings fond.

[14] Box 32 of Gittings papers contains multiple examples of both cases, Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen gay history papers and photographs 1855–2009, The New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division.

[15] The American Library Association's present-day Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Roundtable produces a wide-range of specialized bibliographies, available at http://www.ala.org/glbtrt/tools. Offerings include specialized bibliographies for a diverse range of intersectional identifications related to race, disability, religion, and gender identity.

[16] I cite letters from individuals by date only because of the NYPL's access restrictions, which are designed to preserve anonymity of letter writers: "No names may be published unless individuals are publicly known to be gay or lesbian, their permission has been obtained, or they are deceased" (Karas and Malsbury 2011/2014: i). All letters are from Box 30, Folders 1 and 2, Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin Lahusen gay history papers and photographs 1855–2009, The New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division.

[17] Marga Gomez's childhood memory of watching lesbians on a David Susskind episode while seated beside her mother on the living-room couch show features prominently in the introduction to Muñoz's *Disidentifications* (1999: 3–4, 33).

[18] The survey Gittings sent to periodicals publishers included questions about discounted subscription rates for prisoners and state hospital patients (Gittings 1975). As the bibliography itself shows, many periodicals provided free subscriptions to prisoners (Task Force 1975a: 4–6).

[19] It is tempting to historicize the gay liberation movement and the women's liberation movement as entirely distinct political projects operating, to some extent, at cross-purposes. The gay liberation movement was, by design, a single-issue politics that sought equal rights by diminishing difference as a rhetorical strategy—gay people are "just like everyone else"—while feminism, especially lesbian-feminism, sought to emphasize women's unique qualities. Gittings crossed over between the contexts of feminism and gay liberation, though it was important to her to distinguish

between these movements and identify their incommensurability (Gittings, Lahusen, and Cunningham 1990).

[20] Throughout her papers, Gittings never used the word "lesbian" to describe herself, preferring "gay" instead. Yet her appearance on *David Susskind* made her into a figurehead for lesbianism in mainstream contexts despite her resistance to *lesbian feminism's* terms.