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Queering the
LC Name Authority File

on recording gender in name authority files

The Gay Agenda

- What is gender?
- What is Queer Theory?
- Queer theory and recording gender in name authority records

What's gender anyway?

- **Socially constructed**

We make our ideas about gender and sexuality together.

- **Contingent**

We understand gender and sexuality relationally.

- **Contested and negotiated**

We struggle with and against each other about the meaning of gender and sexuality.

- **Social and public**

We name ourselves to find each other.

How do we catalog and classify it?

What do we fix when we fix the unfixable?

In our work

- We make categories for a living
- Why encode gender at all?
- So if we are going to encode gender, then it needs to be hospitable

Name authority records used to

- Identify
- Disambiguate
- Collocate

Now we aspire to FRAD user tasks

- Find
- Identify
- Contextualize
- Justify

Background

- ISO/IEC 5218 standard
  - Codes for the representation of human sexes
- FRAD
- RDA Rule 9.7
- LC/PCC interpretation and training

RDA 9.7

9.7.1.3   Recording Gender

Record the gender of the person using an appropriate term from the following list:

female

male

not known

RDA 9.7.1.3 cont.

If none of the terms listed is appropriate or sufficiently specific, record an appropriate term or phrase.

intersex

transsexual woman

Gender, RDA style

- ○ literally embodied
- ○ easily defined
- ○ visually identified
- ○ female, male, or empty data
- ○ fixed, now and forever

- ● **But this has real-world ramifications**

Fixed and linear.

Name heading: Bono, Chaz

Gender: female (1969-2008?)
Gender: male (2008?-present)

Variant: Bono, Chastity

Miss-identification

Name heading: Big Freedia

Gender: ~~female~~

Variant: Fredia, Big

Variant: Ross, Freddie

Just plain rude

Name heading: Bornstein, Kate, 1948-

Gender: transgender

Information found: born March 15, 1948, in Neptune, NJ as Albert Herman Bornstein; underwent sex-reassignment surgeries from 1985-1986

Kermit the (male) Frog

Caitlyn Jenner

We need a third option

- FastTrack Proposal submitted to JSC to add "transgender" as an official term to the RDA vocabularies
  - Accepted "umbrella term" for the trans* community
  - Promotes controlled vocabularies and collocation
- The proposal was deferred and the broader issue will be discussed at the JSC Nov. 2015 meeting

We need oversight

- Form a NACO funnel group to handle NAFs for trans* individuals

We need research

- Forthcoming book: *Queer Joy of Cataloging* by Amber Billey and Matt Haugen, Library Juice Press. (expected Spring 2016)
- Gender & sexuality in information studies colloquium, April 2016 in Vancouver, Canada
- #critCat

Little big wins

- LC will be removing outdated training videos and updating other training materials at some point soon after ALA.
- LC/PCC has no policy for providing the element, this is left to cataloger judgment. The old maxim "if in doubt, leave it out" is sound advice.
- As always, NACO members encountering incorrect information in authority records, including the 375 field, are encouraged to **correct the information**.
  - Dave Reser

Thanks!
Questions?