

# LIBRARY RHETORIC: the Canadian Library Association Statement of Diversity and Inclusion & LGBTQ Advocacy

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## *Definitions*

**Bisexual:** Individuals who are attracted to both other-sex and same-sex individuals as sexual partners. A type of sexual orientation – see Sexual Orientation definition.

**FTM:** Female-to-Male. A person who transitions from female to male. Transition means to physically modify one's body; physically modifying may include non-permanent modifications such as binding one's chest or packing (wearing a dildo in one's underwear) and/or more invasive such as hormone treatment, or surgery. FTM's sometimes self-identify as transmen. See definitions of Trans, Transgender, and Transsexual.

**Gay:** A person who is homosexual, especially a male homosexual. The word "gay" in this regard may denote the homosexual individual or the lifestyle, particularly a male homosexual lifestyle.<sup>1</sup> A type of sexual orientation. See definition of Sexual Orientation.

**Gender:** Gender is not the same as sex, although the term is often used interchangeably to have the same meaning. "The words "man" and "woman" refer to gender. No one is born a woman or a man – rather, as the saying goes, "one becomes one" through a complex process of socialization...Gender is historical (it changes through time), that it varies from place to place and culture to culture, and that it is contingent (it depends on a lot of different and seemingly unrelated things coming together)" (Stryker 11).

**Gender Expression:** How individuals "express the complex feelings they have about what others might label 'gender identity' versus what they feel about what others might label 'sexual expression'" (Green 166) or how one lives their natally assigned sex category regardless of expectations associated with their sex category. How a person communicates themselves to others. Related to, but not the same as, gender identity.

**Gender Identity Disorder (GID):** Is recognized as a mental disorder in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder*, Fourth Edition (DSM – IV – TR). GID includes strong and persistent cross gender identification (not merely a desire) of being the other sex. Including frequently passing as the other sex, living or being treated as the other sex. This medical diagnosis is required medically to diagnose a person as transsexual. See Transsexual definition.

**Gender Identity:** An individual's internal sense of being female, male, or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.<sup>2</sup> All persons have a gender identity, whether they are transgendered or not.

**Heterosexual:** A person sexually attracted to persons of the opposite sex.

Or a person who has sexual relations with the opposite sex. Colloquially known as “straight.”<sup>3</sup> The dominant type of sexual orientation. See Sexual Orientation definition.

**Homosexual:** Individuals who are attracted to same-sex sexual partners (Helgeson 7). Homosexuals include males (gays) and females (lesbians). A type of sexual orientation. See Sexual Orientation definition.

**Intersex:** A term used for people who are born with external genitalia, chromosomes, or internal reproductive systems that are not traditionally associated with either a “standard” male or female.<sup>4</sup>

**Lesbian:** Female homosexual. The name “lesbian” comes from the Greek island of Lesbos in the Aegean Sea where in antiquity the women were said to be homosexual. The poet Sappho who lived on Lesbos (circa 600 BCE) was a lesbian in both geographic location and sexual orientation.<sup>5</sup> See Sexual Orientation definition.

**MTF:** Male-to-Female A person who transitions from male to female. Transition means to physically modify one's body; physically modifying may include non-permanent modifications such as applying makeup or wearing a wig and/or more invasive means, such as hormone treatment, or surgery. MTFs sometimes self-identify as transwomen. See also trans, transgender, transsexual definitions.

**Queer:** Once a derogatory term, it is sometimes used as an alternative to lesbian, gay or homosexual. However, Queer is less about sexual orientation and more about opposition to heterosexual social norms. Queer can be a politically charged term. Queer is used by some as an attempt to be inclusive. Queer is an important term for some individuals who want to live in a gender other than the one natively assigned to them (Stryker 20). Queer is also used by some individuals who are generally judged to be heterosexual (straight) but are at odds with being assumed straight, such as members of BDSM communities or some partners of trans individuals.

**Sex:** Sex is not the same as gender, although the term is often used interchangeably to have the same meaning. Until the late eighteenth century scientists and philosophers thought there was one sex, male, and that women's genitalia were merely the inverse of men's. Current Western scientists think women and men are so different physically that at times they seem like two different species. “The bodies, which have been mapped inside and out for hundreds of years, have not changed. What has changed are the justifications for gender inequality...” (Lorber 15). Natively assigned sex categories are usually justified as biological and determined from external anatomical organization of reproductive anatomies visually inspected at birth.

**Sexual Orientation:** a term used to describe a person's attraction to members of the same-sex or different sex. Sexual orientation categories usually include homosexual, bisexual and heterosexual, with heterosexual being the dominant category.<sup>6</sup>

**Trans:** I draw on Krista Scott-Dixon's work by using the word trans as an umbrella term, meaning transgender, transsexual and the many other boundary crossing expressions and identities that are limited by language. “A broad umbrella term suggests many forms of gender boundary crossing, whether in terms of behaviour, self-presentation or identity; or in terms of how such crossings are experienced and understood. Not all people who fit this definition will self-identity as trans” (Scott-Dixon 247).

**Transgender:** is a self-identity label, a political term, and a grassroots

term: “it is not a euphemism for transsexual, the way gender is often a euphemism for sex.” (Green 14) Transgender is often used as an umbrella term, which includes both transgender and transsexual; it is also used as a term that is distinct from transsexual. Transgender may include people who cross-dress, or identify as Transvestites, or who play with gender expression through drag performances, although not all people who fit these categories identify as transgender.

**Transsexual:** I use Jamison Green’s definition: “Transsexual is a term that the medical profession has applied to that subset of transgendered people who seek hormonal and surgical assistance to change the sexual characteristics of their body to bring their gender and their body into alignment, people for whom that physical change is the only possible satisfactory accommodation” (Green 14)

**Two-spirited:** Some Aboriginal people identify themselves as two-spirited rather than as bisexual, gay, lesbian or trans-identified. Historically, some Aboriginal cultures two-spirited persons were respected leaders and medicine people. Before colonization, two-spirited persons may have been accorded special status based upon their unique abilities to understand both male and female perspectives (Schrader and Wells 6).

*It is important to note that not all people who identify as transsexual seek medical help and that not all transsexual individuals identify as transsexual. Many transsexual individuals no longer identify as transsexual after they have medically transitioned. It is also important to note that medical discourse and legal discourse use the terms transgender and transsexual in different ways than I use them in this paper. Again, I will use the term trans to include both transgender and transsexual individuals, in order not to favour one more than the other. A note about language: These terms are defined at the onset of this paper to counter any confusion about terms used throughout this paper. This list of definitions is incomplete, due in part to the limited focus of this paper.*

The Canadian Library Association (CLA) adopted a *Statement of Diversity and Inclusion* in February 2008. The statement directly references the *CLA Statement on Intellectual Freedom* (1974) and serves as an umbrella for other pre-existing statements, such as the *Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for People with Disabilities* (1997) and the *Canadian Guidelines on Library and Information Services for Older Adults* (2000). This paper aims to identify and evaluate western library association rhetoric related to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer (LGBTQ) individuals and groups. The key aim is to identify best practice for direct application to the possible development of a specific CLA position on diversity and inclusion of LGBTQ individuals and groups. This paper is highly relevant to the contemporary Canadian library community and to broader society as it addresses one of the groups (LGBTQ) most in need of access to the information that libraries can offer. Certain themes will be revisited throughout through various lenses. To date, the CLA has no statement specifically on LGBTQ issues, and more particularly, on trans issues.

The CLA's *Statement of Diversity and Inclusion* suggests that librarians value Canada as a "pluralistic society" and directs librarians to recognize diversity and work towards inclusion of all Canadians. The goal of this paper is to create discussion about delineation of categories and language used in the *Statement of Diversity and Inclusion* and to provoke dialogue about how librarians can work towards providing open access. I argue that it is necessary to understand our own situatedness and the inherent privileges therein in order to work towards inclusivity in Canadian libraries. The *Statement of Diversity and Inclusion* suggests that librarians ensure patrons can enjoy services free from any attempts by others to impose values, customs or beliefs upon them. Yet how can librarians do so without first understanding the boundaries already imposed upon themselves and their libraries through societal customs of heteronormativity and *correct* sex and gender expression? To appreciate and accept diversity, an understanding of what is the norm and what is not, is foundational. It is difficult to negotiate structural barriers of diversity, as the *Statement of Diversity and Inclusion* aims to do, when terms such as sex and gender have become interchangeably understood to mean the same. In Canada, that which is not the norm is most often understood through a limited naming of categories such as race, religion, gender, age, and sexual orientation, which are understood as deviant. Are these categories inclusive? Who is left out? In this paper I argue that the *Statement of Diversity and Inclusion* reads as an authority by naming certain categories of diversity and not naming others. In particular I argue that sexual orientation refers to lesbian and gay (homosexuality) as the binary opposite of heterosexuality and formulates a commonsensical understanding of diversity and human rights discourses; an understanding that further marginalizes other categories of difference.

Canadian (and other) library strategies, policies, visions and values written on the topic of LGBTQ persons usually end up addressing homosexual/same-sex experiences, thereby excluding trans and bisexual persons who do not neatly fit into these categories. This paper explores how categorization based upon the acronym LGBTQ actually excludes people and perpetuates incorrect and inappropriate assumptions about sex, sexuality, and gender, as well as human rights. The growing need for information for those excluded is as great as or arguably greater than for those who fall neatly into established categories. Materials written for LGBTQ persons are often limited by the language of lesbian and gay experience. *Serving Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Teens* by Martin and Murdock (2004) mentions transgender and transsexual seven times in the entire book and two of these mentions are to define the terms. Over two hundred pages are devoted to lesbian, gay and occasionally bisexual youth needs. Librarians are aware that youth look for their experiences to be reflected in literature of their library collections; trans youth are likely to find a great void about their experiences. Librarians need to understand how the dominant terms and language restrict boundaries of sex, gender, and sexual orientation to a sticky matrix of conflated terms. We can begin to untangle the language and learn new ways to include patrons who are often excluded and provide access to much needed information.

### *The Pride Library at Western*

The Pride Library is accessible online and is part of the University of Western Ontario, Canada.<sup>7</sup> The Collection Policy for the Pride Library at Western begins with a commitment to uphold the values of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* with a quote from the *CLA Statement on Intellectual Freedom*. The mandate of the Pride Library “is to acquire, preserve, organize, and give public access to information and materials by and about lesbians, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer communities (LGBTQ)” The mandate continues by stating the main purpose of the Pride Library is: “To foster gay and lesbian studies at Western; to collect, document, and conserve the evidence of local gay and lesbian history...” The quick and subtle shift from ‘lesbians, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer’ to simply ‘gay and lesbian’ demonstrates inclusive and exclusive language in this library’s mandate. If we stop including bisexual, trans, and queers in our library rhetoric we begin to exclude. Is it enough just to assume we mean all of *those* people? Can we trust that our understanding, as librarians, will just incorporate trans identity or bisexual identity into our policies, visions and values? Should we settle for not being named in policy statements?

The *Charter of Rights*, which will be explored in the next section, does *not* in fact, ensure coverage for *all* Canadians. The publication by Martin and Murdock and The Pride Library at Western demonstrate how language and terms are used to point at inclusion, while in reality they exclude. This shift in wording affects thousands of Canadians who become less mentioned, less visible, less represented. The Pride Library begins by using the terms LGBTQ which includes trans but soon drops the inclusive language by continually only referring to lesbian and gay. Systematically the Pride Library begins to erase individuals from their collections and policies, thereby affecting the accessibility of trans materials and to trans resources.

The Pride Library at Western is not unusual in deviating from terminology that at first includes trans individuals only to then exclude them. At first the exclusion appears small and rather insignificant until we realize that by excluding a group of people, by simply not mentioning them, we delete them from further conversations and ultimately from thought. The removal from language sets the stage for the erasure from our experience. In rendering a small number of people invisible or non-existent a harmful loss occurs – a loss to which librarians should no longer contribute.

#### *A Brief and Recent and Canadian Homosexual History*

Until very recently it has been socially, medically, and legally acceptable to discriminate against LGBTQ people in society. Homosexuality (same-sex desire) had been deemed a mental illness, diagnosable through the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) until it was removed in 1973 (Stryker 98). This is a controversial date as some scholars mark the removal as late as the 1986 publication.<sup>8</sup> The Canadian *Charter*

*of Rights and Freedoms* was enacted in 1982 outlining the constitutional rights of (some) Canadians. It was not until the Canadian Senate passed Bill C-38 in July 2005 that lesbians and gays could legally marry, thereby ensuring same-sex couples's equal legal status as non same-sex couples within Canadian Law.<sup>9</sup> The embedded prejudices within Canadian society are not just undone when changes to medical discourses are made or when legislative Bills, such as Bill C-38, are passed; yet, when such medical and legal changes are made equality is expected. While it is no longer acceptable to discriminate against homosexuals there remains a lot of work to be done in raising awareness and changing discriminatory attitudes and practices. In the meantime, homophobia still exists in Canada. For trans individuals, these protections are much more precarious. There is no specific provision for gender identity in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and GID is a diagnosable mental disorder. While some transsexuals individuals have found protection in the law on the grounds of sex (Ontario, Quebec, and B.C.) or on the grounds of disability (B.C.) these protections are not specified but are read in by the presiding judges. Moreover, the protections have not been advanced for trans individuals who have not been medically diagnosed as transsexual.

Public institutions, such as Canadian (schools, public libraries, colleges and universities libraries and government) libraries, have a social responsibility to not only ensure access to specifically required information but also to model social acceptance and humaneness through inclusive language and diversity of resources, as well as ensuring the availability of knowledgeable staff. The CLA's *Statement on Intellectual Freedom* ([www.cla.ca](http://www.cla.ca) – position statements) suggests all persons in Canada have rights as set out by the *Bill of Rights* and the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*,<sup>10</sup> yet until Bill C-38 passed this did not include homosexuals. Presently trans people are legally and discursively excluded. How does this reconcile with libraries' current policies? Who else might be excluded? Do the current policies, visions, and values of the national library association, the CLA, provide clear direction to libraries throughout Canada? Does library rhetoric reflect changing values and demonstrate current adjustment struggles within society to ensure inclusion of LGBTQ individuals?

The Canadian *Constitution* and the *Charter* were written to ensure rights and freedoms, but the language is exclusive thereby creating legal loopholes which have historically denied equality to *all* members of society. In 2005 Bill C-38 supplied the officially authorized recognition that allowed same-sex unions' equal legal status. The power of inclusive language is best demonstrated by this legal recognition that Bill C-38 granted to thousands of couples and individuals as well as providing a means through which lesbians, gays, and bisexuals could name homophobic discrimination legally. Institutionalized and systemic homophobic discrimination previously provided no legal recourse for lesbians or gays to fight prejudice. Same-sex relationships have been accepted by many individual Canadians, and some institution. Assumptions that this form of discrimination has been dealt with are entirely too common, misconceived and naive.

A less recent but important example of prejudice within Canadian society is that of Delwin Vriend in Alberta. In 1991 Delwin Vriend was fired from his job at King's University College in Edmonton for admitting that he was gay. Vriend then filed a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission, which refused to investigate his complaint because "discrimination on the basis of a person's sexual orientation is not within the scope of the Alberta Individual Rights Protection Act (IRPA)."<sup>11</sup> Vriend took his case to the federal level. The Supreme Court determined that the *Alberta Individual Rights Protection Act* violated the federal *Charter of Rights and Freedom* in the ruling of April 1998. Justice Peter Cory wrote the majority decision, including:

The exclusion [of gays and lesbians] sends a message to all Albertans that it is permissible and perhaps even acceptable, to discriminate against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation...Perhaps most important is the psychological harm which may ensue [sic] from this state of affairs. Fear of discrimination will logically lead to concealment of true identity, and this must be harmful to personal confidence and self-esteem.<sup>12</sup>

Reactions to this historic decision were varied but one local Albertan lawyer said "Slowly, the forced change in behaviour will change Albertans' attitudes..."<sup>13</sup> Ten years ago homosexuals won *equality* under the law and the shifting attitudes have begun to change.

Policies, visions, values, and even laws have been carefully worded to reflect the societies they are designed to serve. The examples of the Vriend Charter challenge, Bill C-38, and the recent CLA *Statement of Diversity and Inclusion* reflect a growing trend of inclusive language that best reflects social, legal and other realities and works towards ensuring that individual rights and freedoms are protected. These attempts can help adjust attitudes and discriminatory behaviours and enable Canadians to understand the diversity of other Canadians outside of their own experiences. However, the *Statement of Diversity and Inclusion* does not mention gender identity, a category that would include trans individuals who do not congruently fit into categories based on sex or sexual orientation.

The CLA's *Statement of Diversity and Inclusion* reads:

All persons in Canada will receive library and information services that are respectful to them as individuals. Libraries in Canada endeavor to provide services that recognize and affirm the dignity of those they serve, regardless of a person's heritage, beliefs, race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental capabilities, or personal wealth.

Libraries understand that an acceptance of differences can place individual and collective values in conflict. Libraries are

committed to tolerance, understanding and personal discovery. Libraries act to ensure that people can enjoy services free from any attempt by others to impose values, customs or beliefs.

Canadian libraries recognize that a diverse and pluralistic society is central to our country's identity. Public institutions, including libraries, have a responsibility to contribute to a culture that celebrates diversity and inclusion (www.cla.ca – position statements –Diversity and Inclusion).

Categorizes of race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation or physical and mental capabilities are all categories that are now legally recognized in Canada. Despite these enhanced protections for lesbians and gays, there remain individuals who are on the margins of human rights protection and cannot easily access regular legal structures, such as, trans people. “The dominant model of anti-discrimination law as it is enunciated in Vriend and applied to ‘sexual orientation’ requires that claimants caricature themselves to fit within its strictures” (Gotell 107).

*A Brief and Recent but Not Entirely Canadian  
nor Entirely Homosexual History*

LGBTQ individuals are often classified together and represented with this acronym or some combination of these letters (GLBTQ/GLBT) to signify an assumed relatedness between Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/ Transsexual and Queer individuals. This common grouping presupposes relations of sexual orientation, and as anti-discrimination legislation suggests legal status and definition, where in reality little relation actually exists. Lesbians and Gays have secured equal legal access to human rights legislation; however these ‘normal’ categories of ‘queer’ still exclude bisexuals and trans people through the marked difference of ‘same-sex’ attraction (Gotell 106). The *Human Rights Code* exists to provide equality of opportunity and ensure people are not judged based on preconceived notions about ‘groups’ or categories to which they belong. Bisexuals and trans persons blur boundaries and categories, but yet remain grouped with lesbians and gays who identify based solely upon their sexual orientation. Why then has this grouping of letters become common place in our society? To explain the differences between these commonly linked categories I must first discuss how sex and gender are conflated and how the resulting misunderstanding creates a portrayal of a narrowly constructed identity.

*Sex Education or Gender Education: What's in Your Pants  
Compared to What People Think is In Your Pants...*

The terms sex and gender are used interchangeably to produce one meaning, genitals. Many western government documents require that one state their ‘gender’ from the choices given ‘M’ or ‘F’, meaning male or female, sex, not gender which is masculine or feminine. The interchange of terms (sex

and gender) are reproduced and repeated in language. Common definitions of masculine continue to be articulated as an expression of maleness. While feminine remains solely linked to female. Masculinity and maleness produce a gender and sex understood through the assumption of a penis. Femininity and femaleness produce a gender and sex understood through the assumption of a vulva. Gender appears inextricably bound to sex. There are different ways to be women or men, however there are limitations. A masculine body denotes male while a feminine body denotes female. Masculine bodies on females or feminine bodies on males are often understood as doing gender incorrectly. Correct behaviours and actions are ascribed from a sex (female/male) to the correctly corresponding gender (feminine/masculine). However we do not see people's genitals, we see their gender and judge and evaluate it as their sex, thus discursively producing sex and gender as the same thing.

There is a need to know where everybody fits. As Geoffrey Bowker argues "our lives are hedged round with systems of classification, limned by standard formats, prescriptions, and objects...To classify is human" (Bowker and Star 1). The system of classification used to sort out sex and gender runs in only one direction, your sex defines your gender. Yet gender is what gets visually identified and then ascribed to indicate a person's natal genital assignment and therefore their sex. The words sex and gender are used interchangeably on documents and forms which are ubiquitous within society. To open a bank account, apply for a job, or to obtain a library card, people are required to record their gender and/or sex upon documents that range from school forms, sports forms, medical forms, questionnaires, to movie rentals and library lending. The world wants to, needs to, and demands to know your sex and gender. The fact that we have constructed so much of the world around this 'need', this 'demand', to know other people's natal genital assignment demonstrates more than mere curiosity. A person's sex and gender 'must' correlate correctly. Disciplinary practices engender "docile bodies" that conform through correct gestures and appropriate displays to produce a body which is recognizably feminine or masculine (Bartky 65). Rigid control of sex, gender, and sexuality are inherent in society's demand to define, document, and (legally) regulate these identity categories. However, the invisibility of such regulatory regimes provides the illusion that they do not exist. "The absence of a formal institutional structure and of authorities invested with the power to carry out institutional directives creates the impression that the production of femininity is either entirely voluntary or natural" (Bartky 75). The correct way to "do" feminine or masculine are only recognized in direct relation to when gender is done incorrectly, such as when women are masculine or men are feminine. Incorrect gender and sex correlations are then generally understood as being opposite to the correct alignment.

The natural male/female and masculine/feminine association generates a mould to ensure its on-going environment; a matrix is developed. The heterosexual matrix consists of (only) two sexes (male/female). (Butler "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" 17) These two sexes cause (only)

two genders, masculine and feminine. Two sexes (male/female) and two genders (masculine/feminine) correctly corresponding (male being masculine and female being feminine) result in normative heterosexuality. It is through this heterosexual matrix that gender presentation determines perceived sex and sexuality. Masculine and feminine gender expressions are attributed to a particular sex, which in turn produces a particular sexuality. Gender is what is seen and accredited as 'sex'. Gender is understood to produce sexuality:

As individuals enter the social world through birth...the 'expert,' usually a medical doctor, proclaims one of two categories – 'boy' or 'girl' – making it appear as if the sex of the individual baby determines the category into which it is placed. From the pronouncement 'boy', certain natural/biological sexual traits are 'determined' and predicted, such as the presence of a penis, higher testosterone levels and even the amount of hair on the body. Gender predictions follow: he will enjoy sports, be good at math, have a good sense of direction (simpkins 80).

A boy will grow up to be masculine, seek a partner who is female and feminine and together they will create their offspring. Although this is not how the story always unfolds it is how the story is almost always told.

Normative heterosexuality consists of only two binaries of sex and gender, and regulates and controls this identity category as heterosexual. Female/Feminine attracts or is attracted to Male/Masculine and combined they (re)produce normative gender presentations which are reinforced by dominant discourses. If there is a discrepancy between gender and sex then sexuality is assumed to be outside the norm, not heterosexual. It is gender that gets conflated with sex and sexuality. Transgressions of gender are labeled homosexual regardless of the person's sexual orientation or activities. Masculine females and/or feminine males do not do their gender 'correctly' thereby, constructing a consolidation of identity requirements coded as homosexual. The repetition of heterosexual normativity structures the identification of individuals as either heterosexual or homosexual; you are one or the other (Butler in "butch/femme" 227). Inappropriate gender expression is often rendered understandable this way. The conflation of sexuality and gender correlate so that one is constructed to express the other, both become identity categories that construct and regulate each other (Butler "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" 13).

Even with caveats explaining the limits of language, science continues to deploy gender differences in direct relation to gender situatedness. Bodies differ in numerous ways physiologically, but they are altered by scientific 'truths' and social practices to fit into salient categories. Categories of sex and gender are not pure (Lorber 15). Scientific reliance on only two sex and gender categories is epistemologically spurious. Language constructs, categories demarcate, and experts define. Scientific knowledge and power 'innocently' reinforce and privilege gendered normativities that support

hegemonic ideals, despite the 'scientific truths' available that can collapse these structures.

Bisexuals challenge fixed boundaries between sexual identities of both heterosexual and homosexual by moving between two supposedly stable categories. The term bisexuality has been "deployed as a euphemism for gay" (Gotell 107). Bisexuality can, at times, be mapped onto one category or another, hetero or homo. Trans persons challenge gender situatedness, sexual orientation and identity by transitioning such categories. Moving through 'fixed' categories of hetero/homo and male/female and masculine/feminine, trans as a category does not map neatly onto to one or the other. Through reductions of characteristics bisexuals and trans are not so neatly placed into the acronym LGBTQ. This clever assignment supports and regulates normative heterosexual discourse of two 'fixed' binaries of sex and gender and two 'fixed' sexual orientations: opposite sex desire, heterosexual, and its opposite, same-sex desire, homosexual. Gender boundary crossings cannot all be categorized by the term trans, but gender identity as a classification can function to include those that contravene normative and non-normative categories.

#### *CLA Statements, Why?*

The CLA adopted the Code of Ethics in June 1976 and it states that: "Members of the Canadian Library Association have the individual and collective responsibility to.... make every effort to promote and maintain the highest possible range and standards of library services to all segments of Canadian society... facilitate access to any or all sources of information which may be of assistance to library users..." (CLA website, see Position Statements). The CLA has since adopted position statements for people with disabilities in February 1997 and for services for older adults in November 2000. Young adult services (1987) and linguistic and ethnic minorities (1987) now also have national position statements that direct Canadian libraries to be aware of these smaller populations of library users. The CLA has formulated position statements as a type of professional tool to direct and develop awareness and encourage diverse coverage in Canadian libraries. The position statements direct librarians to mirror the mandate that all citizens have a right to equitable library and information services. Library leadership, management, and administration as well as all library workers must be familiar with what is in their collections and what is not and work towards inclusion of minority or underrepresented groups and people. Position statements provide opportunities for librarians to learn more about who is underrepresented and what can be done to meet the changing information needs of Canadians. The CLA current position *Statement on Diversity and Inclusion* specifically names: "a person's heritage, beliefs, race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental capabilities, or personal wealth..." (CLA website) as possible places of discrimination. Many forms of discrimination are addressed through this statement and the language appears inclusive; however, language and its meanings change over time:

Language is fluid and political. There was a time when we were all “Mankind.”...When African Americans were “Black” or “Colored.” When the “N-word” was the actual word....When the “L-word” meant nothing at all. When terms such as “Homo,” “Fag,” “Queer” and “Dyke” were hurled like jagged rocks with the intent to cause injury (de la tierra 95).

Inclusive language applies to the period during which it is used. Individuals that do not neatly comply with one or more of these ‘inclusive’ language categories are generally excluded, or thought of as not needing inclusion or protection. Categorical boundaries of sexual orientation and gender expression are blurred by bisexuals and trans individuals but yet these individuals get understood through (or slotted into) the existing categories of sexual orientation (heterosexual/homosexual) and gender expression (the heterosexual matrix). A long history of a structured gender system of binary opposites supported by rigid boundaries and definitions is sustained through our current institutional frames. How can Canadian librarians ensure that library collections and staff work to include information and materials by, about and for all people, even those who fall outside the boundaries or are positioned on the margins of categories?

The CLA *Statement on Diversity and Inclusion* marks categories to be included thereby delineating all that fall outside or sit upon the margins of these groupings. By not including gender identity (or gender expression) in the statement of *Diversity and Inclusion* libraries continue to be unable and arguably unwilling, to provide resources for thousands of Canadians. A direct translation of this unwillingness is reflected in library policies, specifically collection development policies, and the lack of materials and resources that are provided. The exclusion of certain categories of diverse Canadians supports the current system of ‘identifying and regulating’ boundaries and definitions of what a person is and what a person can be in Canadian society. The statement of *Diversity and Inclusion* participates in the on-going creation of social norms about what is normal and what is not. The CLA’s position statements for older adults, people with disabilities, young adults and ethnic minorities set out to deal with areas that needed attention, and that without such focus might otherwise be neglected or not provided for. Position statements work to challenge assumed social norms. Professional directives keep Canadian librarians critically questioning by providing leadership in areas of human rights and social justice, as well as providing on-going opportunities for learning.

#### *Library Idiom or Language that Reflects the Real*

In 2007 the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), a piece of American legislation, was created to guarantee LGBT people (the Q was not used by ENDA) the right not to be discriminated against; a privilege taken for granted by many. ENDA became a source of pride and achievement by those people who had created the concept and crafted the wording. Donna Rose was one of those people.<sup>16</sup> Donna was the first

and only openly trans member of the Board of Directors of the Human Rights Campaign, and was the national co-chair for Diversity and co-chair for the Business Council. Donna Rose resigned October 8, 2007 after the Board of Human Rights Campaign took a 'neutral stance' in reaction to the purposed exclusion of the 'T' in the 'LGBT' in the anti-discrimination act. EDNA willing excluded trans individuals (the 'T') in order to ensure lesbians, gays and bisexuals (the 'LGB') would have coverage by the EDNA legislation. The committee reacted by stating that a victory had taken place and the winners, the lesbians, gays, and bisexuals, could now work on further legislation to protect trans individuals. The neutrality, in the case of lesbian, gay and bisexual committee members, might best be explained by the words of the late Paulo Freire, a scholar who is best known for his work titled, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970): "washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral."<sup>17</sup> Trans individuals were left behind by the EDNA legislation. The American Library Association (ALA) went back for the "T's" by tabling a resolution in 2008 insisting that the inclusion of gender identity be added to EDNA. Without inclusive language that reflects real people and real situations we do nothing more than maintain the current engrained systems of societal norms.

Also in 2008, the Social Responsibility Round Table (SRRT) within the ALA presented a new up-dated version of an interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*. The changes are titled: *Access to Library Resources and Services regardless of Sex, Gender Identity or Expression, or Sexual Orientation: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Right* (See <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/oif/statementspols/statementsif/interpretations/accesslibrary.cfm>).<sup>18</sup> This resolution uses specific terms and direct language that aims to include gender identity and expression, which opens possibilities for trans people to have similar human rights as non-trans people. The ALA recognized what ENDA had given up; trans people must be included in policies, position statements, resolutions and legislation. Moreover, the new version of the changes to the *Library Bill of Rights* are explicit in arguing that by only prohibiting discrimination against certain individuals, such as on the grounds of sexual orientation they are condoning discrimination against other individuals, such as trans people, who face ongoing daily discrimination and hatred.

Historically the CLA has often followed the lead of the bigger and older organization, the ALA, in forming position statements and policies. However, the CLA's 2008 statement on *Diversity and Inclusion* mentions neither gender identity nor expression, thereby ensuring a smooth narrative of normal sexuality and gender while casting trans people as less than human (Lloyd 155). Using terms such as gender identity and expression would begin to include trans people and alter our (mis)understanding of sex, gender and sexuality and push library rhetoric to a new attentiveness and responsiveness that would enable a growing awareness of what library patrons expect from their community libraries, academic libraries and specialized library collections. Changes to library discourse that reflect

changes in society and language facilitate Canadian librarians' ability to respond to the growing and urgent demands for access to information and materials that represent our changing environment.

Collection development policies are structural components of libraries and as such provide opportunities to work towards inclusion and awareness raising. Library policies establish foundational tools to examine the scope of individual library collections and ensure community members are served: "policies describe current collections, assist with budgeting, establish priorities, serve as a communications link between the library and its constituents, support cooperative collection development, protect intellectual freedom, and assist with gifts, deselection, and cancellations" (McGuigan and White 18). Canadian communities include trans people, and collection policies should also reflect this. The continued reduction of sex to anatomy significantly hampers librarians' abilities to provide access to information. Gender norms are the root of sex discrimination and must be (re)examined to prohibit all forms of normative gender stereotyping, regardless of one's natally assigned sex. Current categorizations used in human rights legislation, government documentation, and institutional forms are exclusive because "sex" classification systems are still based primarily upon the assumptions that sex is binary, unambiguous and can be biologically determined, despite scientific research that indicates that none of these assumptions are completely accurate (Lloyd 153).

#### *Who Uses Inclusive Language?*

In April 2008 CUPW, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers published their national newsletter with a quarter page coloured advertisement that states: "Trans rights are human rights. Celebrate Diversity. Challenge Transphobia." A picture of a butterfly (see front cover) with colourful symbols in the wings is shown and in small print beneath states: "The butterfly is the symbol of total transformation. It represents a need for change and greater freedom. At the same time it represents the courage one requires to carry out the changes necessary in the process of growth."<sup>19</sup> CUPW leads the way for other unions and institutions in its use of inclusive language; they extend human rights to clearly include trans rights. Acknowledging that transphobia exists in the workplace is the first step to challenging such forms of discrimination.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has also recognized gender identity must be included in human rights legislation and as of June 30, 2008 the Commission's Policy states that "human rights complaints of discrimination and harassment based on gender identity will be accepted under the ground of sex."<sup>20</sup> The OHRC defines trans individuals and explains how steps towards anti-discrimination will be covered: "[i]ndividuals who are discriminated against or harassed because of gender identity are legally protected under the ground of 'sex'. This includes transsexual, transgender, and intersex persons, cross-dressers, and others whose gender identity or expression is, or is seen to be, at variance with their birth-

identified sex” (OHRC Website). Accepting complaints under the category of sex serves as another example of how sex and gender continue to be conflated yet the OHRC provides hope that the systematically sanctioned discrimination against trans individuals (in Ontario at least) will no longer be acceptable. The recognition of gender identity in provincial legislation, even although it still misplaces gender identity under the category of ‘sex’, works towards creating changes and provides legal resources to fight such discrimination.

Earlier this year a report was released by The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute called *Opening the door to the inclusion of transgender people: The Nine Keys to Making Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organizations Fully Transgender-Inclusive*.<sup>21</sup> Written by Lisa Mottet and Justin Tanis, April 2008, this publication concedes the conflation between sex and gender exists even within the communities of gays and lesbians who are so often the targets of such discrimination:

...women who break out of constricting gender roles and take leadership in their communities are often branded as “lesbian” to make them stop pushing for change – whether that change means better schools for their children, clean-up of a toxic waste dump, or marriage equality. Similarly, men who visibly challenge gender conformity – by confronting male violence, expressing emotion, or embracing their artistic or “feminine” sides – are punished both socially and in the world of work. Simply, gender bias and homophobia are inextricably entwined (Mottet and Tanis 2).

Non-conforming gender traits are common amongst homosexuals, but are not the defining feature of homosexuals. Gender expression that does not match gender stereotypes of heteronormative society exposes trans individuals to threats of limited or denied access to key social institutions, as well as significant personal violence and prejudices. This document, *Opening the Door*, can help librarians who struggle to use inclusive language and terms to write more comprehensive collection development policies and provide direction to library trustee’s who have little or no experience outside normative heterosexual gender conforming roles and language.

LGBTQ organizations have often added the “T” in name only, with no authentic effort to integrate trans experience into their organizations. *Opening the Door* exposes and challenges organizations that have typically overlooked trans experience so easily while pushing these edges: “...we might ask people if they are gay, lesbian, bisexual *or* transgender, rather than seeing that a person can be lesbian, gay, or bisexual *and* transgender.” (Mottet and Tanis 2). It is important to recognize the differences and stop making assumptions based on heterosexual norms that have historically constructed binary sexes with corresponding genders. The term heteronormative describes “the cultural view of heterosexuality as normal behaviour and homosexual as deviant” (Lloyd 156). These construed

binaries idealize behaviours and categorize individuals accordingly. The categories of lesbian, gay and bisexual are all derived from one's sexual orientation and are based upon sexual desire; gender identity may have a correlation, but does not define one's sexual preference. Appropriate inclusive language is important because without it assumptions, confusion, misunderstandings and out-right discrimination persist.

*Evidence, verification, proof, confirmation  
and other forms used to deny*

Most of us know people do not neatly fit into categories that we have historically created; yet we continue to categorize based on one of two 'allowed' groupings: female or male. We believe that XY chromosomes are male and XX chromosomes are female, and that these two groupings cover everyone. But without chromosome testing, which select few ever have, how do we know what category we belong to? Chromosomes do not determine genitals, yet we usually define sex categories according to specific genitalia. One in twenty thousand men have two X chromosomes, rather than one X and one Y (Green 2). These men often do not know of their extra X chromosome until their 'female' partner cannot conceive and it has been determined through testing that she is not infertile. According to the Intersex Society of North America, one in one hundred people have bodies that differ from standard male or female. "That means that one out of one hundred bodies has some quality that doctors would specify as an abnormality of sexual differentiation. Roughly 1 in 1,000 births involves what's called ambiguous genitalia, in which the doctors can't tell by looking whether the infant is a boy or a girl" (Green 3). Scientific evidence does not support the two sex theory. Why then are we so confident that we know a person's sex by looking at them?

In Western cultures, gender is defined by our genitals. We have no culturally defined category for people who are uncomfortable with their sex or who would like to combine roles. We are very uncomfortable when we cannot determine someone's sex and we are very uncomfortable with people who try to create new gender categories (e.g., transsexuals). (Helgeson 11).

We are uncomfortable with those who *choose* to blur boundaries, such as trans individuals, but we presuppose that trans people have had the privilege of making such a choice. Masculine women and effeminate men serve as on-going examples of how instable the matrix of sex and gender is, as do men with vulvas or women with penises. Through the use of exclusive language, science has created theories that have since been repeatedly discredited; yet "we make assumptions based on what we observe, and when we find our observations were incorrect according to some arbitrary system of categorization, instead of recalibrating our categories we react with shock, horror, shame, anger, embarrassment, whatever, towards the person or object [about] which we were incorrect" (Green 5).

Gender is more than two categories. Gender is a deeply internalized sense of self. Trans people's sense of self does not always line up with what their body displays. Gender is what gets seen, it is what gets understood as sex. But if you are one of the millions of people who are somewhere in-between the correct alignment then physical evidence does not mean so much. If we had a greater tolerance for variation in gender presentation we might not need such restrictive categories. Why then do we continue to slot people into such narrowly defined terms? How can we produce organizations and policies that are more inclusive and better demonstrate diversity? Librarians must enter into this important discussion and begin to critically question language that is currently used in policies and position statements and start to move towards inclusivity.

*Language and Meaning...*

“Language does not ‘reflect’ social reality, but produces meaning, creates social reality....Language is how social organization and power are defined and contested and the place where our sense of selves, our *subjectivity*, is constructed” (Richardson 928-929). Currently library policies and position statements need to include gender identity/gender expression as recognized categories of discrimination while providing the means to deal with these prejudices. Library collections need to supply resources and materials that trans individuals can access openly. If we agree that: “[g]ender and genitals are strongholds of control binding all people to a social order that has so far had serious difficulty acknowledging diversity” (Green 184), then how can we work towards needed changes without critically questioning current policies and positions? While librarians are committed to teaching and learning all that accompanies these goals must form the work of today's librarian (Bade 90). Critically questioning how our collections and our services are developed is as important as challenging the silences that censor them.

The *Statement of Diversity and Inclusion* uses rhetoric that marks differences without acknowledging the discrimination of such limited terms. The majority seldom need examination to be understood, especially by those who, demographically, comprise what is ordinarily normal in Canadian society; heterosexual individuals whose physical bodies fit neatly into (only) two categories. These categories require no explanation because they are assumed to be experienced or at the very least understood, by everyone within society. These limitations exclude and reinforce strict boundaries that further ensure exclusion perpetuates.

Gender is not the same as sex. Discrimination against individuals whose perceived gender is misunderstood and/or confused with sexual preference takes place regularly. Best practice for librarians includes examination of how the current language creates and perpetuates assumptions about individuals whose information needs stand to be overlooked, forgotten, buried, negated, or worse ultimately erased from our collective memory by limited library policies.

#### Footnotes

1. MedicineNet.com <http://www.medterms.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=10793>. Accessed May 28, 2008
2. *Opening the Door to the inclusion of transgender people*, p. 6.
3. MedicineNet.com <http://www.medterms.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=3745>. Accessed May 28, 2008.
4. *Opening the Door*, p. 7.
5. MedicineNet.com <http://www.medterms.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=4133>. Accessed May 28, 2008.
6. See *Opening the Door to the inclusion of transgender people: The Nine Keys to Making Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Organizations Fully Transgender-Inclusive* by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute 2008: 7.
7. The Pride Library – Collection Policy <http://www.uwo.ca/pridelib/collectionpolicy.html>. Viewed June 9, 2008.
8. Facts About Homosexuality and Mental Health. Gregory M. Herek 2008. [http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/HTML/facts\\_mental\\_health.html](http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/HTML/facts_mental_health.html). Accessed May 28, 2008.
9. Equal Marriage for Same-Sex Couples. [www.equalmarriage.ca](http://www.equalmarriage.ca) Accessed May 28, 2008.
10. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms hereinafter the Charter.
11. Religious Tolerance: Gay Teacher Wins Major Civil Rights Case in Canada. [http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom\\_0063.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_0063.htm). Accessed May 28, 2008.
12. Ibid.
13. Religious Tolerance Website.
14. See Appendix B.
15. See Appendix C.
16. See Donna's Blog at <http://www.donnarose.com/Community.htm>. Accessed June 9, 2008 and August 25, 2008.
17. Taken from the Department of Sociology homepage, University of Alberta. <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/sociology/> Accessed July 20, 2008. The quote changes on an irregular bases.
18. See the American Library Association's web site <http://www.ala.org>. See Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights. Accessed August 20, 2008.
19. *CUPW Perspective* April 2008, p. 9. See Appendix "A"
20. The Ontario Human Rights Commission <http://www.ohrc.on.ca>. See News Releases Ontario Human Rights Commission Releases Policy on Gender Identity, June 21, 2008. Accessed August 25, 2008.
21. *Opening the Door to the Inclusion of Transgender People* available at: <[http://www.nctequality.org/PDFs/Opening\\_the\\_Door.pdf](http://www.nctequality.org/PDFs/Opening_the_Door.pdf)>

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