

FROM SUFFRAGE TO POSTFEMINISM: AN EVOLUTION OF THE LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS SUBJECT TREATMENT OF WOMEN'S ISSUES

by
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This paper will attempt to draw parallels between the evolution of societal views of women and the evolution of the Library of Congress subject headings and references used to describe them. The research underlying the paper was accomplished through examination of the 24 editions of the Library of Congress subject headings (1910-2001) and the different waves of feminism that occurred throughout the century. The social movements of the 1960s raised awareness of what some deemed as biased language in society, eventually prompting the Library of Congress to make significant changes to its cataloging practices and headings in the mid 1970s. From headings such as **WOMEN—SOCIAL AND MORAL QUESTIONS**, to terms such as **LESBIAN FEMINISM** and **ECOFEMINISM**, the LCSH are evidence of social change.

Headings:

Subject Headings, Library of Congress

Subject Cataloging

Subject Headings, Women

Women—United States—History—20th Century

Feminism—United States—History—20th Century

Sexism in language

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Introduction

Catalogers provide access to library materials in several different ways. For example, a patron can search for the author, the title, or the subject of a publication. Most of the time, when creating a cataloging record, documenting the author and the title is straightforward; the information is on the title page of the book. Providing subject access is more difficult. How do catalogers determine what a book is about when they have never read it? Simply assigning words found in the title can be misleading. Another problem associated with subject access is the dynamic nature of language. While the book in hand will never physically change, perhaps the language to describe it will. Determining what words best represent the content of a publication can be very subjective, and the catalogers have the burden to pick the correct words to best facilitate access for the patrons.

To help provide subject access to its own collection, the Library of Congress publishes a list of subject headings and references called the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* or LCSH. The LCSH attempts to give catalogers a controlled vocabulary from which to choose when assigning subject headings. For example, if a book were about the Women's Liberation Movement, the cataloger would look in the current edition of LCSH (in this case, the 2001 ed.) and discover that **WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT** is a former heading. The reference would tell him/her to use the heading **FEMINISM** instead. This is an attempt to manage the subject access.

The subject treatment of women's issues has been a controversial topic through the years. As society's views of women have evolved, so has the language used to describe them. As the language has evolved, so have the Library of Congress subject headings. When the Library of Congress list was first published in 1910, women were defined by the men around them. The Women's Movement of the 1960s helped to raise awareness that women were more than just wives and mothers. New areas of research emerged from that movement, and women's studies programs were created in the late 1960s. Publications in the field of women's studies have multiplied to the point where scholars cannot keep up (Amico p.vii). The word feminism has taken on new meanings throughout the century. From suffrage to postfeminism, this paper will attempt to draw parallels between the evolution of societal views of women and the evolution of the Library of Congress headings and references used to describe them.

As background, it is necessary to discuss one characteristic inherent in our society's language, that of the "male-as-norm" concept. Historically, and even today, when describing men and women, it is often the case that the male is considered the norm, and the female is the deviation (Spender p.3). This language exists in the Library of Congress subject headings from the 1st ed. (1910-1914) to the most current edition, the 24th ed. (2001). Maggio claims that the terminology used to describe people is basically to assume that everyone is "male, heterosexual, able-bodied, white, married, between the ages of 26-54, of western European extraction" (p.18). Anyone who does not fit into these categories is considered a deviation of the norm, and thus requires new methods of labeling (Spender p.3). This is most widely seen in occupational headings. The older heading **WOMEN AS LIBRARIANS** and the more current heading **WOMEN LIBRARIANS**

are illustrative of the male-as-norm concept, which is particularly interesting given that women dominate the profession of librarianship. In 1950, 89.5% of employed librarians were female (*Statistical Abstract* 1950 table 223), in 1983, 87.3% were female, and in 2000, 85.2% of the profession is female (*Statistical Abstract* 2001 table 593). Perhaps the Library of Congress does not have the literary content to warrant the heading or reference **MEN AS LIBRARIANS** since the heading **LIBRARIANS** embodies that assumption. However, it is interesting that the heading **NURSES** exists, and its counterpart is **MALE NURSES**. In 1950, approximately 98% of nurses were female (*Statistical Abstract* 1950 table 223), in 1983, 95.8% were female and, in 2000, 92.8 % of the professions is female (*Statistical Abstract* 2001 table 593). Both professions are female dominated, yet nursing is assigned a predominant female heading. Other headings such as **SPORTS FOR WOMEN** and **EDUCATION OF WOMEN** do not have male counterparts.

One policy of the Library of Congress that has never changed throughout the years is that it will only create a subject heading based on literary warrant. A subject heading will not be created unless the subject is represented in some aspect of documents in the collection. Although a subject of interest could be absent from LCSH if LC has no works on this topic in its collection, Olson states, “The collection of the Library of Congress could be construed as a fair representation of mainstream American publications, particularly through the agent of legal deposit” (“Subject Access,” 160). Even if a subject heading does not exist to represent a topic, it is possible to find a cross-reference in the alphabetical list, referring the cataloger to the preferred way of representing a subject.

The Origins of Subject Cataloging

Before discussing the Library of Congress and its headings in greater detail, it is necessary first to discuss Charles A. Cutter's influence upon subject cataloging. Cutter, who had created the printed dictionary catalog of the prestigious Boston Athenaeum in the latter part of the nineteenth century, was a firm believer in the systematic organization of knowledge. His classification schemes are the basis of the Library of Congress classification system, and his "Cutter numbers" are used in creating call numbers today (Miksa p.96). His influence is seen not only in the classification of materials, but in the subject cataloging of them as well. Miksa asserts that the fundamental rules of contemporary subject cataloging are directly derived from the works of Cutter, namely his *Rules for a Dictionary Catalog* (Miksa p.394). Its 4th edition was published in 1904. Cutter defined subject as "the theme or themes of the book, whether stated in the title or not," and a subject heading as "the name of a subject used as a heading under which books relating to that subject are entered" (Cutter p.23). Cutter identified several principles that have greatly influenced current subject cataloging practices. Some of his basic guidelines in choosing subject headings were:

1. Enter a work under its subject heading, not under the heading of a class which includes that subject.
2. Among subjects that overlap choose the one that preponderates, with a reference from the other.
3. In choosing between synonymous headings prefer the one that—
 - a. Is most familiar to the class of people who consult the library.
 - b. Is most used in other catalogs.
 - c. Has fewest meanings other than the sense in which it is to be employed.
 - d. Brings the subject into the neighborhood of other related subjects.
4. Enter books under the word which best expresses their subject, whether it occurs in the title or not.
5. Make references from general subjects to their various subordinate subjects and also to coordinate and illustrative subjects. (pgs.66-79)

In 1895, the American Library Association, of which Cutter was a co-founder, published an alphabetical list of subject headings for use in smaller collections, called the *List of Subject Headings for Use in Dictionary Catalogs*. While the list featured cross-references and a controlled vocabulary, it was not heavily based on Cutter's guidelines for subject cataloging (Miksa p.159). Using the ALA list as a guide, the Library of Congress decided to create its own list of subject headings and references for its own collection. In 1897, the Library of Congress moved into its new building and hired J.C.M. Hanson as the chief of LC's Catalog Department. Hanson faced the challenge of planning and organizing the recataloging and reclassifying the nearly one million titles in the library's collection, as well as keeping up with the new acquisitions (Miksa p.181). During Hanson's tenure at the Library of Congress from 1897-1910, he was involved in the development of the Library of Congress Classification, LC's catalog, the distribution of printed catalog cards, cataloging rules, and the Library of Congress subject headings (Immroth p.228). Hanson made the decision that the Library of Congress would create its own list of subject headings loosely based on the ALA list. The LC catalogers added headings to the list as needed, and in 1909, the Library of Congress began the release of the *Subject Headings Used in the Dictionary Catalogues of the Library of Congress*, which would be completed in 1914. Again, this list borrowed from Cutter's principles of using a controlled vocabulary and having cross-references, although Hanson's system was not quite as well defined as Cutter's principles. The massive undertaking of recataloging the collection required a pragmatic approach, and Hanson did not consider classification of knowledge in his method of subject cataloging. Hanson's approach was for the cataloger to provide access to the "topical contents of books" without

consideration of how the books would fit into the larger classification scheme (Miksa p.182). When the 2nd edition of LCSH appeared in 1919, most of the headings in the first edition had not changed a great deal, although the list had expanded somewhat to incorporate more terms that appeared in new publications that LC had cataloged. LC published supplements from time to time to update the list between editions. The updates varied from yearly to quarterly publications. When the 3rd edition of the LC list of subject headings was published in 1928, some headings concerning suffrage and the rights of women were, **WOMAN—RIGHTS OF WOMEN; WOMAN—LEGAL STATUS, LAWS, ETC.; WOMAN—SUFFRAGE**. These headings represented the literary warrant of LC's collection at that time. A new reference also was added to the 3rd edition; **FEMINISM** *See* **WOMAN, WOMAN—SOCIAL AND MORAL QUESTIONS**.

Women and Equal Rights

While the technical services activities of the Library of Congress were undergoing change in the early part of the century, so was the women's movement in the United States. Some refer to this period as the first wave of feminism. One of the goals of the movement was for women to achieve equal rights as those afforded to men (Thornham p.29). In 1919, Congress passed the 19th Amendment, and in 1920, the states ratified it. Women had won the right to vote. Groups that lobbied for the new legislation included the Woman's Party, formed in 1916 by Alice Paul and Lucy Burns and the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA), which later became the League of Women Voters (Weatherford p.380). Rupp and Taylor assert that the Woman's Party, sometimes referred to as the National Woman's Party, was a rather militant group, whereas NAWSA was considered to be more mainstream (p.5). Some argue that

feminism died with the passing of the 19th amendment (Friedan “Feminine Mystique” p.100), but these organizations continued on with the goal of the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, or ERA, first proposed in 1923 (Chafe p.47). The ERA contained the statement, “men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction.” The various women’s groups were divided over the meaning of this though, and they failed to unite to achieve the common goal of getting the amendment passed and ratified (Chafe p.47).

By the end of the 1930s, the push for equality was at a standstill due in large part to the disputes between the different factions of activists (Chafe p.47). Chafe notes that in 1916, a clarification was made to distinguish the different goals of different groups; there were the “suffragists who wished to remove a specific inequality, and feminists who aimed to transform the attitude of the entire society toward women” (p.48). It can be argued that the suffragists succeeded with the ratification of the nineteenth amendment, but the feminists did not succeed in transforming society’s views.

David J. Haykin and the “Reader as Focus”

In the 4th edition of the subject headings list published in 1943, LC published the “refer from” references in a separate volume. The 5th edition was published in 1948, although this time, LC included the “refer from” references in the same list. The list also grew from one column per page to two per page. During this time period, about 1,700 headings were added annually to the list as announced through the publication of supplements (Miksa p.336).

Not unlike Hanson, Haykin was a librarian who significantly impacted LC’s subject cataloging practices. In 1941, the Library of Congress reorganized its technical

services unit. Previously, classification was a unit unto itself with descriptive and subject cataloging another unit. Under the new arrangement, subject cataloging and classification were joined, and descriptive cataloging became a single unit (Miksa p.334). Haykin was appointed as the chief of the newly formed unit, the Subject Cataloging Division. During Haykin's tenure as its chief, from 1941 to 1952, subject cataloging policies changed somewhat from Hanson's more pragmatic approach of creating headings. Miksa asserts that Haykin was a proponent of Cutter's principle of the "reader as the focus" (p.346). While Hanson took a very practical approach to the assignment of headings, Haykin chose to follow more of a psychological approach to try to foresee what the reader would be thinking when looking for materials. Haykin stated:

The user of the catalog is the user of the library and, since the librarian's task is to make available the resources of this library to the user, the cataloger must, by the same token, make the catalog such that the reader can as quickly and as easily find out whether the library has the book he seeks. ("Fundamentals" p.82)

Similarly, Pettee, librarian of the Union Theological Seminary in New York, in her 1946 published treatise *Subject Headings: the History and Theory of the Alphabetical Subject Approach to Books*, stated:

To know what the majority of intelligent readers demand of our catalogs is fundamentally important. We are making them to serve their current and their more permanent demands. When we have acquired more accurate knowledge of the varying types of readers' demands and have conformed our catalogs more perfectly to them, this perfected uniformity will further cooperative enterprises and enable both readers and staff to move more freely from one library to another of the same type and feel equally at home in each. (p.65)

While the "reader as focus" approach to cataloging was accepted at the time, in later decades it would be the focus of controversy.

At mid-century, some librarians were growing dissatisfied with the LC list of subject headings. Post World War II, libraries were feeling pressured by the increasing

number of publications and acquisitions (Stone p.4). While descriptive cataloging rules existed, there were no rules for the usage and application of subject headings. The only guidance catalogers received was in the preface of the various editions of the LC list. Haykin published a manual in 1951 called *Subject Headings, A Practical Guide*, but it failed to provide the rules needed for usage and application. Stone further asserts that Haykin reiterated Cutter's principles of subject cataloging and tried to account for the inconsistencies with LC's list (p.4). However, this did not provide the catalogers with the necessary guidelines they so desired (Stone p.4). Stone asserts that catalogers were also displeased with LC's inability to make additions and changes quickly as needed (p.5).

Feminism at Mid-Century

During World War II, many women entered the work force for the first time and took jobs that were previously held by men. Rupp and Taylor assert that post World War II, when these women were forced out of their positions, a new "propaganda" was employed to make women feel content in their place at home (p.14). They state that "the 'Happy Housewife' of the 1950s is an image so familiar it need not be belabored: the smiling, pretty, suburban matron, devoted mother of three, loyal wife, good housekeeper, excellent cook" (p.14). Friedan says feminism became a "dirty word" because the women who believed in equality between the sexes did not embrace the social mores of motherhood, male dominance, and sexual passivity ("Feminine Mystique" p.80). Friedan further wrote:

The fact is that to women born after 1920, feminism was dead history. It ended as a vital movement in America with the winning of that final right: the vote. [...] 'Feminist' like 'career woman', became a dirty word. The feminists had destroyed the old image of woman, but they could not erase the hostility, the prejudice, the discrimination that still remained. Nor could they paint the new

image of what women might become when they grew up under conditions that no longer made them inferior to men, dependent, passive, incapable of thought or decision. (“Feminine Mystique” p.100)

Despite publications such as Beard’s *Woman as Force in History* (1946), de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1953), and Montagu’s *The Natural Superiority of Women* (1953), the women’s movement did not make much progress. The Woman’s Party, which once thrived with a membership of 60,000 in 1920, now had fringe status in society with a membership of only 200 in 1952 (Rupp and Taylor p.26).

Social Change in 1960s America

The 6th edition of the LC list was published in 1957, with the columns per page expanding from two to three, a format that remains in use today. The 7th edition appeared in 1966; the last edition to be published before the Library of Congress would receive its strongest criticism yet of LCSH. With the 8th edition in 1975, the title of the subject heading list was changed to the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* or LCSH, and the list expanded into two volumes. This is the first time the list appeared in the “big red book” format as we know it today.

The Library of Congress was (and still is) undisputedly the most powerful library institution in America. In 1901, it began selling its cataloging records to other libraries (Miksa p.178), thus enabling libraries to facilitate access to their collections through this cooperative system. When a Library of Congress catalog card was received, it could be modified to fit that particular institution’s collections. Thus, good subject retrieval in libraries nationwide became more dependent on the LCSH and the quality of the record that LC contributed (Olson “Subject Access” 165). During the 1960s and 1970s when groups began urging for social change and reform, the Library of Congress was very slow

to react, maybe understandably so (Rogers p.181). For one heading to be changed, it not only resulted in LC having to change its card, but it also potentially affected millions of other cards. Change would not only impact LC's records, but also all of the libraries' records across the country that had purchased LC's cards. Unfortunately, this resulted in libraries nationwide having cards with what some would judge to be offensive and biased subject heading terminology on them for patrons to use.

The 1960s was a period that raised a nation's consciousness. It was a time of social unrest, violence, and tense foreign relations. It was also a period that changed history. The civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam war movement, the student movement, and the women's movement were the most prominent protest movements to make an impact on society (Thornham p.30). In 1963, with the publication of Friedan's landmark *The Feminine Mystique*, feminism reemerged without the negativity the term once connoted. This so-called Second Wave of Feminism "sought to voice (in Friedan's terms, to name) women's immediate and subjective experience and to formulate a political agenda and vision" (Thornham p.31) [parenthetical in original]. This was a feminism of liberation, as opposed to the equal rights battle in the 1910s and 1920s (Thornham p.29). Some women realized that they no longer wanted to be defined in terms of their husbands, children, or fathers. Women in America were becoming more independent. A large number of women were leaving their homes to join the workforce, fertility rates went down, and awareness of sex discrimination went up (Chafe p.201). Times were changing, and people were becoming more aware that the language surrounding these social movements needed to change as well. With awareness of how sex bias in language affects women's positions in society in full swing, some in the

American library community began to realize the impact the language had on library catalogs.

Biased Language

What exactly makes language offensive and biased? Maggio discussed this in her book *Talking About People: A Guide to Fair and Accurate Language*, published in 1987.

She lists six ways in which biased language refers to people:

1. It leaves out certain individuals or groups.
2. It makes unwarranted assumptions.
3. It calls individuals and groups by names or labels that they did not choose for themselves.
4. It is based on stereotypes that imply that all lesbians/Chinese/women/people with disabilities/men/teenagers are alike.
5. It treats groups in nonparallel ways in the same context.
6. It categorizes people when it is unnecessary to do so and when this is not done in similar cases. (p.2)

If people were going to change and not use language with qualities mentioned above, then our libraries needed to change too. Why did the reference **FEMINISM See WOMAN—SOCIAL AND MORAL QUESTIONS** need to exist at all in the 1970s? Why did a patron looking up the subject **SPINSTERS**, a heading until 1966, to locate books about being single? Society was making progress with using more sensitive terminology, but was the Library of Congress?

Arguably, the time in between the publication of the 6th edition in 1957 and the publication of the 8th in 1975 is one of the most important periods of social change in American history and unquestionably of the twentieth century. Social change in the 1960s and 1970s had a great impact on the Library of Congress and its subject cataloging practices. Groups were finally raising awareness and calling attention to the biased language that had permeated society and library catalogs for years. They could assert

that if it was time to revise the offensive language in our society, it was necessary to revise the Library of Congress subject headings.

LC Under Fire

Sanford Berman, Head Cataloger at the Hennepin County Public Library, was one of the first to put pressure on the Library of Congress to change the biased terminology used in its list of headings. His book, *Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on the LC Subject Heads Concerning People*, first published in 1971, identifies what he sees as wrong with the Library of Congress practice of assigning headings, what is wrong with existing headings, and what can be done to improve the headings. He criticizes LC for its:

1. failure to promptly create and begin using headings for people-related topics actually appearing in books and other media;
2. failure to helpfully assign headings that are already available: i.e., undercataloging a given work or rendering important aspects of it invisible; and
3. Failure to compose ‘public notes’ that clarify the scope and meaning of new or unusual topics (p.6)

Marshall, another critic of LC’s policies, offered solutions in her 1977 work, *On Equal Terms: A Thesaurus for Nonsexist Indexing and Cataloging*. She discredited Haykin’s principle of the “reader as focus” by saying “the attempt to identify a single reader, and therefore the creation of a hypothetical norm, has resulted in subject descriptors which serve some and disserve or underserve the many” (p.6). She offered six principles to follow while assigning subject headings:

1. The authentic name of ethnic, national, religious, social, or sexual groups should be established if such a name is determinable.
2. In establishing subdivisions for use with the names of people or peoples, consider the connotation, in addition to the denotation, or the wording and structure of the subdivision.

3. The wording and structure of headings for minorities or other groups should not differ from headings for the majority.
4. Be specific and current. Do not use previously established terms to cover new topics.
5. Do not use subsuming terminology. Do not establish headings for some, but not all, classes of people or peoples.
6. Do not allow huge files of undifferentiated cards to accumulate under a heading. (pgs.7-9)

Marshall offered these principles because at the time, no subject cataloging manual existed, except for Haykin's treatise from 1951.

Between the publication of Berman's and Marshall's books, LC realized the need for the updating of subject headings in general and especially those relating to people or groups of people. However, some thought this momentous challenge would be too difficult. Changing millions of records was not going to happen overnight (Harris and Clack p.375). Miksa also noted that the people calling for LC to change their terms were the librarians, not the users. He asserted that certain groups with more power may benefit more from these changes, and he posed the question "can the process of choosing subject headings bear this kind of politicizing without more attention being paid to who is being represented and how that representation is being accomplished?" (p.389). He agreed that prejudicial headings should be changed, but argued that the process would be too problematic if it got politicized (p.466). Conversely, Greenblatt argued the Library of Congress "will never provide adequate access to the rich cultural diversity of information concerning groups existing outside mainstream American culture" (p.96). Whoever has the most power in society has the most power to name, but during this point in history, the power was beginning to shift. Kaplan asserted that groups with power had started to realize that to refuse access to unbiased language is to oppress groups like those of women within a social class as well as in trans-class situations (p.55).

Making Progress

Between the publication of the 8th (1975) and 9th (1980) editions, the supplement to the 8th edition (1974-1976) was released. This supplement provided some desired changes to subject headings concerning women. **FEMINISM** and **WOMEN'S STUDIES** became authorized headings, and **WOMAN—SOCIAL AND MORAL QUESTIONS** was cancelled. Instead of **WOMEN AS LIBRARIANS**, the heading was changed to **WOMEN LIBRARIANS**. Similar changes were made for other occupations in which women were engaged. A completely new section of headings appeared, those having to do with **SEX DISCRIMINATION**. The list of headings concerning women grew quickly. With the implementation of an online catalog, it became easier for LC to maintain with its expanding list of headings and references. On January 1st, 1981, the Library of Congress closed its card catalog and opened its new online catalog. Many of its bibliographic records had become automated (Foskett p.339). Now when a heading needed to be changed, it could be changed globally in a computerized database instead of having to change every single card with the former heading. As beneficial as this was for LC, libraries that purchased catalog cards were left with the same problem they had before, until they too could obtain online catalogs. In 1984, the Library of Congress published its *Subject Cataloging Manual: Subject Headings* or SCH: SH. LCSH, when used in conjunction with this manual, ceased just being a list, and finally became a subject cataloging system (Stone p.6). In 1986, the 10th edition of LCSH was published, and with the publication of the 11th edition in 1988, LCSH became an annual. With the 11th edition, *See*, *See also*, xx, x references were replaced by of thesaurus-like terminology:

BT (broader term), NT (narrower term), RT (related term), UF (used for), USE (use), and SA (see also).

Subject Access to Materials

Subject access to women's studies materials can be difficult at times because of the interdisciplinary nature of the field. Thus, it is almost impossible to find all the relevant materials in one place (Amico p.vii). Research and writing in women's studies can be found in nearly every field of academia, such as the humanities, social sciences, business, and the fine arts. Important tools have been published to facilitate access to women's studies materials. One of these aids published in 1983 was Dickstein, Mills and Waite's *Women in LC's Terms: A Thesaurus of Library of Congress Subject Headings Relating to Women*. This list brought together over 3,500 subject headings and cross-references useful to researchers, librarians, faculty and others (p.xi). Capek compiled a thesaurus in 1987 called *A Women's Thesaurus: An Index of Language Used to Describe and Locate Information By and About Women*. Although not specific to LCSH, the thesaurus brought these terms together in one place. Amico's *Reader's Guide to Women's Studies* is another attempt to provide for easy subject access for the researcher in the area of women and gender.

A barrier that can hinder subject access to a book is the practice of copy cataloging. If a book is not cataloged appropriately the first time, it runs the risk of getting perpetually miscataloged by every institution that shares the record. Berman refers to this as "bibliocide by cataloging" (Cornog p.170). If wrong, inappropriate, or what have become outdated headings are assigned to a book, it has the chance of never being found by a user. Even though subject cataloging can be very subjective at times, it is necessary

for the cataloger to be objective when assigning headings to materials. The SCM: SH has a rule about being objective when assigning terms:

Objectivity. Avoid assigning headings that label topics or express personal value judgments regarding topics or materials. Individual cataloger knowledge and judgment inevitably play a role in assessing what is significant in a work's contents, but headings should not be assigned that reflect a cataloger's opinion about the contents. Consider the intent of the author or publisher and, if possible, assign headings for this orientation without being judgmental. Follow stated intentions of the author or publisher in such matters as readership, audience level, treatment as fact or fiction, etc. (updated Feb. 2001)

The titles of feminist materials such as the book *Cunt* by Inga Muscio sometimes do not provide helpful information. In fact, some find the title to be quite shocking. The headings assigned to the book by LC are:

WOMEN
WOMEN—SOCIAL CONDITIONS
WOMEN—PSYCHOLOGY
WOMEN—IDENTITY
BODY, HUMAN—SOCIAL ASPECTS
SEXISM IN LANGUAGE
FEMINISM

They are indeed representative of the concepts of the book. However, the work *The Vagina Monologues* by Eve Ensler, gets the headings

MONOLOGUES
VAGINA
WOMEN

Some would argue that this latter example is another instance of “bibliocide by cataloging.” Both works contain a similar message; the books are about women’s self-acceptance and learning to love themselves and their bodies. In the both cases, the title contains a word that might seem shocking to some. While in the former case the headings were assigned based on content, in the latter instance, it appears as though LC chose the subject headings based on the title. When looking up the word **VAGINA** as a subject heading in the Library of Congress online catalog, nine records are retrieved,

three of which are for *The Vagina Monologues*. The other six titles are medical books dealing with health of the vagina. Also, there are twenty-six pages of subject headings that represent different aspects of woman/women. When a patron looks up the word **WOMEN** without any subdivisions notating literary form, time period, geographic location, or topical content, as a subject heading in the catalog, an overwhelming number of records are retrieved. This might raise the question as to whether more specific headings in this instance would improve the access of the book.

PC Backlash and Postfeminism

After the progress of the 1960s and 1970s, feminism and the use of what came to be known as “politically correct” or “PC” language suffered from backlash. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the phrase “politically correct” as:

From the early 1970s, *spec.* conforming to a body of liberal or radical opinion, esp. on social matters, characterized by the advocacy of approved causes or views, and often by the rejection of language, behaviour, etc., considered discriminatory or offensive.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, some groups began to complain that perhaps society was becoming too concerned with how people talk about people. This is reflected in the 2nd definition of PC in the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* 4th ed. 2000:

1. Of, relating to, or supporting broad social, political, and educational change, especially to redress historical injustices in matters such as race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. **2.** Being or perceived as being overconcerned with such change, often to the exclusion of other matters.

Much debate surrounded the use of PC language, but Doyle argues that using inclusive language aims to “clarify and distinguish, to move away from labeling and name-calling. In so doing, it reflects the positive changes taking place in our society; it enables, and

genuinely empowers” (p.152). Rogers points out that in this era of political-correctness debate, it is difficult to find an agreeable balance between following traditional prejudices on one side and overly politicizing words on the other side (p.196). Steinau Lester points out:

The group with the most social power usually doesn't notice its own language. It doesn't have to. So it can feel uncomfortable to suddenly become self-aware. Thus the common complaint, 'I can't say anything anymore. I have to walk on eggshells.'...The 'free speech' we may remember wasn't actually there for everyone in the past. The excluded group long felt silenced and invisible. (Maggio p.26)

Doyle also states that by calling a person “vertically challenged” instead of “short” is a caricature of PC, and such language will not live in society's vernacular. It is however still important to speak and write about other people with sensitivity and awareness (p.152).

Feminism also suffered from backlash in the 1980s and 1990s. Now referred to as postfeminism, its meaning is somewhat contested (Andermahr p.205). Some feminists use the term to show that feminism has succeeded in winning women's liberation and that now it is time to move on into a “postfeminist” era. Others argue that the term conveys the assumption that feminism is no longer relevant, thus producing a backlash against women trying to achieve equal status in society (Andermahr p.205). Faludi discusses the latter notion in her work *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women*, published in 1991. She asserts that

Just when record numbers of younger women were supporting feminist goals in the mid-1980s (more of them, in fact, than older women) and a majority of all women were calling themselves feminists, the media declared the advent of a younger “postfeminist generation” that supposedly reviled the women's movement. (p.xix)

When the deadline to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment expired in 1981, some believed that women had already achieved the equality they so desired with the women's rights movement. Others believed that women no longer needed the Equal Rights Amendment (Faludi p.ix). This is what Faludi termed the backlash. She stated:

Feminism is "so 70s," the pop culture's ironists say, stifling a yawn. We're "postfeminist" now, they assert, meaning not that women have arrived at equal justice and moved beyond it, but simply that they themselves are beyond even pretending to care. It is an affectlessness that may, finally, deal the most devastating blow to American women's rights. (p.72)

In the 24th edition (2001) of the LCSH, **POSTFEMINISM** does not exist as a subject heading. Rather it is a reference to **FEMINISM**. The Library of Congress does have the literary warrant for the term however; the word postfeminism appears in several of the titles in its catalog. Is this an instance of LC being slow to change, or does postfeminism need to become a more concrete, well-defined word in society?

Are We on Equal Terms Yet?

In 1991, Rogers conducted a study in which subject headings from LCSH 8 (1975) to LCSH 14 (1991) were traced to see how the subject headings concerning women had evolved. She questioned if there still existed male biased language in the subject headings after much improvement on LC's part. She found that bias is less visible than it was twenty years ago, but the eradication is still not complete. The most dramatic change in the years 1975 to 1991 was the significant growth of the number of terms concerning women. From 1980 onward, headings reflected that women have a variety of roles, not just domestic ones. They reflect a more serious and realistic view of women's roles in society (Rogers p.182).

A problem that remains, and will probably always remain to some degree is the headings used for women in various occupations. **WOMEN LIBRARIANS**, for example, is the current appropriate form for the heading. Berman and Marshall suggest the inversion, **LIBRARIANS, WOMEN** so as to put the occupation before gender. Rogers discusses that the inversion of occupational headings would be problematical. First of all, LC is trying to avoid inverted headings. Second, changing the headings would cause too many problems for libraries that still rely on card catalogs. Third, inverting the headings would scatter all the headings that refer to women through the alphabet. While the notation of **WOMEN** in a heading creates gender labels, it also brings all the headings that begin with **WOMEN** together. Rogers also asserts that paradoxically, identifying women by gender in a heading can be useful in providing access to women's studies materials (Rogers p.191).

Haykin believed it was necessary for the cataloger to use terms that a hypothetical researcher would use to access materials (Miksa p.346). Marshall points out that Haykin's idea of a hypothetical researcher, or a heterosexual, white male (p.6), will not serve the needs of the general public and the ever changing demographics of schools. (Rogers p.195) Rogers agrees with Marshall that the "library has a responsibility to be fair to the people referred to in its catalog, just as librarians have a responsibility to be fair to the users they deal with" (Rogers p.196). What if the user is looking for material with biased content? Should the library be helping to educate why the language is biased, or should the library provide easy access to the materials the users want? (Rogers p.195). Rogers states that while using biased language in some instances might give users easier access, "it would also encourage those prejudices and instill them in young readers"

(p.196). Marshall and Rogers each recommend educating the users of the library catalog, as opposed to the patrons using the inappropriate terms to search for materials.

Future of LCSH in the Twenty First Century

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Library of Congress created a list of subject terms for use in its own catalog. Today, it is the most widely used controlled vocabulary system for libraries both in the United States and around the world. In 1999, LCSH had about a quarter of a million terms (Chan and Hodges p.226), and no doubt that number will continue to grow as our language and the number of resources published expand. It was not until the 3rd edition of the list that the term **FEMINISM** appeared, and then only as a *See* reference to **WOMAN—SOCIAL AND MORAL CONDITIONS**. In the 24th edition of LCSH (2001), terms exist such as **BISEXUAL FEMINISM**, **ECOFEMINISM**, **LESBIAN FEMINISM** (See Appendix). Without the progress society has made through social reform and protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s, these terms still might not exist. As for the future of feminism, Friedan believes it will come from “the organization of the family” (“Future of Feminism” p.14). She believes that women still have not achieved the equality that groups fought for in the 1960s, and she stresses that

We must still transform institutions, physically and culturally, from the office to the home, and change the patterns of career advancement beyond the current models that tacitly assume that the worker always has a wife at home to handle life for him (“Future of Feminism” p.14).

People of the last century have shown that social and cultural revolutions are possible. Generation by generation, cultures continue to flourish and become more accepting of various groups of people and ideas. The last century has been one of greater acceptance overall. Progress in society is also reflected in our cultural institutions.

Ideally, the library is a place of open mindedness and learning. Language is the most important form of communication; as such, it is the library's responsibility to make sure that everyone can take part in this communication. Ironically, librarians have often referred to their users as "patrons." The word "patron" originates for the Latin word for "Father." However, the word has evolved and its original meaning is so far removed that it is perfectly acceptable to refer to both women and men as "patrons" (Maggio p.153).

Conclusion

By tracing the evolution of a list of terms published by the Library of Congress for use in its catalog throughout the last century, it is possible to see how American society's views and the language used to describe women have changed. Women are no longer defined in terms of their relations to men; they are distinguished by their role in society (Friedan, "Future of Feminism," p.14). LCSH today is illustrative of this observation. While some librarians might not regard subject headings and what they connote with much regard, subject headings do have an indirect impact on everyone and what the library represents. Olson states that:

Each individual librarian is responsible for LCSH in its standard form and, to an even greater degree, in its application. We cannot foist off responsibility onto the Library of Congress or onto the singular public or the literature. We must take responsibility along with the Library of Congress and use it according to the long-standing ethic of our profession to promote universal access. ("Difference," p.70)

Librarianship is not merely a profession about providing access to books on shelves.

Everyone involved in the library is socially responsible for the users. Users deserve to be treated fairly and to have adequate access to the materials that they may possibly need.

Looking at subject headings and how the treatment of women has changed from a

historically contextual viewpoint is necessary, because a reflection on the past provides a better understanding of the future.

Appendix: LCSH and the term Feminism

The entries for FEMINISM in LCSH from the 1st edition in 1910-1914 to the 24th edition in 2001 are presented here. It shows the evolution of a single term that went from being a reference to an authorized heading. Only the word feminism is considered and not headings such headings as FEMINISM IN ART, FEMINISM IN LITERATURE, etc.

While many supplements were published between editions, only the one with the most significant changes is included. The supplement to the 8th ed. 1974-1976 documents the changes where feminism ceased being a *See* reference and became an authorized heading. The word CANCEL appears in the supplement to the 8th ed. It only applies to the term that appears directly below it.

Beginning with the 9th ed. (1980), a term with [NEW] indicates that it was a new addition under the term feminism for that edition. A term with a strikethrough indicates that it was omitted from future editions.

1st edition 1910-1914**2nd edition 1919****3rd edition 1928**

Feminism. *See* Woman; Woman—*Social and moral questions*.

4th edition 1943

Feminism. *See* Woman; Woman—*Social and moral questions*.

5th edition 1948

Feminism. *See* Woman; Woman—*Social and moral questions*

6th edition 1957

Feminism. *See* Woman; Woman—*Social and moral questions*

7th edition 1966

Feminism.

See Woman

Woman—Social and moral questions

8th edition 1975

Feminism

See Woman

Woman—Social and moral questions

Supplement to the 8th edition 1974-1976

CANCEL:

Feminism

CANCEL:

See Woman

CANCEL:

Woman—Social and moral questions

Feminism (*Indirect*) (*HQ1101-2030.7*)

sa Feminists

CANCEL:

International Women's Year

International Women's Year, 1975

Radical therapy

Sex discrimination against women

Women—History

Women—Legal status, laws, etc.

- Women—Social conditions
- Women's rights
- x Women's lib
- Women's liberation movement
- xx Women
- Information services (*Indirect*)

9th edition 1980

Feminism (*indirect*) (HQ1101-2030.7)

- sa Bible and feminism [NEW]
- Feminists
- International Women's Year, 1975
- Radical therapy
- Sex discrimination against women
- Women—History
- Women—Legal status, laws, etc.
- Women—Social Conditions
- Women's rights
- x Women's lib
- Women's liberation movement
- xx Women
- Information services (*Indirect*)

10th edition 1986

Feminism (*Indirect*) (HQ1101-2030.7)

- sa Bible and feminism
- Feminist motion pictures [NEW]
- Feminist theater [NEW]
- Feminist therapy [NEW]
- Feminists
- International Women's Year, 1975
- Radical therapy
- Sex discrimination against women
- Women—History
- Women—Legal status, laws, etc.
- Women—Social conditions
- Women's rights
- x Women's lib
- Women's liberation movement
- Women
- Bibliography [NEW]
 - sa Feminist Literature [NEW]
 - xx Feminist Literature [NEW]
- Religious aspects [NEW]
 - —Baptists [Catholic Church, etc.] [NEW]
 - —Buddhism [Christianity, etc.] [NEW]

11th edition 1988**Feminism** (May Subd Geog)

[HQ1101-2030.7]

- UF Women's lib
Women's liberation movement
- BT Women
- NT Feminist motion pictures
~~Feminist theater~~
Feminist therapy
Feminists
International Women's Decade, 1976-1985 [NEW]
International Women's Year, 1975
Radical therapy
Sex discrimination against women
Women—History
Women—Legal status, laws, etc.
Women—Social conditions
Women's rights
- Bibliography**
RT Feminist literature
- Religious aspects**
NT Bible and feminism [MOVED]
- —**Baptists [Catholic Church, etc.]**
- —**Buddhism [Christianity, etc.]**

12th edition 1989**Feminism** (May Subd Geog)

[HQ1101-2030.7]

- UF Women's lib
Women's liberation movement
- BT Women
- NT ~~Feminist motion pictures~~
Feminist therapy
Feminists
International Women's Decade, 1976-1985
International Women's Year, 1975
Radical therapy
Sex discrimination against women
Women—History
Women—Legal status, laws, etc.
Women—Social conditions
Women's rights
- Bibliography**
RT Feminist literature
- Religious aspects**
NT Bible and feminism
- —**Baptists [Catholic Church, etc.]**
- —**Buddhism [Christianity, etc.]**
- —**Christianity** [NEW]

13th edition 1990**Feminism** (May Subd Geog)

[HQ1101-2030.7]

- UF Women's lib
 - Women's liberation movement
- BT Women
- NT Feminist therapy
 - Feminists
 - International Women's Decade, 1976-1985
 - International Women's Year, 1975
 - Psychoanalysis and feminism [NEW]
 - Radical therapy
 - Sex discrimination against women
 - Women—History
 - Women—Legal status, laws, etc.
 - Women—Social conditions
 - Women's rights
- Bibliography**
 - RT Feminist literature
- Religious aspects**
 - NT Bible and feminism
- Baptists [Catholic Church, etc.]**
- Buddhism [Christianity, etc.]**
- Christianity**

14th edition 1991**Feminism** (May Subd Geog)

[HQ1101-2030.7]

- UF Women's lib
 - Women's liberation movement
- BT Women
- RT International Women's Year, 1975 [MOVED]
- NT Feminist theory [NEW]
 - Feminist therapy
 - Feminists
 - International Women's Decade, 1976-1985
 - Psychoanalysis and feminism
 - Radical therapy
 - Sex discrimination against women
 - Women—History
 - Women—Legal status, laws, etc.
 - Women—Social conditions
 - Women's rights

- Bibliography**
 - RT Feminist literature
- Philosophy** [NEW]
 - USE Feminist theory [NEW]
- Religious aspects**
 - NT Bible and feminism
- Baptists [Catholic Church, etc.]**
- Buddhism [Christianity, etc.]**
- Christianity**

15th edition 1992

Feminism (May Subd Geog)

[HQ1101-2030.7]

- UF Women's lib
 - Women's liberation movement
 - Women's movement [NEW]
 - Women
- NT Ecofeminism [NEW]
 - Feminist theory
 - Feminist therapy
 - Feminists
 - Psychoanalysis and feminism
 - Radical therapy
 - Sex discrimination against women
 - Women—History
 - Women—Legal status, laws, etc.
 - Women—Social conditions
 - Women's rights
- Bibliography**
 - RT Feminist literature
- International cooperation** [NEW]
 - NT International Women's Decade, 1976-1985 [MOVED]
 - International Women's Year, 1975 [MOVED]
- Philosophy**
 - USE Feminist theory
- Religious aspects**
 - NT Bible and feminism
- Baptists [Catholic Church, etc.]**
- Buddhism [Christianity, etc.]**
- Christianity**

16th edition 1993**Feminism** (May Subd Geog)

[HQ1101-2030.7]

- UF Women's lib
 - Women's liberation movement
 - Women's movement
- BT Women
- NT Ecofeminism
 - Feminist theory
 - Feminist therapy
 - Feminists
 - Psychoanalysis and feminism
 - Radical therapy
 - Sex discrimination against women
 - Women—History
 - Women—Legal status, laws, etc.
 - Women—Social conditions
 - Women's rights
- Bibliography**
 - RT Feminist literature
- International cooperation**
 - NT International Women's Decade, 1976-1985
 - International Women's Year, 1975
- Moral and ethical aspects** [NEW]
 - RT Feminist ethics [NEW]
- Philosophy**
 - USE Feminist theory
- Religious aspects**
 - NT Bible and feminism
- —**Baptists [Catholic Church, etc.]**
- —**Buddhism [Christianity, etc.]**
- —**Christianity**

17th edition 1994**Feminism** (May Subd Geog)

[HQ1101-2030.7]

- UF Women's lib
- Women's liberation movement
- [Former heading] [NEW]
- Women's movement

~~BT—Women~~

- NT Bisexual feminism [NEW]
- Ecofeminism
- Feminist theory
- Feminist therapy
- Feminists
- Lesbian feminism [NEW]
- Psychoanalysis and feminism
- Radical therapy
- Sex discrimination against women
- Women—History
- Women—Legal status, laws, etc.
- Women—Social conditions
- ~~Women's rights~~

—Bibliography

- RT Feminist literature

—International cooperation

- NT International Women's Decade, 1976-1985
- International Women's Year, 1975

—Moral and ethical aspects

- RT Feminist ethics

—Philosophy

- USE Feminist theory

—Religious aspects

- NT Bible and feminism

— —Baptists [Catholic Church, etc.]**— —Buddhism [Christianity, etc.]****— —Christianity**

18th edition 1995**Feminism** (May Subd Geog)

[HQ1101-2030.7]

- UF Women's lib
 - Women's liberation movement
 - [Former heading]
 - Women's movement
- NT Bisexual feminism
 - Ecofeminism
 - Feminist theory
 - Feminist therapy
 - Feminists
 - Lesbian feminism
 - Psychoanalysis and feminism
 - Radical therapy
 - Sex discrimination against women
 - Women—History
 - Women—Legal status, laws, etc.
 - Women—Social conditions
- Bibliography**
 - RT Feminist literature
- Indian influences** [NEW]
 - BT Indians [NEW]
- International cooperation**
 - NT International Women's Decade, 1976-1985
 - International Women's Year, 1975
- Moral and ethical aspects**
 - RT Feminist ethics
- Philosophy**
 - USE Feminist theory
- Religious aspects**
 - NT Bible and feminism
- —**Baptists [Catholic Church, etc.]**
- —**Buddhism [Christianity, etc.]**
- —**Christianity**

19th edition 1996**Feminism** (May Subd Geog)

[HQ1101-2030.7]

- UF Women's lib
 - Women's liberation movement
 - [Former heading]
 - Women's movement
- NT Bisexual feminism
- Ecofeminism
- Feminist geography [NEW]
- Feminist theory
- Feminist therapy
- Feminists
- Lesbian feminism
- Psychoanalysis and feminism
- Radical therapy
- Sex discrimination against women
- Women—History
- Women—Legal status, laws, etc.
- Women—Social conditions
- Bibliography**
 - RT Feminist literature
- Indian influences**
 - BT Indians
- International cooperation**
 - NT International Women's Decade, 1976-1985
 - International Women's Year, 1975
- Moral and ethical aspects** (May Subd Geog)
 - RT Feminist ethics
- Philosophy**
 - USE Feminist theory
- Religious aspects**
 - NT Bible and feminism
- —**Baptists [Catholic Church, etc.]**
- —**Buddhism [Christianity, etc.]**
- —**Christianity**
- Songs and music** [NEW]
 - USE Feminist music [NEW]

20th edition 1997**Feminism** (May Subd Geog)

[HQ1101-2030.7]

- UF Women's lib
 - Women's liberation movement
 - [Former heading]
 - Women's movement
- RT Anti-feminism [NEW]
- NT Anti-rape movement [NEW]
 - Bisexual feminism
 - Ecofeminism
 - Feminist geography
 - Feminist theory
 - Feminist therapy
 - Feminists
 - Lesbian feminism
 - Psychoanalysis and feminism
 - Radical therapy
 - Sex discrimination against women
 - Women—History
 - Women—Legal status, laws, etc.
 - Women—Social conditions
- Bibliography**
 - RT Feminist literature
- Indian influences**
 - BT Indians
- International cooperation**
 - NT International Women's Decade, 1976-1985
 - International Women's Year, 1975
- Moral and ethical aspects** (May Subd Geog)
 - RT Feminist ethics
- Philosophy**
 - USE Feminist theory
- Religious aspects**
 - NT Bible and feminism
- Baptists [Catholic Church, etc.]**
- Buddhism [Christianity, etc.]**
- Christianity**
- Songs and music**
 - USE Feminist music

21st edition 1998**Feminism** (May Subd Geog)

[HQ1101-2030.7]

- UF Women's lib
 - Women's liberation movement
 - [Former heading]
 - Women's movement
- RT Anti-feminism
- NT Anti-rape movement
 - Bisexual feminism
 - Ecofeminism
 - Feminist geography
 - Feminist theory
 - Feminist therapy
 - Feminists
 - Lesbian feminism
 - Nationalism and feminism [NEW]
 - Psychoanalysis and feminism
 - Radical therapy
 - Sex discrimination against women
 - Women—History
 - Women—Legal status, laws, etc.
 - Women—Social conditions
- Bibliography**
 - RT Feminist literature
- Indian influences**
 - BT Indians
- International cooperation**
 - NT International Women's Decade, 1976-1985
 - International Women's Year, 1975
- Moral and ethical aspects** (May Subd Geog)
 - RT Feminist ethics
- Philosophy
 - USE Feminist theory
- Religious aspects**
 - NT Bible and feminism
- —**Baptists [Catholic Church, etc.]**
- —**Buddhism [Christianity, etc.]**
- —**Christianity**
- Songs and music**
 - USE Feminist music

22nd edition 1999

NO CHANGES

23rd edition 2000

NO CHANGES

24th edition 2001**Feminism** (May Subd Geog)

[HQ1101-2030.7]

- UF Emancipation of women [NEW]
- Women emancipation [NEW]
- Women's lib
- Women's liberation [NEW]
- Women's liberation movement
- [Former heading]
- Women's movement
- BT Social movements [NEW]
- RT Anti-feminism
- NT Anti-rape movement
- Bisexual feminism
- Ecofeminism
- Feminist geography
- Feminist theory
- Feminist therapy
- Feminists
- Lesbian feminism
- Nationalism and feminism
- Psychoanalysis and feminism
- Radical therapy
- Sex discrimination against women
- Women—History
- Women—Legal status, laws, etc.
- Women—Social conditions
- Bibliography**
- RT Feminist literature
- Indian influences**
- BT Indians
- International cooperation**
- NT International Women's Decade, 1976-1985
- International Women's Year, 1975
- Moral and ethical aspects** (May Subd Geog)
- RT Feminist ethics
- Philosophy**
- USE Feminist theory
- Religious aspects**
- NT Bible and feminism
- Baptists [Catholic Church, etc.]**
- Buddhism [Christianity, etc.]**
- Christianity**
- Songs and music**
- USE Feminist music

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