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Personal Expressive Bibliography in the Public Space of Cultural Heritage Institutions

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Abstract

Through their composition, arrangement and description, collections of objects and information resources, including those held by libraries, archives, and museums, tell a form of story; principles of selection, organization, and description produce an interpretive frame that shapes the meaning of each collection. Within cultural heritage institutions, however, such effects may run counter to longstanding goals and values. While interoperable information management systems, for example, facilitate universal access, the goal of interoperability constrains the generation of distinctively expressive descriptive systems. User-supplied collections of citations, however, are free to exploit a wider communicative potential of collecting and describing than those from the institutional perspective, and can provide an intriguing counterpoint to it. This article examines three means by which such personal, expressive bibliographies may communicate differently from institutional collections: through eclectic goals for collecting and describing, through a unique authorial voice, and through engagement with emotional experience. Expressive bibliographies that display such characteristics exhibit the combination of control and ambiguity that Umberto Eco (2009) calls the poetry of lists.

Introduction

Deep within its website, the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) makes available several organized sets of descriptive information about its holdings, as selected, arranged, and annotated by patrons. One showcases a group of items according to color; another characterizes particular objects as

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instructive for a teenager's homeschooling. A third set identifies works that the author was surprised to find at SAM. Similarly, the University of Pennsylvania library catalog's PennTags system enables users to create themed collections, or "projects." Subjects range from sociology research techniques and machinima as fan culture to resources selected for Penn courses ("Psychology 200"). As documents, these bibliographies—which seems their most precise name, as they select and arrange citations to other materials—enable the creation of a focused, distinctive attention that turns metadata into a form of creative communication and a supplementary access mechanism to what is provided by the sponsoring institution.

Bibliography, in its sense as collecting, classifying, and arranging citations, seems an old-fashioned type of scholarly exercise, its utility perhaps obsolete in a world of search engines and automatic links to materials. But the Web's surfeit of networked information has made filtering take on a new importance, especially filtering that exhibits discernment and flair. One reason for the popularity of social software systems such as LibraryThing and Flickr has, I think, been their ability to supply a human element to information management, to reinvigorate compilation with creativity. As they anticipate potential audiences, citation compilers become authors, transforming private lists into coherent public expression. A Facebook profile is not merely a list of contacts as one might maintain in a private desk drawer; with its public audience and associated communicative purpose, Facebook becomes a bibliography of friends, where selection and arrangement principles create meaning in the assembled group. I call these personal collections of citations, selected, organized, and described by users, "expressive bibliographies," because, unlike traditional bibliography, these collections may be designed to express the unique perspective of their authors toward the material that they collect and arrange.

While expressive bibliographies may incorporate user-supplied index terms, or tags, expressive bibliographies are distinct from folksonomy, or the aggregation of all tags contributed to a resource collection. An expressive bibliography is a single user's collection of resources, typically a small subset of larger institutional holdings. While an individual expressive bibliography may be organized using tags assigned by its author, a folksonomy gathers every user's tag for every item in an entire resource database. Tagging and folksonomy have interested libraries and museums for their potential to enhance retrieval and spark user participation (in Library and Information Science, see for example, Furner, 2009; in museum studies, see for example Trant, 2006; Chan, 2007; Cameron, 2008). Some commentators, however, have noted that the unclear semantics of tags can decrease the coherence of resource descriptions and impede precision (see, e.g., Macgregor and McCulloch, 2006). Folksonomies can incorporate many voices in a single descriptive system, but disentangling each strand of meaning is difficult as tags typically lack context or expla-

nation. Each expressive bibliography, in contrast, represents a single alternative perspective. Compared with folksonomy, the personal collections that constitute expressive bibliography have been little studied.

In this article, I describe three salient characteristics of expressive bibliographies: eclecticism, voice, and emotional intimacy. I draw upon literature from systematic bibliography, composition studies, museum collecting, and cultural studies to describe these characteristics and show how they work in case studies from SAM and PennTags. Through engagement with the examples, I locate a unifying principle to guide the articulation of these characteristics: Umberto Eco's (2009) notion of the poetic list. I contrast the expressive potential of the poetic collection with traditional descriptive goals of libraries, archives, and museums—universal access, preservation of evidentiary context, and cultural education—and discuss how encouraging the development of expressive bibliographies in the poetic mode might provide a worthwhile counterpoint to established descriptive systems in cultural heritage institutions.

Eclecticism: Imaginative Goals for Selection and Description

Libraries, archives, and museums have longstanding goals associated with collection and description. To facilitate access to information, libraries obtain materials that serve a local community's needs while working to standardize descriptive practices to enable federated searching across multiple collections. To preserve the evidentiary status of records, archives select and describe materials to provide documentation of the context established by the record creator. To safeguard and study culturally important materials and to educate the public about their significance, museums gather both typical examples and unique specimens, and display and describe their holdings in ways that explain each object's role in a particular cultural heritage. These goals have, in turn, formed convictions in each institutional context about what constitutes a resource collection and its associated descriptive attributes. A library's collection, for example, typically comprises material deemed suitable for general borrowing by the local community. The primary access points of author, title, and subject, which align with Cutter's nineteenth-century formulation of public library user needs, are applied throughout. If a library finds itself in possession of articles that do not fit these basic characteristics—an art object that cannot, even broadly construed, be "read," or manuscripts too fragile to circulate—these are often separated from the main holdings in special collections that are described differently and are typically not included in the primary library catalog.

Such fundamental assumptions about collection composition and description persist, despite scholarly undercurrents, in all cultural heritage institutions in relation to the contingent, historical, and political nature

of collecting and describing. According to such analyses, the composition, structure, and description of collections creates an interpretive frame through which each item in the assembled group obtains a contextualized meaning. Any grouping and associated description of resources is but one of potentially innumerable valid accounts. In the library and information science context, for example, Mai (2004) suggests that "classifying bibliographic material has much more to do with interpretation and judgments than with logic," while the archivists Duff and Harris (2002) contend that "description is always story telling—intertwining facts with narratives, observation with interpretation." In the museum environment, Hooper-Greenhill (2000) examines how description and arrangement may endow similar objects with different interpretations. She shows, for example, how two collections of traditional Maori objects, one gathered by a Maori woman living in England as part of an authoethnography project, and one gathered by an English tourist, tell different stories about the Maori experience, about the practice of anthropology, and about the intersection between traditional cultures and colonial powers.

Especially in library and information science, because descriptive attributes, such as author, title, and subject, are more extensively standardized, critiques tend to focus on the assignment of values to descriptive attributes (such as the headings associated with the subject field in a catalog record), or on the design of value schemes (such as subject headings or classifications), as opposed to questions about the overall structure of the attributes comprising the descriptive schema (such as "subject" or "author," that characterize the resources) or the basic composition of the collection itself. In examining the limitations of the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) for describing materials about women, for example, Hope Olson (1998) shows how the term *unpaid employment,* a concept included in the *Women's Thesaurus* (Capek, 1987), can only be mapped to the class for *labor actively employed* in DDC. *Homemaking,* a related term to *unpaid employment* in the *Women's Thesaurus,* is only characterized in DDC as a technology, without an association to labor. The DDC cannot, according to Olson's analysis, tell a story of unpaid work, as the *Women's Thesaurus* can; it can only distinguish between traditional employment and other activities, and a book that analyzes homemaking as unpaid employment can only fit "uncomfortably" into the DDC's structure. Studies such as Olson's convincingly show how changing values assigned to the subject attribute (which may require adapting the value scheme) can lead to different interpretations of collected resources. They do not, however, propose changing the descriptive structure entirely, perhaps by supplementing the subject attribute with properties for political orientation, epistemological perspective, methodology, intended audience, and so on. Theorists such as Hjorland (1998) have contended that the idea of a subject should incorporate some of these additional characteristics, that, for example,

the concept of "personality" in the subject domain of psychology depends for its definition on the school of thought—behaviorist, psychoanalytic, and so on—adopted by a resource author. This approach makes a case for expanding the subject attribute, not for expanding the basic schema for library description. However, it is not a failure of the imagination that amendments to the overall descriptive apparatus are not more widely discussed; standard means of description are necessary in attempting to achieve interoperability of records, a goal considered by many as leading to progress toward universal information access.

Duff and Harris (2002) directly address the tension between the utility of descriptive standards and the tendency of standard structures to encourage particular sorts of stories from resource collections. They acknowledge that, within the archival environment, collaborative projects between institutions require a level of descriptive uniformity. To enable both evolving and alternative conceptions of records, Duff and Harris imagine descriptive systems that are "permeable to the naming work of users, and respect (rather than banish) prior namings when new ones are articulated." They suggest that user annotation might help accomplish such goals, echoing similar endorsement of annotation by Light and Hyry (2002) and Yakel, Shaw, and Reynolds (2007) (Duff and Harris, 2002, p. 285).

Museums may be less concerned with interoperability of their collections databases, though along with archives, they may feel a duty to maintain an authoritative stance in their descriptive practices. Cameron and Mengler (2009) note how, amid the fluidity and abundance of Web information, users continue to trust the reliability and authenticity of museum sources. With a strategy similar to the support for annotation presented in archival literature, Russo et al. (2008) suggest maintaining this authority but extending it through social media applications that invite user participation. They provide an example of a museum blog post that is then commented upon by users. Cameron (2008) suggests the incorporation of user tags into museum collection information, in the folksonomic manner implemented by the Powerhouse Museum in Australia, as described by Chan (2007).

Expressive bibliographies may transcend the possibilities of user annotation and folksonomy by enabling users to devise not only their own descriptive attributes and associated values, but to reconfigure the collection itself. Unencumbered by institutional goals and expectations for collection composition and description, authors of expressive bibliographies can create collections that display an eclectic sensibility regarding resource selection and description. For example, one creator of a personal collection at the Seattle Art Museum, "Dr.Dada," plucked examples from diverse cultures, time periods, styles, and media to illustrate the role of color in contributing to an artwork's aesthetic impression and emotional force. Dr.Dada's annotations on the selected objects describe color inten-

sity ("translucent," "glowing," "dense," "muted," "bold") and the effects produced by differing color depths and contrasts ("smoldering," "melting candy-jewels").

For Pearce (1994), systematic purpose and distinct organizational principles distinguish institutional from personal collecting. Pearce associates personal collecting with the retention of souvenir items as "samples of events which can be remembered, but not relived" and with "fetishistic" collection, which concentrates on one type of item (canes, stamps, maple syrup containers). Personal collecting is centered on identity formation, or "an attempt to create a satisfactory private universe." Public, institutional collecting on the other hand is a "positive intellectual act designed to demonstrate a point" (Pearce, 1994, p. 195, p. 202). Pearce's position echoes Susan Stewart (1984, p. 154), who notes, "to ask which principles of organization are used in articulating the collection is to begin to discern what the collection is about." A systematic and public collection as opposed to a private collection uses its selected items to display the validity of the organizational scheme it embodies. The collection and its descriptive systems require an audience that the collection might then instruct, provoke, delight, and so on. A collection of Japanese pottery might, for example, show its audience how certain vase forms evolved over time. The audience then knows and can appreciate the significance of form as an attribute in more fully experiencing the artistry of Japanese pottery. The institution's collecting policies will be influenced by these organizational principles. A museum might try to obtain representative and exceptional instantiations of all recognized forms and their variations, for example. In this formulation, while a private collector might be tempted by any example of Japanese pottery that tickles his or her fancy, an institution will actively collect items to express the categories it has identified as important.

Such distinctions between systematic, public collections and private, identity-focused ones can blur in expressive bibliography. Certainly some portion of expressive bibliographies are focused around a potentially haphazard, underspecified sense of personal taste, and so represent primarily an idea of what the author likes and by extension who the author is. In the personal collections made available by the Seattle Art Museum, the example created by "laurenmurphy" exhibits these characteristics. This collection is titled "My favorite works." The collection-level description offers the clarification that the author's favorites are contemporary pieces in the permanent collection, but it does not explain any set of properties that these favorites share or any organizing principles that one might use to gain a deeper sense of the relationships between the collected examples. Although it is possible in the implementation adopted by SAM to annotate each selection in one's personal collection, "laurenmurphy" rarely includes additional descriptions. When these do appear, they mostly reiterate the author's fondness for a work without explaining the nature of

that fondness. Web bookmark collections in services such as Delicious are often similar. For example, the Delicious user "deliciousdko" has tags that span subjects from "blog" "guitar," "nintendo," "portland," to "economics." A reader's primary sense of what connects these topics is their interest to "deliciousdko."

However, other expressive bibliographies present a more focused sensibility in the systematic mode that Pearce calls "public." A PennTags project created by "rodrigue" for medical students in a clinical decision-making class emphasizes resources that adhere to standards of evidence-based medicine, thus advocating a data-driven approach to medical practice. Another SAM personal collection, authored by "coffic1," was created to introduce a homeschooled teenager to fine art. As explained by "coffic1," items in her collection were selected on the basis of their "ingenuity of construction" or their "visceral appeal." Furthermore, "coffic1" uses item-level annotations to explain how each work fits one of these categories. For example, a Saint-Gaudens sculpture is selected because of the way in which the artist makes clay mimic the appearance of fabric and a painting is chosen for its pure Cubist expression of different perspectives of an object. While "coffic1's" collection incorporates some measure of personal identity construction as well—she acknowledges idiosyncratic preference as an additional contributor to her resource selection, for example—the collection design is equally purposeful and consistent. In noting her fondness for Cubist art, "coffic1" does not merely offer examples of Cubist works as components of personality or taste; instead, she explains how Cubism fascinates her and thus offers a systematic rationale for including such articles in the collection.

Moreover, both the PennTags project and the SAM collection are clearly addressed to an outside public; their fashioning reflects consideration of an audience. Where the applicability of a resource to clinical decision making seems unclear, "rodrigue" clarifies this. For example, a resource titled simply "BestBETs" is annotated to show its connection to evidence-based medicine: "BETs (Best Evidence Topics) were developed in the Emergency Department of Manchester Royal Infirmary, UK, to provide rapid evidence-based answers to real-life clinical questions." Were this project for "rodrigue's" personal use, such information might not have been necessary. Similarly, "coffic1" uses significant detail in describing herself, her teenage friend Bret, and her goals in educating Bret about art, thus setting the stage for an outside audience to appreciate the collection, perhaps appropriating it for additional uses, such as introducing art to a person completely different from a homeschooled teenager (an educated retiree, maybe). In contrast, while Delicious user "deliciousdko's" bookmarks are technically public, in the sense of being accessible over the Internet, they are not packaged as such; no annotations clarify the meaning of categories or relationships, or discuss why certain resources were selected.

The nature of bibliography as collections of citations or surrogates without the need to locate, purchase, store, and display physical objects, may encourage commitment to the eclectic range of purposes that appear to motivate this type of collecting activity. In addition, expressive bibliographies are easier than traditional bibliographies for authors to construct, and they provide a more immediate and engaging experience for their readers. On the authoring side, putting together a traditional bibliography of print works can require extensive, time-consuming research complete with trips to multiple physical locations, depending on the scale of the work. From the perspective of audience experience, a traditional bibliography, even one that is extensively annotated, can only be fully appreciated over time, as potentially interesting resources are located and evaluated. An online expressive bibliography can be created in a few moments, published initially and then endlessly revised as new ideas strike; readers can access the collected resources immediately through links (for text works) or included representations (for art images).

Voice: Expressing Purpose with a Unique Vision

With a traditional systematic bibliography on a particular subject as prepared by an information professional or scholar, ideas of authorial voice or vision would seem to be irrelevant. The standard design principle for such bibliographies has been a neutral, objective comprehensiveness. The creators of these bibliographies have considered themselves compilers, not authors. According to traditional practice, a bibliography of, say, vegetarianism should include all available information on that subject and nothing else. These design ideals have been emphasized by historians of systematic bibliography such as Besterman (1936) and Balsamo (1990). Both Balsamo and Besterman praise the sixteenth-century bibliographer Conrad Gesner for inclusiveness and employing a universal classification, while Balsamo criticizes the politically motivated bibliographies of religious authorities, such as the Catholic Possevino, whose ideologically slanted selection criteria are described as pernicious bias. Certainly, when political authority is wielded to restrict resource access, as Reformation-era Catholic Church authorities intended, the free flow of ideas is threatened. However, as Marcia Bates (1976) comments, all bibliographies of necessity must incorporate some editorial judgment in their construction. In other words, no bibliography can avoid a measure of the Possevino approach. All bibliographies employ some form of selection criteria, and no system of organization is universal across situation, subject, and time; such inevitable decisions endow each collection with a distinct character.

As noted in the previous section, researchers throughout the cultural heritage landscape have come to acknowledge difficulties associated with assumptions of disinterested objectivity in collection design and description. Within the institutional contexts of libraries, archives, and museums,

however, disciplinary values and commitments may hinder the embrace of authorial voice as a purposeful element of collection design and description. The goal of interoperability between descriptive systems, for example, seems to demand uniformity of approach as evidenced by the development of content and format standards such as the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR2), Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS), and Cataloging Cultural Objects (CCO) for description in libraries, archives, and museums. For many, as well, longstanding professional ideals such as intellectual freedom in libraries inspire continued striving for a neutral orientation, even as the impossibility of complete objectivity is recognized. Most critiques of "bias" in library information systems, for example, identify problematic opinions in order to correct them (for a review of such studies, see Olson and Schlegl, 2001). In other words, at least within public institutions of cultural heritage, a continuing orientation toward the ideal of neutrality suggests that a perspective should be adopted that strips out offending voices rather than exploiting them to illustrate diversity of thought. Perhaps because of such commitments, the contributions that authorial vision and character might make to the experience of collections and associated descriptions have yet to be widely studied.

Expressive bibliography offers a means by which the variety of communicative possibilities of collection design and description can be more fully examined. To support such an endeavor, it is useful to consider concepts of authorial voice from rhetoric and composition studies. Peter Elbow (2007) describes how ideas of voice in this field have evolved. In the 1960s and 1970s, voice was associated with a sense of agency, authenticity, and "rhetorical power" in keeping with a pedagogical focus on individual expression. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, voice and individualist pedagogy in general were subjected to postmodern critique. Scholars and writing teachers focused more on ideas about the social construction of the text and became cynical about authorial intention, which seemed inextricably connected with voice. The idea of the writer as a coherent self or autonomous agent was repudiated as an artifact of hegemonic discourses (Faigley, 1992).

One need not equate the expressive qualities of a text with a particular author's actual identity or intentions. Wayne Booth (1983) asserts that authenticity in writing results from the textual construction of an implied author not from the writer's actual self. In addition, even within the coordinated structures of a particular discourse community, rhetorical situation, and set of genre conventions, writers make choices that contribute to a unique authorial presence (Clark and Ivanic, 1997; Johnstone, 1996). Johnstone, a sociolinguist, comments that "self-expression plays a crucial role in . . . mediating between options and outcome" and notes that "even the most formulaic genres" such as thank-you notes can be "self-expressive in the hands of good writers" (Johnstone, 1996, pp. 90, 179).

In this vein, Matsuda defines voice as an "amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from socially available yet ever-changing repertoires" (Matsuda, 2001, p. 40). In this definition, voice represents the overarching quality of difference that distinguishes one writer's response from another's despite social constraints. In fact, one could say that such constraints contribute to voice by marking deviations. A thank-you note that manages to express a singular voice indeed stands out.

The textual features that combine to convey voice are often described as stylistic, referring to form but not content (as in Elbow, 2007). Clark and Ivanic (1997) comment, however, that content choices may reveal authorial presence more strongly. An author who claims ownership over unique ideas has more presence in a text, even if the style is unobtrusive, than an author who is, for example, primarily citing others. When analyzing voice in expressive bibliography, then, we may see authorial vision emerging in a number of ways: through selection of resources and their assignment to descriptive categories, through the substance of annotations, through the way that categories are named, and through the author's writing style.

As an example, the Seattle Art Museum user "michelem's" bibliography of modern and contemporary art is framed through its overall annotation as a sampling from the permanent collection with no additional selection principle applied. The purpose of highlighting items from the permanent collection is not eclectic like "Dr.Dada's" exploration of color. Indeed one could imagine such a collection being formed by a SAM curator. "Michelem's" expression of purpose, however, is unusual and creative. The annotations for individual items reveal a diverse range of attributes that one might consider when viewing contemporary art. "Michelem's" notes touch on the potential significance of formal innovations, relationships between artistic styles, the boundaries between figurative and abstract art, potential symbolic meaning, and questions of biography and artistic intention. Through this range of commentary, "michelem" emphasizes the interpretive richness of contemporary art, showing its potential to engage a viewer on multiple levels. The breadth of "michelem's" remarks and her fluent references to contemporary styles (Dada, Pop, Action Painting) mark her authorial persona as educated, with a sophisticated eye. Her stylistic choices portray contemporary art as complex but accessible. She phrases her annotations as questions, inviting the public to share her opinions (for example, "By shooting his models nude, has Zhang Huan clarified or obscured their individual identities?" and "Jackson Pollock at a transition from brush to drip—but what do the pebbles add?"). "Michelem's" clarity in phrasing very specific questions focuses the reader's attention on a variety of artistic properties for the selected works, from subject matter, to technique, to placement within a particular style. She makes layered, nuanced interpretation seem effortless and

natural. While a more traditional scholarly tone might distance the audience, "Michelem's" authorial voice, down-to-earth yet rigorous, sophisticated yet respectful, initiating but not ending the conversation, characterizes the collection in a friendly yet challenging way, inspiring the reader to appreciate and engage the art, rather than dismiss it as unknowable and opaque.

In another example, in the PennTags project "LGBT Guide," the user "azzolina" (n.d.) emphasizes an international perspective on LGBT culture. The included resources cluster around culture and the arts (such as guides to gay novelists, gay and lesbian film and video, gay and lesbian children's literature, encyclopedias of gay culture, an encyclopedia of folklore and myth) with few references to law, policy, or religion. In addition to including items in a variety of languages (Spanish, French), which cover a variety of locales (the Muslim world, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States, Latin America), "azzolina's" annotations distinguish references with an international perspective ("admirably international in scope," "an international team of scholars contributed to the project," "includes Spanish and Portuguese authors," "strong on French and European topics") as well as those that lack such a focus ("most books set in the United States"). The guide also takes a scholarly approach, one aimed at LGBT research, as opposed to LGBT life. Reference annotations often mention the presence or absence of bibliographies and indexes, as well as relative comprehensiveness and temporal freshness. Through such choices in resource selection and description, "azzolina" (n.d.) has taken the general purpose of creating an "LGBT guide" and given it a precise, unique character.

Emotional Intimacy: Locating Affect in Collections

Because their authors are not enmeshed in the traditions of collection and description that shape cultural heritage institutions, expressive bibliographies can display a range of eclectic purposes that motivate collection formation. They can also communicate a creative, original vision arising from that purpose through a distinct authorial voice. Moreover, in the context of expressive bibliography, the actions of collecting and describing may communicate feelings as well as thoughts. Indeed, expressive bibliography may resonate with an audience not for the information or ideas that it contains but for what it evokes as an emotional response.

In describing his long obsession with collecting random objects (his "collections of nothing"), William Davies King (2008), a theater professor and cultural critic, claims that his collections are a means of forging intimacy. To share a collection, King suggests, is to initiate an emotional connection between collector and viewers, to show others what you hold dear and to share the complex knot of thoughts, feelings, and memories that constitutes that dearness. Similarly, when the poet Mark Doty (2002) tries

to describe a Dutch still-life painting that mesmerizes him, his characterization comprises not just a set of selected physical attributes (the way the lemon in the still-life is depicted) nor even an associated interpretation of those attributes and their significance to him (the luxuriousness of the color and texture of the lemon, how these seem to reflect an idea of artistic freedom and exuberance) but a sense of the emotions that Doty feels toward the painting (fondness mixed with intrigue and obsession) and a glimpse of the memories that the painting evokes in him (remembrances of other objects and the people associated with them, and the attendant pleasure and pain of these recollections). For Doty, description encompasses all these levels. His take on Jan de Heem's *Still Life with Oysters and Lemon* owes its singularity in large part to the scale of its emotional effect on him, how the painting crystallizes memories of other objects and their owners for him and so illuminates his personal web of experience. In excavating the origins and tracing the extensions of their complex feelings toward objects, King and Doty draw the reader toward their own emotional engagement with collections and descriptions.

Ann Cvetkovich's book *An Archive of Feelings* (2003) reflects an emphasis on experience similar to that articulated by Doty. The book explores the idea of trauma and its embeddedness within the lesbian community. It describes artifacts of popular culture as archival not for the material itself but for the emotions that the material provokes in a particular audience. Cvetkovich posits an archive whose motivation is to document and preserve feelings. The collected artifacts are significant not in themselves but in their roles as emotional catalysts. As an example Cvetkovich considers films made by the artist Jean Carlomusto as a form of archive. In one film Carlomusto watches the movie *Stella Dallas* with her mother. *Stella Dallas* itself is not part of the archive that Cvetkovich sees within Carlomusto's work. Rather, the filmed experience of watching *Stella Dallas* with her mother creates the archival material. This is similar to Mark Doty contemplating de Heem's *Still Life with Oysters and Lemon* as it calls forth entwined memories which together form his attempt to describe the painting. For Cvetkovich, emotion, which results from the juxtaposition of an artifact (such as the movie *Stella Dallas*) with a particular framing experience (a childhood viewing with one's mother), motivates and centers the activities of collecting and describing. Cvetkovich suggests that the archive of lesbian feelings she conceptualizes is too elusive, intimate, and ephemeral to be accommodated in traditional collecting and descriptive systems of libraries, archives, and museums. The expressive bibliography, however, provides an opportunity for user authors such as her to exploit the holdings of cultural heritage institutions as the structure for their own emotional archives, either as individuals or as members of a community.

The current personal collections available through the Seattle Art Museum and PennTags reveal only suggestive hints of the potential of

expressive bibliography. While the SAM user "laurenmurphy" locates her fascination with Cai Guo-Qiang's installation as beginning with an experience at the Guggenheim museum in New York before the piece came to Seattle, and her continuing interest in the work is so strong that it has become the background of her cell phone, the core of what must have been an intense connection with the artwork remains unknown. A number of PennTags projects situate the collected resources within disciplinary contexts, sometimes in an extended and sophisticated way, as perhaps encouraged via classroom assignments. For example, the user "amagnes" (n.d.) describes a Roger Ebert film review by saying "this review is very important to understand the timeline, context, and ultimate consequences of Hollywood's blaxploitation movement"). Sometimes the comments bear directly upon a resource's applicability for the user's current research project, as when "belfiore" notes: "While none of this research deals with online communications, I believe that such analyses can be extrapolated to apply to online discussions" (n.d.) (the comment apparently relates to the topic of a class term paper). However, few PennTags annotations discuss the effect of a resource upon the project creator. PennTags user "belfiore" hints at this in identifying citations that might not be relevant for the project task at hand but that "belfiore" has still found arresting. For example, "belfiore" notes that although one resource is not appropriate for "belfiore's" current project, it is still "a very cool read for feminist scholars and anyone interested in body politic."

Fiona Cameron (2008) described an experimental wiki-based collaboration in which a Palestinian wedding dress (*thob abu qutbeh*) receives complementary descriptions from curatorial groups in Australia, Palestine, and Israel, as well as from a group of Australians of Palestinian descent. This suggests the expressive potential of this type of collaboration, although Cameron emphasizes the diversity of political viewpoints that is revealed through the project rather than the emotional import of the object for the describers. A similar project at the Smith College Museum of Art more directly engages the personal, affective dimension of description. In the ID Tags project, contributors were invited to contemplate artworks from the perspective of their particular identity with a focus on race. The contributors' descriptions, which run to several paragraphs per work, are signed by the authors. One example considers the Edward Hopper painting *Pretty Penny,* which features a large, glowing, white wooden house with many green-shuttered windows and a variety of neoclassical elements including an imposing set of four columns to support the front porch. The house is fronted by a verdant lawn and carefully tended shrubs. The author of the ID tag, Nicole Roylance, a museum staff member, describes a significant interaction between the painting and a group of high-school students. A student comments that the house is "so white," meaning not the color of the paint but the web of race, class, and privilege in which

neighborhoods such as this one are embedded. While Roylance initially feels a kinship with the student in that they both share an outsider perspective on the lifestyle the painting represents, in a subsequent meeting with the students, they describe her as the kind of person who might purchase such a painting. This suggests that the students view Roylance as a member of the "white" establishment of which they see the house as part. Examining her own goals and desires, Roylance realizes there is some truth in the students' supposition. She wonders, "Do we decide our race through our dreams and goals? Would I be cementing a closed-off whiteness by living in this house? Is my race my decision?" As with Cvetkovich's example of *Stella Dallas,* the Hopper painting is secondary to the moment of important introspection that it has inspired and that has been captured in the contributor's description. The power of the moment is only grasped through detailed reference to the painting; the insights of Roylance's personal experience require juxtaposition with the artwork to be fully understood.

Poetry: The Expressive Bibliography as Site for Reimaginings

In previous sections of this article, I have suggested that the form of expressive bibliography, as exemplified in personal collections created to complement institutional holdings, can connect with an audience through a variety of communicative mechanisms, including eclecticism of purpose, unique authorial voice, and emotional intimacy, which libraries, archives, and museums, within their institutional confines are less able to pursue. As a unifying frame for the three mechanisms I have described—eclecticism, voice, and emotion—I turn to Umberto Eco's (2009) notion of the poetic list. The mechanisms delineated here can be seen as three of potentially many design elements that expressive bibliographies might exhibit as a type of poetic communication.

In discussing the list, a form of collection, Eco characterizes a poetic list, in contrast to a pragmatic one, as a list that has an imaginary component that may potentially stretch into infinity based on some as-yet unknown new items or newly discovered characteristics or relationships between existing items. Eco hints that a poetic list will balance a sense of "dizzying voraciousness" with an equal sense of internal coherence. While each element in the list is evocative of a potential whole, it does not circumscribe that whole absolutely; additional elements may yet be found, and the character of relationships between elements subtly change. A poetic collection leaves open the opportunity for subtle interpretive flexibility within a carefully delineated structure; it is enticing and suggestive to enable the reader's own imagination to flourish within the environment it creates.

To some degree, the difference between a poetic and pragmatic list in Eco's formulation may merely be one of orientation. Any list or col-

lection may become poetic when the reader discovers new dimensions that realign and revivify its contents. Yet some collections may engender this type of audience response more readily than others. One of Eco's examples comes from the medieval Carmina Burana, a list of characteristics related to money. Money, for example, "gives you exquisite dishes and well-prepared fish" and yet also "loves to see peoples' backs bent." None of the items in the list can, on its own, encapsulate the different aspects of money, and yet by reading through its many entries, we perceive the advantages money confers and the potential moral pitfalls associated with accepting those advantages. The list is extensive and yet not entirely comprehensive; one could imagine adding to it. There is a sense of space about the list, where a reader's thoughts can complement the existing structure. And yet there is a distinct structure that can't be ignored. One could not stretch the list so much, for example, that it would clearly endorse the acquisition of wealth for its own sake. Nor could one add items about forms of wealth other than money or even items about money that were without some connection to the existing themes and stylistic choices of the list, such as the average price of a loaf of bread across decades. The poetry of the money list lies in the interplay between specific details and a variety of potential underlying connective themes.

In contrast, a list of my monthly expenses seems mundane and closed; there is nothing to add to it, and my personal bills don't seem interesting to most other people. However, I could make a list of monthly purchases more like the Carmina Burana list by making it less personal through showing its public significance. I could orient the list around the idea of good intentions going down the drain as time passes and resolve weakens (eclecticism of purpose). I could use the list to comment ironically on my bourgeois spending habits (authorial voice). I could explore each item's success or failure as a form of retail therapy for boosting self-esteem (emotional intimacy). The characteristics that I describe in this article, in other words, can facilitate the generation of poetic lists. Eclecticism, voice, and emotion are textual elements that, when strikingly employed, can take an expressive bibliography into the poetic realm.

When "Dr.Dada" shows us, for example, how color can productively relate artworks at the Seattle Art Museum that span different periods, styles, and cultures, we are invited to see with our own eyes complementary and contrasting use of color throughout the museum's collections. We are able to reimagine the museum in a new way using the interpretive frame offered us by "Dr.Dada." The resource selection principles and collection description strategy adopted by "Dr.Dada" achieve a balance between a sense of infinity and internal coherence. They provide a firm basis for interpreting the museum's holdings and the space to enable extension, adjustment, and other forms of audience reaction. Thus they make public (as opposed to exclusively personal) and poetic statements. In contrast,

the SAM user “laurenmurphy’s” collection remains a personal construct. To “laurenmurphy” it may cohere around clear selection and description principles, coalescing into a strong interpretive statement, but this structure is not revealed to the audience. Without such an articulation, “laurenmurphy’s” collection cannot inspire potential audience reaction and comment to the same degree as “Dr.Dada’s.” In lacking sufficient structure through design elements that reflect an original purpose, a unique authorial voice, or the intimacy of emotional identification, “laurenmurphy’s” collection does not allow the audience to perceive the quality of the space carved out by the resources and descriptions, and so poetic inspiration is less likely.

Discussion: Encouraging and Facilitating Expressive Bibliography as Poetic Communication

Through the way its items are selected, organized, and described, any collection will tell some sort of story. Within libraries, archives, and museums, however, longstanding institutional goals and values may constrain the shape of the stories they tell. Existing audience expectations of the form, content, and style of the information provided by libraries, archives, and museums may encourage them to continue their familiar communicative strategies for collection design and description. Expressive bibliographies, however, of which audience members as authors aggregate, annotate, and manipulate citations to cultural heritage objects, can provide a means for alternate stories. They can provide complementary perspectives and counterpoints to institutional narratives thus enriching the dialogue about a set of resources. Expressive bibliographies may facilitate the integration of collection descriptions into the complex, transdisciplinary world of networked information invoked by Fiona Cameron. In this world cultural heritage institutions function as “attractors in a network, building together various elements, ideas, and people, enabling different types of interactions with collections and as a border zone where different systems of representation meet” (Cameron, 2008, p. 240). Because expressive bibliographies can express a rich, coherent perspective in a way that folksonomy or aggregated user tags cannot, they may provide a key venue for alternatives to established descriptive modes to flourish.

This article has shown, however, that not all expressive bibliographies produce similar effects. To enable an audience to contemplate the potential infinity that an expressive bibliography might suggest, the bibliography must also provide a solid foundation upon which such extensions and reimaginings have to rest. Three mechanisms, three design elements by means of which such a foundation might be attained are described in this paper: a clear, eclectic purpose; an original authorial voice; and a sense of emotional intimacy. My goal here has been limited to describing how these three elements work and what their potential is as communica-

tive devices. Other mechanisms or elements of this kind may serve similar functions.

Cultural heritage institutions that want to encourage the development of expressive bibliographies in the poetic mode might consider several options. One is to provide implementations of personal collection features that actively facilitate the incorporation of the design elements I have discussed. For example, a collection-level annotation feature might be designed to encourage authors to identify and explicate a theme or purpose for the bibliography. To avoid cluttering the interface for users whose goals focus on personal information management as opposed to public engagement, separate tools could be designed for collections intended to be shared with the public as opposed to those intended only for private use. A complementary strategy would be to include more detailed instructions and, potentially, examples of expressive bibliographies that suggest to participants the communicative potential of the form. An alternative or perhaps additional approach is to solicit contributions from specific guest authors as the Smith College Museum of Art ID Tags project has done. Research into the design and evaluation of tools, documentation, education, and other support systems for the production of expressive bibliographies would be valuable in fields such as knowledge organization, digital libraries, and museum informatics. Additionally, more explorations like the one offered in this paper may identify other dimensions of interpretation and assessment of expressive bibliography and encourage innovative modes of expression within the form. Through all of these approaches to expressive bibliography in the poetic mode, libraries, archives, and museums can assimilate multiple avenues of information access and interpretation while still maintaining established institutional goals and values.

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