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For too long, our collective written histories have silenced, ignored, and neglected queer experiences. As a result, cultural heritage institutions do not adequately represent the spectrum of sexualities and genders that make up our societies. Galleries, libraries, archives, and museums have begun to address these missing histories, with queer librarians and archivists leading the way.

*Queer Library Alliance* is a meaningful compilation of essays that tackles the complexities of collecting, preserving, and organizing queer collections and offers perspectives from multiple countries across the world. Many cultural institutions have given little to no priority to collecting and preserving queer materials, but these documents do exist. The editors of *Queer Library Alliance*, Rae-Anne Montague and Lucas McKeever, write, “There has been queer content since there has been content” (xiii). *Queer Library Alliance* provides an international perspective of how libraries and archives, and the people who work within them, have tried to address their exclusionary practices. The authors in this collection provide possible ways of challenging and remediating these practices in societies that continue to perpetuate cis-heteronormativity.

*Queer Library Alliance* offers reflections on both current and past library and archival practices that seek to empower the lived experiences of queer individuals who are often oppressed. The term *queer* is used by the editors as an all-encompassing term to describe the experiences of individuals who fall under the umbrella of LGBTQIA2+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and two-spirit, with the + sign used here to recognize individuals who identify with a sexuality or gender that is not included in the acronym). Montague and McKeever credit the LGBTQ Users Special Interest Group of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions as a driving inspiration behind the creation of this collection, as well as the student-run group Queer Library Alliance, which was...
formed at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

Montague and McKeever advocate for queer rights through an intersectional lens. The essays within the book cover a range of experiences and speak to intersecting oppressions such as race and class. However, the introduction would have benefited from a more detailed definition of intersectionality with a clear reference to Kimberlé Crenshaw, who defined the term in an essay she published in 1989.

The collection is divided into two sections, and each section has four chapters. The first section focuses on the developments of services to meet LGBTQIA2+ users’ needs. These chapters look at programs and initiatives from the United States, United Kingdom, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They reveal the prevalence of cis-heteronormativity in the libraries and archives field as well as the obstacles that marginalized peoples face when fighting for their rights. In the first chapter, Noriko Asato and Andrew B. Wertheimer provide a historical reflection on the work of Michael McConnell and his advocacy for LGBTQIA2+ individuals within, and outside of, the American Library Association.

Louis Kamwina Nsapo discusses the challenges of dealing with institutional homophobia and collecting and preserving queer documents in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where legislation silences LGBTQIA2+ voices. Nsapo argues that despite these challenges, there are alternative ways of finding these voices and making sure they have a place in the archival record.

Another theme within this section is how library practices perpetuate cis-heteronormativity. For example, Elizabeth L. Chapman exposes the lack of education that UK library employees have on issues related to queer users’ needs, particularly in the area of collection development. Chapman reveals how cis-heteronormativity is ingrained within our library systems, even if it is often invisible to non-queer folks. Libraries perpetuate this oppressive hegemony when we fail to represent diversity in our collections. Chapman not only reflects on these issues but also provides recommendations for improving provision of LGBTQIA2+ materials (39) and includes an appendix of queer fiction aimed at children (UK based) (59).

Lastly, Gregory Toth describes the strengths and weaknesses of the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) in terms of creating unbiased subject classification, specifically for queer materials. While UDC is seemingly more flexible and accommodating than other classification systems, such as Library of Congress and the Dewey Decimal System, it still contains biases on topics of sexuality and perpetuates the gender binary.

The second section of the collection looks at the profession and how queerness can manifest in our professional practices. Bharat Mehra and Lisette Hernandez
take a deliberate stand against the Western idea of libraries as neutral institutions and instead propose that public libraries in India are strategically positioned to provide support to queer users and should do so by partnering with political, legal, economic, and educational stakeholders. The authors believe that libraries in India can positively alter their public perception by identifying themselves as allies to the LGBTQIA2+ community.

The last three chapters in this section speak to the importance of establishing relationships between cultural heritage institutions and LGBTQIA2+ communities in order to offer effective services, build queer collections, and gain trust between institutions and queer communities. Ragnhild Brandstedt describes a study in which a public library in Sweden undertook intensive training from LGBTQIA2+ advocates to become more aware of issues related to LGBTQIA2+ users in their communities. The training resulted in increased competency among staff, increased acquisitions of LGBTQIA2+ materials, and new policy developments.

Matthew Knight discusses the collaborative experience of building a special collection of LGBTQIA2+ resources at the University of South Florida with help from librarians, university professors, community donors, and graduate student workers. Knight answers logistical questions about the collection, which could be helpful information for anyone working on similar projects.

In the last chapter of the collection, Rachel Wexelbaum suggests that librarians should engage with LGBTQIA2+ communities by providing reliable information through social media and online spaces. Many queer communities consider the internet a “safe space,” especially communities in countries where homosexuality is criminalized (214). The internet offers a space for queer communities to engage with each other and share information anonymously.

Ultimately, the collection as a whole brings attention to how queer communities have been and are oppressed by our institutions and demonstrates the ways that information professionals around the world are challenging this by supporting, acknowledging, and prioritizing queer communities in their practices. Queer Library Alliance is an invaluable resource, not only as an addition to the scholarship on queer sexualities within library and information studies but also as a testament to the active solidarity between queer and allied folks working in this field.

REFERENCES