

**Interview of Kurt W. Wagner, University librarian of the  
Murry and Leonie Guggenheim Memorial Library**

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5 Kurt Wagner: Yeah. My name's Kurt W. Wagner.  
6  
7 Julian Chambliss: Okay. And it's September 6th, uh, 2019. We're here in the Monmouth  
8 University Library and you are the head of the library.  
9  
10 Kurt Wagner: I'm the university librarian at the, um, Murry and Leone [tapping]  
11 Guggenheim Memorial Library at Monmouth University.  
12  
13 Julian Chambliss: [0:22] How long have you had that job?  
14  
15 Kurt Wagner: I've been here since January 2016, so it's been about 3-1/2 years. It'll be 4  
16 years in January.  
17  
18 Julian Chambliss: And I know that, um, part of your sort of view of the library has been about  
19 sort of shifting the narrative [inaudible 0:38] programming a little bit and  
20 trying to develop the collection. Um, I know you're really active in the  
21 regional librarian network.  
22  
23 Kurt Wagner: Yeah.  
24  
25 Julian Chambliss: Uh, and of course, I, you know – one of the things that's really interesting  
26 for me as a historian – I, I work a lot with librarian and librarian [inaudible  
27 0:54] collections. It's important work of the library in terms of like, you  
28 know, platform for a lot of work around [inaudible] [and a 1:01] lot of  
29 cultural programming, uh, in many institutions I work with [inaudible 1:07]  
30 librarians. So thank you for all your hard work.  
31  
32 Kurt Wagner: You're welcome.  
33  
34 Julian Chambliss: Um, but, you know, uh, the [inaudible 1:12] project as I was explaining  
35 before, [this 1:15] archive project is really sort of like a arf-, Afrofuturism  
36 oral history project. Um, part of using [that] [inaudible] [importance 1:22]  
37 go through this process is that we're sorta at a moment of renaissance around  
38 Afrofuturism [thumping]. Um, so most of my questions are gonna be  
39 focused on, on that sort of sessile that – and in particular, of course, because  
40 of the programming that you have here at Monmouth, uh, [this, this 1:40]  
41 semester that [we're 1:42] exploring, which is of Afrofuturism is a great  
42 opportunity to talk to you, especially from your perspective as a librarian  
43 about what you think Afrofuturism is. [1:51] So...  
44  
45 Kurt Wagner: [Mm-hm 1:51].  
46

1 Julian Chambliss: ...my first question is for you is, um, how would you define Afrofuturism?

2

3 Kurt Wagner: Well I've just kind of myself begun to learn about it through my association  
4 with, with Walter Greason. And, um, you know, everyone knows or at least  
5 has, uh, some understanding I, I believe of, of African-American culture and  
6 most places, uh, universities that, that I've either worked at or, or known  
7 about have programs or majors in, uh, Africana studies or African-American  
8 culture, that kind of thing. Uh, Monmouth itself doesn't and I found that a  
9 little, little surprising when I came here. Um, but, uh, learning about  
10 Afrofuturism basically came through my, my friendship with, with Walter.  
11 Um, I really didn't know much about it at all. Um, but through that  
12 relationship and my growing, um, understanding and perception of it, I  
13 believe Afrofuturism is, is kind of a, a, a reframing of a narrative that  
14 probably began way back – as far back even as, you know, slavery in 1619  
15 and, um, the, the inequality and the, you know, just the realization that one,  
16 one people keeping another in, in, in bondage was, was not right, um, and  
17 what – all the things – the – that were then denied that person through,  
18 through slavery.

19

20 And almost everything was denied those people and then as slavery ended  
21 and emancipation – and this is like the way this exhibit seems to unfold – as,  
22 as different forms of, of bondage or servitude or slavery were, were  
23 overcome and surpassed, there, there always seemed to be s-, something else  
24 that was still denied, um, black people. And it seemed like – it's almost like  
25 the, uh – I don't know – uh, Maslow's pyramid kind of things, different  
26 priorities, different, different, uh, intellectual priorities. [And it – and 4:12]  
27 some of the higher ones are more higher ways of thinking, um, access to  
28 knowledge, uh, imagination and dreams. And it seems to me that that, eh,  
29 ability to imagine i-, is one of the last things that was denied black people.  
30 They, they had no [tapping] fantasy. They had no speculation. They had no  
31 ability to – because so many more fundamental things were the priority f-,  
32 of them.

33

34 So it, it just seems to me the final emancipation is the ability to speculate  
35 and dream and have a fantasy asi-, uh, an ability to creat science fiction and  
36 dream in ways that I believe was just more accessible to, to, to w-, to white  
37 people more privileged or, [tapping] uh, other classes of people. Um, so to  
38 me, that's kind of the final, uh, realization. When, when you have the  
39 freedom to, to dream a-, and you have the freedom to even speculate and  
40 write and produce literature, uh, that's the – that's unbound by the past  
41 where it's not just all, all [tapping] I'm writing about it is how I overcame  
42 something. I'm now writing about, um, some future world that doesn't even  
43 know anything about, eh, eh, that past. So that's kind of my view of, of  
44 Afrofuturism, is just this long, long process and finally I've, I've kind of, uh,  
45 overcome that [tapping] past and I'm, I'm free.

46

1 Julian Chambliss: Okay. Um, you mentioned the exhibit that, uh, is happening here at  
2 Monmouth.  
3

4 Kurt Wagner: Yes.  
5

6 Julian Chambliss: [6:04] So could you help title that [inaudible 6:06].  
7

8 Kurt Wagner: Oh, well the title is called Afrofuturism, uh, Afrofuturist Design from  
9 Ancient Dogon to Wakandan Futures. [tapping]  
10

11 Julian Chambliss: Right.  
12

13 Kurt Wagner: And so it's, it's really a, a – just a profile fr-, it's a – kinda a [tapping] historic  
14 timeline of, uh, how Afrofuturism is based in the, the past, uh, past studies  
15 of [tapping] African history and then through the, the African-American  
16 experience, um, through the period of slavery and emancipation and then  
17 Jim Crow and then the great migration and the Harlem Renaissance, how  
18 African, uh, American culture has evolved and progressed and struggled.  
19 Uh, finally, uh – well not finally but to this day now achieving a, a kind of a  
20 literary a-, and art, um, freedom, hm, perhaps that didn't exist in the past and  
21 allows, uh, just a, a, a different way of expressing or reframing, um, a  
22 relationship with art and design and literature that's, that's [tapping]  
23 wonderful, vibrant, beautiful. And it really allows, uh, expression that, eh, I  
24 think just gives new perspective to, uh, to, to things like science fiction and  
25 fantasy.  
26

27 Julian Chambliss: [7:37] Um, when you think about your role as university librarian and an  
28 exhibit like this, [tapping] is, is there a particular challenge that you see in  
29 terms of library practice in Afrofuturism or are there opportunities related  
30 to, to this sort of like alternative narrative that you sketched out?  
31

32 Kurt Wagner: Well I think part of, part of what I've been trying to do with the library since  
33 I came here is to, um, is to in, in similar ways reframe, uh, the perception of,  
34 of the library's role at the university. And I think this is not something  
35 unique to, to my approach or what I've been doing. I think this ties in nicely  
36 with how libraries everywhere, especially academic libraries but not limited  
37 to academics have had to kind of reframe the, the narrative of what libraries  
38 mean in, in society. Today with, of course, information, availability, being,  
39 um, largel-, in large part online, moving to more and more online ability to  
40 retrieve information and now several generations of, of people being born  
41 digital, um, and maybe with less of a realization or a understanding of the  
42 role and purpose of physical libraries and the value of print resources, it  
43 makes finding ways to show that the library still has relevance and  
44 importance and value, um, more and more my job. And so looking for every  
45 way to show the value of the library is, is really what I've been focusing on.  
46

Bringing exhibits to the library is one, I believe, important way of underscoring the library's role as being a interdisciplinary center of the university, a place where new ideas, uh, perhaps disruptive ideas, ideas that challenge your way of thinking, uh, ideas that maybe introduce new concepts, new topics, new subjects, new, new studies, new realms are exactly what I consider to be the value of the library. Um, I always looked at libraries as being a place where your mind gets changed, um, not only a place where you learn about things, you learn about subjects, you learn about, uh – find answers to questions maybe that you had but places where you go and while you're doing that, you might learn things you didn't know, you didn't know. Where you – perhaps you would call it getting distracted or, you know, going down a rabbit hole or [tapping] something like that. But, yes, that sharp left turn when you're looking for psychological theory and you just discovered some other aspect of, of literature that you didn't know existed and you follow that direction for a while.

And maybe you come out of the library a different person knowing something that you didn't even know existed before that could profoundly change what you're going to study and what you're going to do, um, here at the university and maybe for, for your life and career. Uh, to me, that's the, the most exciting and profound thing that a library stands for. And when I say it changed your mind, it changed the way you think about the world. And I believe libraries have the potential for that. And so to me, this Afrofuturist, uh, exhibit [tapping] is a perfect example of oh, I never thought about African culture. I never thought about the African-American experience. I never thought about [tapping] oh, what I always thought was y-, uh, talking about civil rights or, or things like that. This takes it to a different level of analysis. This takes it to, uh, the – kind of a convergence of art and literature and speculation and history and religion all m-, meshed together and remixed in a different way. And where else could that happen, I believe, but at a library. I – and, [you know 12:13], I think that's just a wonderful, [tapping] uh, place for this to happen.

Julian Chambliss: And, and it's [really like 12:19] interesting because, of course, one of the things about, um – a lot of our conversations about Afrofuturism is around knowledge creation.

Kurt Wagner: [Yeah 12:29].

Julian Chambliss: [12:29] And so, you know, when you think about the library as a repository of information, you think about the library as, uh, as the same platform for facilitating new kinds of conversation, you know, thinking about this exhibit, was there a ease in finding this material? Like, you know, [with 12:49] the – there's a questioning about are the narratives that are represented by Afrofuturism there and we don't know they're there and the [inaudible 12:56] of this exhibit is that it's bringing people, bringing

1 people's attention to it? Or is there a, a process that you have to think about  
2 from the library standpoint of we need to do more to collect certain kinds of  
3 material? Eh, what's the [intension 13:09] there from your perspective as the  
4 head of the library?

5  
6 Kurt Wagner:

7 Well I, eh – there's a lot there to unpack for sure. Uh, I believe it's a matter  
8 of, um, relationship-building, eh, finding people who, um, are interested in  
9 using the library, um, showing their students the value of the library. And  
10 this relates back to, to Walter Greason and our relationship. And on some of  
11 my early days here in the library – part of what we do at academic libraries  
12 is our librarians, um, divide up the, the, the departments on campus and each  
13 librarian, depending on the size of the library and the faculty we have has 1  
14 or more departments that they are liaisons with or responsible for, meet  
15 with, interact with, build relationships with. And they form the channels of  
16 communication so that we know in the library what we need to collect, what  
17 programs of study we need to make sure our collections can support, which  
18 databases our students need, all of that interaction with the departments and  
19 the syllabi. And a-, another, uh, aspect of this is that we provide research  
20 instruction, library instruction, bibliographic instruction, whatever it's called  
21 at your institution. The librarians provide for classes, customized, uh,  
22 sessions of instruction on how to navigate all the library's resources, how to  
23 answer the kind of questions they need to complete the assignments in their  
24 courses and, um, at a higher level how to conduct academic research.

25 And so, eh, part of our constant challenge is making sure our faculty are  
26 aware of the services we offer, the expertise within the library faculty  
27 [tapping] to provide, uh, this s-, support for their students' research, um, and  
28 s-, and, and to try and increase the number of sessions that, that we teach. At  
29 some institutions, they have mandatory information literacy sessions taught  
30 by librarians. Um, we do not. So, uh, we do not teach credit-bearing courses  
31 ourselves like at some universities. So we rely on our ability to e-, establish  
32 relationships with our faculty. And, and luckily, you know, h-, hundred or so  
33 sessions, uh, per academic year, we're in there teaching, doing our thing,  
34 promoting our, our library and its resources and helping our, our students,  
35 you know, use the library and its tools, uh, more effectively. But then I  
36 noticed Walter doing something a little different. Suddenly he was not  
37 scheduling classes with the librarians. He was bringing his own classes to  
38 the library, not once but several times over the course of the semester. I  
39 remember approaching him, just meeting him practically for the first or  
40 second time and going what are you doing. And he sat down and explained  
41 that he would bring his class here 3 times, once when they were first starting  
42 out, again as, uh, his assignments were [tapping] evolving and then later for  
43 a more advanced look.

44  
45 And he would have his students, uh, start forming topics they were  
46 interested in exploring, then looking up reference materials on that topic,

um, coming to him to talk about those sources and then with his guidance and suggestions going into the main stacks to find even more in-depth information. And in the process of doing this, they were not only learning about their topics, they were learning about the value, eh, of using the library as a research tool. And so they were being taught lessons on several different levels in, uh, a – uh, an in-depth manner that was even beyond what we as librarians were often able to do in our limited, uh, exposure to, to classes. And so I was fascinated by his approach. I a-, I, I told him several times I wish we could bottle this and sell this. We, uh, uh – I encouraged him to do a session at our Center for Teaching Excellence, which is a, a, um, uh, uh, a group here on campus, an office here on campus that's used for professional development for our faculty. So he was able to present his method, h-, his library, uh, research support, uh, method that he uses in his classes. And several other faculty have taken his, his cue and are using, uh, [tapping] versions of that in their own class.

And which was exactly what I wanted them to do, just to improve their students' ability to use the library and its resources. So, you know, that was kind of a relationship I built, uh, with, with Walter. And through, uh, continued conversations with him, um, we just got to be good friends and talked about a lot of things. And then suddenly I was selected to be the Chair of, uh, The Search Committee for our, uh, Dean of The Honor School and Walter was a candidate. And we had a lot of very fine candidates and – but as it turned out, Walter's, um, enthusiasm and abilities and background and the whole package won the day and he was, uh, for a couple of years was our Dean of our Honor School. And I had the privilege of sharing a floor with him here at the library and having him next door [tapping] to me and so our relationship continued over the past couple of years there with daily conversations. Um, and from time to time, our conversation would turn back to what he was interested in and Afrofuturism figured prominently in that and so over those years I learned a little more about it until the time came when my outreach to campus to bring more interest in interaction with the library had already been finding other ways to showcase what's going on on campus, eh, in the form having different exhibits in the library.

And after having, uh, a, an exhibit of, eh, eh, featuring the Art Now Committee on campus, which highlights our art and, um, performing arts and communication faculty and the projects they do, um, I showcased that in exhibits through the library. And then we did a big exhibit featuring our Bruce Springsteen archives in the library and we did one on, uh, the centennial of World War I. Uh, I remember talking to Walter do you have one in the wings that we could do an exhibit for and, and then I also said and I think I know what's it's going to be and [laughter] so we started talking about having, having this exhibit. And so, eh, to me all serves a, a larger purpose of engaging the library with the, the intellectual, uh, work we do here on campus. It's making the library a center for, uh, reframing

1 narratives, uh, reexamining topics maybe in different ways, exposing people  
2 to knowledge, uh, that maybe they had not thought of before or considered  
3 before, considered in this way before. And I think the banner you see as you  
4 walk in to the library, uh, Create Knowledge at the Library, um, eh, it's also  
5 something I, I hold really near and dear because I think it's here you put  
6 pieces together and assemble things that maybe you hadn't considered  
7 before and come out with something new that you've created.  
8  
9 Julian Chambliss: [20:58] And, you know, in, in partnership with, um, the sort of scholar that,  
10 that Walter is, uh, you guys are providing the space and a lot of this material  
11 is your material, right?  
12  
13 Kurt Wagner: Yeah.  
14  
15 Julian Chambliss: [21:10] This is coming from...  
16  
17 Kurt Wagner: Right.  
18  
19 Julian Chambliss: ...[your 21:12] collection, right?  
20  
21 Kurt Wagner: Right. And so it's, you know, it's like you could probably do a hundred  
22 different exhibits in this library with a hundred different scholars who  
23 recombine what they find here in, in different ways. Uh, I'm not trying to  
24 detract from, from this because I think this is [tapping] outstanding. Uh, I  
25 think though that that kind of thing can probably be, be [tapping] replicated,  
26 you know, in some other ways. I think the next one we have on deck is  
27 going to be on climate change and how that affects – and I've even had the  
28 conversation with Walter about the climate change one and how it affects,  
29 [tsk] um, uh, people with less opportunities who are usually at lower  
30 elevations and maybe in the tropics and in countries, um, with, with other  
31 social problems and, and other economic issues and how, [tapping] you  
32 know, the, the effect on them will, will be unequal. And it's always a matter  
33 of privilege and who's able to, uh [tapping] – or who's the victim and, and  
34 different things like that. So I think this gives the library many, many  
35 different opportunities to bring, uh, subjects together in, in novel ways to  
36 maybe think about things in, in – within different combinations. I think that  
37 also [tapping] probably happens, uh, you know, when people do cluster  
38 classes and they have a, a, a psychology professor and an environmental  
39 science professor, an economist and an art historian...  
40  
41 Julian Chambliss: [Mm-hm 22:44].  
42  
43 Kurt Wagner: ...start talking about different facets of, of a topic. And, um, I like to have  
44 the library also as a – as kind of a fulcrum on which these things can, can  
45 balance.  
46



1 Julian Chambliss: [22:56] Well from your perspective, is the library in a position to continue  
2 this particular conversation around Afrofuturism in, in a particular way as  
3 the exhibit, which I, I know is going to be out most of the semester?  
4

5 Kurt Wagner: Mm-hm.  
6

7 Julian Chambliss: [23:13] Uh, what's your follow-up for this? Is this something where like  
8 well now that we've done it, hopefully the students will follow-up or  
9 professors will be inspired or there's – is there more of like an institutional  
10 approach that you might think about in terms of like having these  
11 conversations?  
12

13 Kurt Wagner: I'm not sure but, eh, you know, I think it gives impetus to the creation of,  
14 you know, someone who wants to put the work in at a, [thumping] at an  
15 academic curriculum level to create a, a m-, a proposal for a major or a  
16 department or [tapping] something like that, um, you know, Africana  
17 studies, Africana world studies or something like that in which [tapping]  
18 Afrofuturism would, would play a part. And you could certainly propose a  
19 course in Afrofuturism, uh, you know, with even a cluster approach where  
20 you had people from Art History, you had people from Sociology, you had  
21 people from our History [tapping] Department, uh, team teaching or  
22 teaching a sequence of courses that, that led to this. We also created a  
23 couple of LibGuides, which are used at, you know, many colleges and  
24 universities to support, um, different courses or different subjects. We've  
25 created several, uh, uh, uh, for this project. Those will continue. Those will  
26 s-, s-, still be links on our webpage. Um, and, you know, hopefully the, the  
27 products of this, the books will always be in the collection. Um, [thumping]  
28 I m-, I may be helping our, um, our cataloguers, maybe add some subject  
29 heads...  
30

31 Julian Chambliss: Oh.  
32

33 Kurt Wagner: ...to, to all the books in this collection maybe so if you're able – if you type  
34 Afrofuturism in our, uh, in our catalogue, all these books will come up.  
35

36 Julian Chambliss: [Mm-hm 24:58].  
37

38 Kurt Wagner: So, you know, that's the – one of the neat things about having electronic  
39 records that can be tagged, if you will. Eh, you know, you don't have to  
40 have [tapping] separate physical collections. You can have many, many  
41 virtual collections just by having everything shelved [thumping] normally.  
42 If, if they're tagged in a such a way, I could make all, you know, 372 books  
43 in this collection all come up in 1 search.  
44

45 Julian Chambliss: [Hm 25:26].  
46



1Kurt Wagner: So...

2

3Julian Chambliss: [25:28] [Well if – and 25:28] that's really interesting because I think one of  
4 the things about knowledge creation [and especially with 25:35] the library  
5 is, is metadata, right?

6

7Kurt Wagner: Mm-hm.

8

9Julian Chambliss: Um, [inaudible 25:40] library, we talk a lot [about 25:44], about metadata  
10 and partly we talk about it because [tapping] there's a, [papers rustling]  
11 there's a real question about [thumping] how do we understand the creation  
12 of knowledge [background noises] in society because it's sort of invisible,  
13 like you, you have a set of structures. They're in place and [scraping] and  
14 then people, [squeaking] um, show up and they, they adopt the structures.  
15 They never really stop [and 26:08] [tapping] think about it. I mean, so it's...  
16

17Kurt Wagner: Hm.

18

19Julian Chambliss: ...interesting if you think about...

20

21Kurt Wagner: It made me write down Afrofuturism as a subject heading. Does that exist?  
22 What are the politics [thumping] of creating a subject heading? Who decides  
23 is that a subject?

24

25Julian Chambliss: Right. Well [inaudible 26:23] – well actually, because I think that's one of  
26 the things that isn't super clear all the time. Of course, the Library of  
27 Congress...

28

29Kurt Wagner: Mm-hm.

30

31Julian Chambliss: ...[inaudible 26:32] and stuff.

32

33Kurt Wagner: That's where you would go. You would go to...

34

35Julian Chambliss: [Inaudible 26:35].

36

37Kurt Wagner: ...OC...

38

39Julian Chambliss: Yeah.

40

41Kurt Wagner: ...LC to look for – that's where we get our catalogue records, our copy  
42 cataloging. But we're free to add fields. We're free to add metadata. We can  
43 do locally created, you know, subject fields and things like that. We already  
44 have a collection of Irish history books that were donated by a retired  
45 faculty member who collected these books and then donated them and  
46 wanted them kept as kind of a corpus or a body of, of books and they're

1 actually shelved in 1 collection. For a while they made a decision, oh, well  
2 they're all tagged, uh, Flannery collection [tapping] so they could just go in  
3 to the regular – some are in history. Some are in literature.  
4

5Julian Chambliss: Right.  
6

7Kurt Wagner: Varied, like, some are in geography. Um, but they're all tagged. So all you  
8 have to type is Flannery and can see them all but then someone else said,  
9 “Yeah, but I wanted to see’m all on a shelf.” [tapping] And so, you know,  
10 especially where we have, um, eh, a thing like Afrofuturism that spans so  
11 much of our collection where it wouldn't be really right, you know, to put,  
12 you know – I don’t know – would – you know, we, we, we couldn't really –  
13 I don’t know if we could have Octavia Butler...  
14

15Julian Chambliss: Right.  
16

17Kurt Wagner: ...you know, like on the same shelf with Du Bois.  
18

19Julian Chambliss: Yeah. Right.  
20

21Kurt Wagner: You know, because subject-wise they go in different places.  
22

23Julian Chambliss: Right.  
24

25Kurt Wagner: Um, but we could certainly do that with metadata and we can certainly do  
26 that with our LibGuides. We can certainly have bibliographies created. Uh,  
27 but I like the fact of, of using our subject headings and there's gotta be – I  
28 mean Afrofuturism is not a new topic and is not a – we j-, we didn’t just  
29 make this up.  
30

31Julian Chambliss: [Uh-huh 28:31].  
32

33Kurt Wagner: And I think it's probably in there. It's just, I think, a matter of, uh – and I, I  
34 may be in a position to – at least in this collection say as we are, uh, as we  
35 are checking these back out of our exhibit location and in to our main  
36 collection, again at the close of this exhibit, I can, I can say let's take a  
37 moment and add an Afrofuturism tag to them or a s-, locally created subject  
38 heading, uh, just so that we can say, uh, we, we want to keep an eye on this  
39 collection or we want to be able to kind of preserve the [tapping] continuity  
40 of, of this set of works because it's an important collection within a  
41 collection.  
42

43Julian Chambliss: [29:18] And, and how, how difficult is that decision? Like, you know, what  
44 you just talked about. That’s a significant thing in terms of future people’s  
45 engagement with the collection.  
46

1Kurt Wagner: Yeah.  
2

3Julian Chambliss: [29:32] [And so] [inaudible 29:32] my question is like as a [tapping] library  
4 professional, what goes into like that, that moment? Like you're head of the  
5 library, so you just decide like yes, but from a kind of institutional  
6 standpoint...  
7

8Kurt Wagner: Sure.  
9

10Julian Chambliss: ...what's the challenge?  
11

12Kurt Wagner: Well, you know, probably from a sheer governance perspective, I would  
13 have a librarian meeting and say hey, you know, we put a little investment  
14 into this. We, uh, with, with, uh, Walters's help, we selected these titles.  
15 Um, they are legitimately [tapping] a part of our collection. They represent  
16 a, a, a, I think a significant set of resources in our collection. Um, this  
17 exhibit is substantial, I feel. Um, and, and we, we have a, we have a record  
18 of having kind of specially tagged collections already. You know, like the  
19 one I just talked about, the Flannery, the Irish history one. So I would ask  
20 for the librarian faculty to, to approve the – something like that. And, um, I,  
21 I don't think there's much more to the politics than that. I think it has  
22 significance and if I think something [laughter] has significance...  
23

24Julian Chambliss: [Inaudible 30:53].  
25

26Kurt Wagner: ...and, and a – depending on how – I like to do things with consensus  
27 [tapping] even if it is kind of my idea or something. I like other people to  
28 maybe share but that that's – I, I don't see [the 31:06] – what would the  
29 downside of that be? Um, you know, I think if we were making up maybe a  
30 subject heading or something like that that didn't exist but, uh, you know,  
31 I'm willing to, to bet money on if I go to, uh, Library of Congress subject  
32 heading, uh, in, uh, subject authority records right now there is a subject for  
33 this.  
34

35Julian Chambliss: Right.  
36

37Kurt Wagner: So, uh, so to me, [tapping] eh, it's, it's a, a very low or no-risk proposal to be  
38 able to, uh, [squeaking] add a little bit of metadata cataloging to these  
39 records to, uh, to just appropriately tag them for future reference because  
40 [thumping] part of what we're doing here by having this exhibit is to  
41 educate, um, educate ourselves [thumping] and educate people who come to  
42 the library and see this. And I've even had senior faculty conversations right  
43 in the corridor outside my office here, who I'm talking with and saying oh,  
44 we're putting this exhibit together; what do you think? Uh, so a conversation  
45 with the senior faculty in one of our departments, uh, uh, yesterday and the  
46 person said I'm not even sure what Afrofuturism is.

1  
2 And so I had an opportunity there to [tapping] just share my understanding  
3 of it and saying I don't even understand it completely but I'm learning more  
4 about it and I'm appreciating it more as a body of knowledge and we're all  
5 learning about it together. And the person came away with a little  
6 knowledge they didn't have before or a – or maybe a glimmering – a, a little  
7 more understanding of something. And to me, that's what this is all about.  
8 And so as we're all learning [tapping] about this, I think, eh, we can also  
9 improve our, our metadata – our collection itself by – that makes our  
10 collection a little smarter. Now if someone types in Afrofuturism, they get a  
11 – will, will get a substantial result. I think right now you don't get much  
12 when you type that in our catalog.  
13  
14 Julian Chambliss: [Hm 33:18]. Well I, I really appreciate you taking the time to talk to me  
15 about Afrofuturism and about the exhibit and about your views – your view  
16 as a – the head of the library. I appreciate it. Thank you.  
17  
18 Kurt Wagner: Well it's completely my pleasure. [laughter] Really, really enjoyed talking to  
19 you.  
20  
21 Julian Chambliss: All right.  
22  
23  
24/lo