The author's language is clear and lucid. To be helpful to the students, each chapter has been divided into small sections with feature headings. A small list of supplementary readings would have been in place. Nevertheless, it is a well presented book with quality production standards and has been very reasonably priced. Shahabat Husain leaves no option but to fully endorse John Feather that „Such an overview is welcome"!

M.P. Satija

(1) Satija, M.P.: (Book review of) Kumar, Krishan: Theory of Classification. Delhi: Vikas 1991. Int.Classif. 18(1991)No.3, p.170-171

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THOMAS, Alan R. (Ed.): **Classification: Options and Opportunities**. New York, London: Haworth Press 1995. VII,242p. ISBN 1-560224-709-6

The book is a simultaneous publication of volume 19 Nr.3/4, 1995 issue of *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly* (Haworth Press, 1980-) edited by Dr. Ruth C. Carter. Alan R. Thomas, editor of the book as well as of the special issue, is a veteran writer on matters of classification. Including the editor's introduction, the book has 17 chapters divided into 5 large sections each devoted to a specific theme. In his introduction the editor describes the purpose and plan of the volume.

The first section „Basic design considerations" has 5 chapters on theoretical principles and practical methods of designing classifications. Derek LANGRIDGE, in „Alternative starting points in classification" repeats his thesis of division of knowledge by form followed by main classes. Alan R. THOMAS in „Blissfully brief" critically draws the essence of H.E. Bliss' „Canons of Classification". Bella Hass WEINBERG, in „Library classification and the IR Thesaurus" makes a comparative study of the two while emphasizing the increasing role of the thesaurus in electronic libraries, although she thinks that classifications and thesauri are complimentary to one another. In the future they may merge to serve both, informatin retrieval and shelf arrangement purposes. Robert M. LOSEE, in „How to study classification systems and their appropriateness for individual institutions" provides advice on selecting a particular system suitable for a given library and gives measures to evaluate a classification system. Edmund C. SHORT, „Knowledge and the educational purposes of higher education" suggests implications for the design of a classification system to serve the need of curricula for four types of education, viz.: general, special, researchers' and teachers'.

Inescapably all classification systems are culturally coloured posing innumerable problems when used in different cultures. It is because all knowledge, both in contents and structure is social, so this structure, represented by classification, varies from culture to culture. A foremost example is the DDC having a WASPish (Western Anglo-Saxon Protestant) bias (1). So to make these western 'universal' classifications effective in other cultures, especially Asian and African, these systems have to be adapted and expanded with home-spun numbers to classify local subjects. Some classification systems officially permit this and provide guidance to classify local material with shorter class numbers; and some systems provide alternatives and options within the system - though local expansions are generally discouraged as unstandard practices. Such provisions are discussed by Lois Mai CHAN in the Library of Congress Classification who also discusses the question of using alternative class numbers given on the LC MARC record. In the next chapter, Joan S. MITCHELL (Editor, DDC) elaborates on this theory and provides details of all such options in the DDC. She concludes that although options have an important role to play, they should be used as the last resort.

Of the four chapters in the third section „Alternative Classification Systems", one is on Mill's BC-2 by Alan R. THOMAS, and another is on the UDC by P. David STRACHAN and Frits M.S. OOMES, both from the UDC Consortium. Both chapters present a state-of-the-art of these two systems. Another chapter by Karen M. HSU is on local classifications; and another, strangely enough, is a reborn fixed location system started in the 1950's. It has been claimed that a fixed location system saves 35% of the shelf space. The study quotes that the classified arrangement incurs a loss of 20 to 50% of the shelf space (p.139). It also enumerates many other advantages of fixed location systems. But it is admitted that such a system is non-browsable and viable only for infrequently used collections. In the next chapter, Jacquelyn SAPIE describes the need and kinds of readers interest classification. Based on a survey it concludes that these user friendly schemes pose a challenge to general (discipline divided) classifications. These maximize the use of libraries and physically facilitate accessibility as witnessed by increased circulation statistics. To devise and implement such systems, we need to conduct user studies. Apart from aiding the users and saving their time it was found that such an arrangement helps the staff to edit library collections , as it provides a visual means to determine the size of various collections to identify the low use and surplus stock and areas for future stock provision (p. 151).

The fourth section „Combinations Platters and Reclassification" has three chapters, „International use of multiple classification schemes in US libraries" by R. Conrad WINKE, explains the pros and cons of using more than one system of classification in a library. Classification policy must be subservient to library policy. So any classification system, either single-handedly or coupled with another rival system must provide a meaningful display and use of a library collection. For this purpose a library could employ two systems used simultaneously for different types of materials or for different disciplines; or it could switch to a new system from a given date while retaining the previous classification for the older collection. Some libraries arrange, say, government publications by the code numbers already assigned by the publication agency. Based upon interviews of librarians it is concluded that the use of multiple schemes is viable and routinely practiced in the United States as well as outside. A

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related and resurfaced issue is reclassification. It was current in the mid 1950's when the DDC was being taken as a waning, even dead classification. Now it is becoming retrospective conversion in online catalogues. It has been dealt with in the aptly named chapter „Reclassification revisited: an automated approach" by Ling Yu W (Miko) PATTIE. It is a case study of the University of Kentucky library reclassification in an automated project named NOTIS: The chapter considers methods and planning aspects of reclassification.

The last section on Information Technology comprises two chapters: the first is on information technology vis-à-vis classification by Gertrude S. KOH, and the second is on Electronic Dewey by Ross TROTTER. Dr. Koh studied the use of classification in virtual union catalogues and in virtual libraries. Classification in online systems demonstrates workability and cost effectiveness. The recent emerging consensus is on combination of classication, free text and controlled vocabulary as a more powerful retrieal method. It is a comprehensive survey of the use of classification in online subject searches. Ross Trotter critically but comprehensively describes the features of „Electronic Dewey" (EDDC) published in 1993 in CD-ROM form by Forest Press/OCLC. It heralds the electronic age of classification providing greater flexibility to access the data.

The book comes as a whiff of fresh wind across some old and mostly new array of wide-ranging issues. The topics are not only very pertinent but immensely practical, too, as one could expect from an American book on classification. It opens new vistas to classification studies and research. An optimistic outcome of the volume is that classification, its practice, study and research are equally valid in the days of global information networks and virtual libraries. The trend seems toward making classification more socially relevant and user-friendly than to be logical. The editor is successful in achieving his declared intentions of the „set" of papers „to encourage fresh and wider choice in library and bibliographic classification decisions, the extent of choice and 'best fit' of a system to local factors" (p.2).

All contributions are marked by indepth and well documented research. References given at the end of each chapter almost make a current bibliography on classification studies. At the beginning of each chapter an abstract is given and every chapter ends with a conclusion and a summary. Most of the authors are well known while others have amply justified their selection to set with outstanding names. It is one of the fundamental books exclusive to classification to originate from the United States. One can ignore it at one's own peril of lagging behind in classification studies.

M.P.Satija

1 Comaromi, J.P., Satija, M.P.: History of the Indianization of the DDC. Libri 35(19985)No.1, p.1-35

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LEPSKY, Klaus: **Maschinelle Indexierung von Titelaufnahmen zur Verbesserung der sachlichen Erschließung in Online-Publikumskatalogen.** (Machine indexing of bibliographic data to improve subject analysis in OPACs). Köln: Greven 1994. V,121p., ISBN 3-77743-0572-2 = Kölner Arbeiten zum Bibliotheks-und Dokumentationswesen, 18

Online public access catalogues have been with us for a couple of years now, and we are getting used to public access to the files of our own library as well as of libraries in distant parts of the world. We are convinced that OPACs are the only reasonable way to pass on the benefits of library automation to library users. Yet a somewhat uneasy feeling prevails about the way OPACs should properly be designed to allow for maximum quality of subject searching. Taking a closer look at this issue, we may find that the uneasiness is rooted either in the design of the OPAC's user interface or in the way bibliographic data are being prepared for use in OPACs. More often than most librarians would be prepared to admit, it turns out that the uneasiness results from both the design as well as the data preparation.

As for the design issue, librarians should wonder if there is any reason to pursue the distinction between subject headings and keywords taken from book titles or other fields of bibliographic description. What may sound a clear-cut distinction in English, is more likely to become mixed up in the German language which only provides two very similar looking (and sounding) words for this antinomy: Stichwort (keyword) as opposed to Schlagwort (subject heading)., German librarians have traditionally been very eager to insist on this distinction, and have consequently been relying on it in the design of OPAC user interfaces. With the benefit of hindsight, surveying some ten years of OPAC design and use in German libraries, one may safely argue that this insistence must be criticized for at least three reasons: first, it is wrong to say that the complete stocks of libraries (public and academic alike) are comprehensively subject indexed, which is bound to lead to incomplete search results; second, it is misleading to argue that there is a significant difference between the information to be derived from the keywords on the one hand and the added subject heading(s) on the other, that is to say the subject heading(s) are quite often merely redundant to the key words; third, what ever benefits of subject headings librarians may have expected for information retrieval, most library users simply ignored the eagerly pursued distinction, or, what would be nearer to the truth, could not cope with it. Which, in turn, raises the question why libraries proceed spending considerable staff resources in subject indexing presumed fit for their OPACs, which, after all, is hardly appreciated by their users. To adopt a bit more positive thinking instead, why do libraries not - as yet - devote more efforts to explore the sources of information inherent in keywords of book titles and other related fields, painstakingly recorded in the process of descriptive cataloguing, for subject retrieval?

All positive thinking notwithstanding, this is, of course, quite a sensitive issue. It touches on the self-respect of subject librarians. What is needed, then, is a study that takes an

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