ten), sondern auch die der Klasse 6 (Angewandte Wissenschaften) und 7 (Urbanistik, Sport, Freizeit). Im Gegensatz hierzu wird eine Thesaurus-DK dadurch gebildet, daß man eine einzige DK-Klasse nimmt und daraus einen oder mehrere Thesauri erzeugt. Eine Thesaurus-DK ist ein sich auf eine einzige DK-Klasse beziehender DK-Thesaurus. Die Wechelwirkung zwischen diesen beiden Thesaurustypen ist sehr eng; sie gestattet eine sorgfältige, positive Kritik an der DK, die zu einer vorteilhaften Modernisierung der gesamten DK führen kann.

Abb. 2 gibt ein Beispiel für eine Thesaurus-DK (10). Es ist leicht ersichtlich, daß hier bewußt auf die Angabe der hierarchischen Beziehungen (BT, NT, usw.) verzichtet wurde. Die Beziehungen zwischen den in Blockschrift und den in kleinen Buchstaben geschriebenen Begriffen sind als allgemein anzusehen. Der Benutzer soll die Freiheit haben, die Hierarchien, die seiner Fragestellung entsprechen, selbst aufzustellen (11). Dies kann auch denen als Hilfsmittel dienen, die den DUD-Wert der DK durch Überwinden der hierarchischen Fesseln vergrößern möchten, um der DK für die weitere Zukunft mehr Effektivität zu sichern.

Abschließend sei darauf hingewiesen, daß die Autoren dieser Arbeit eine recht gegensätzliche Auffassung vom Wert der DK haben, aber doch versuchen, ein einheitliches Bild über deren Grenzen und Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten zu vermitteln. Sie meinen daher, allen Lesern nahelegen zu sollen, sich die pragmatischen Argumente M. Deweys zu eigen zu machen und mit Vernunft und gutem Willen, Eigenschaften, die bereits den jungen Dewey auszeichneten, zur Verbesserung der DK beizutragen.

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Conception and Development of the Dewey Decimal Classification

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Suggestions and origins of the structure and notation of the DDC which most probably can be traced back to the catalog of the St. Louis Public School Library and its author W. T. Harris whose classification principles were based on the philosophy of F. Bacon and G. W. F. Hegel. Description of the specialities in the first and second edition of the DDC of 1885 (the relative index, auxiliary tables, faceting, and simplified spelling). Modernization of the system in the last quarter century by the publisher, Forest Press and the editor, B. A. Custer. References to translated versions of the DDC in Note 9. (I. C.)

I. Changing an "Absolute System" into an economic shelf arrangement

In his early twenties Melvil Dewey chose librarianship as his life's work. That he would be a librarian was incidental; what he intended to do was to develop librarianship on a scientific and economical basis. While he had faith that libraries would become vitally important to the education of many Americans, he suspected that they would not receive a large share of the educational budget. He knew that the best way to husband the resources available to libraries was through standardization and centralization. In a survey that he made of libraries of the Northeastern United States, it became apparent to him that, among other things, the common method of shelf arrangement was uneconomical. It was called the fixed or absolute system: each library assigned to every title a locational number, a number related to the building in which the book was located and that would change when the library grew out of its particular room or building. To prevent this unwise use of time and money Dewey conceived a plan wherein the subject of a book, which does not change, would be indicated by Arabic numerals used decimally, to the third digit if necessary, assuring easy expansion at any subject and enabling a book to be located relative to the rest of the collection. Renumbering an item was unnecessary when the library grew beyond its physical limits. Each digit at the ones level represented a class. Each digit at the tens levels represented a sub-class of the class represented by the

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preceding digit. Each digit at the hundreds level represented a further level of subdivision.

It may appear that Dewey devised the decimal plan solely to facilitate and economize shelf arrangement. That is not quite so. He was also attempting to devise a method for arranging a subject catalog (a classified catalog). The books of the library would thus stand on the shelves in the same order as they were found in the subject catalog. The DDC has had this dual purpose from the beginning. The dual purpose, in fact, helps to explain the split personality that the DDC's users have had to live with for almost a century: it has attempted to provide currency and detail for the classified catalog at the same time that it has attempted to provide stability and short numbers for shelf arrangement.

2. Source of Dewey's "decimal idea"?

What was the source of Dewey's decimal idea? Several proposals have been made. The first to be discussed here was put forth by *John Maass* in 1972[1]. While Maass was putting the final touches to The Glorious Enterprise, his work on the Centennial Exhibition held in Philadelphia in 1876, he noticed a similarity between Dewey's notation and that of the decimal notation used to arrange the exhibits at the Exhibition. When he discovered that the Exhibition arrangement had been proposed before Dewey conceived his idea, he suggested that Dewey had seen the proposal and had based his decimal plan on it. This is possible, but it is not probable. The notation of the system used at the Exhibition, which was devised by the American scholar William Phipps Blake, had Roman numerals I through X for the classes. Within each of these classes there were ten subdivisions numbered 1–10, 21–30 and so on up through 91–100. The subdivisions had 100 subdivisions numbered 1–100, 101–200 and so on up through 901–1000. It was most certainly a decimal system, but its notation was not used in the way that Dewey used the arabic numerals. (Note that in Blake's system the final class could have been numbered X100, 1000, or simply 1000.) As 1000 could belong only to 100, and 100 only to X, the notation was both hierarchical and expressive of the content of a class. It is not at all clear, however, how Dewey, whose final class mark was 999, could have been led by Blake's notation to make the mental leap to decimal subdivision by nines, the zero being the general number for a class. And it is the uniform subdivision by nines that makes Dewey's notation – indeed, his classification – the elegant conception that it is: hierarchically expressive, universally understood, and concise. Consequently, Blake's notation was an unlikely link in Dewey's chain of thought, even if Dewey had seen Blake's proposal, which is debatable.

The second possible source was indicated by Dewey himself in the preface to the first edition of the DDC:

> In his varied reading, correspondence, and conversation on the subject, the author has doubtless received suggestions and gained ideas which it is now impossible for him to acknowledge. Perhaps the most fruitful source of ideas was the *Nuovo Sistema di Catalogo Bibliografico Generale* of Natale Battezzati, of Milan. Certainly he is indebted to this system adopted by the Italian publishers in 1871, though he has copied nothing from it. The plan of the St. Louis Public School Library and that of the Apprentices' Library of New York, which in some respects resemble his own, were not seen till all the essential features were decided upon, though not given to the public. In filling the nine classes of the scheme the inverted Baconian arrangement of the St. Louis Library has been followed[2].

In spite of Dewey's claim, *Battezzati's* scheme was probably not the most fruitful source of his conception[3]. Nothing in his Nuovo Sistema, or in that part of it that Italian publishers adopted, could have provided even one link in the chain of Dewey's thought. What Battezzati urged upon his fellow booksellers was a system whereby several catalog cards would accompany a new work and be used for various bookselling catalogs – a sort of *Books in Print* on cards. The cards for the subject catalog would be color-coded: white for religion, yellow for law, green for the sciences and arts, red for belles-lettres, and blue for history. The structure of the classification used was based on the scheme of the French bibliographer Jacques Charles Brunet, the notation a mixture of Arabic numerals and lower case letters. For instance, V 11a indicated History-Bibliography; IV 6a indicated Belles-lettres-Philology. Battezzati's suggestion was actually a step in the process that has advanced as far as the current Cataloging-In-Publication. Dewey was indebted to Battezzati for the idea of title-slips, slips of paper possessing catalog copy for the work in hand and to be found with the book when it arrived at a library. He was not indebted to Battezzati for any aspect of his classification.

If there is an identifiable outside source, or sources, for Dewey's idea, it is most likely in either or both of the men associated with the libraries mentioned in Dewey's acknowledgements: *William Torrey Harris*, who devised the classification for the St. Louis Public School Library; and *Jacob Schwartz*, librarian of the New York Apprentices' Library. Dewey admitted to borrowing the structure of the DDC from Harris. Furthermore, as Harris employed Arabic numerals 1–100 to mark his classes and major sub-classes, Dewey may have drawn his decimal idea from him as well. But this is doubtful, for History in Harris was 79, British History 93. What Dewey did not find in Harris' notation was Arabic numerals used to subdivide a subject by nine. This he could have seen in Schwarz's *Catalogue of the New York Apprentices' Library*. Schwartz used capital letters for his main classes, 0–9 for the subdivisions of each, 0 being used for the general number of each class, 1–9 for subdivisions.

We will probably never know for sure from whom Dewey borrowed, nor to what extent. And finally, there remains the possibility that he conceived of his idea alone and independently.

On May 8, 1873, Dewey submitted to the Library Committee of Amherst College, the college he attended and in whose library he worked, his plan to recatalog and rearrange the collection of Amherst's library. The plan was accepted. Dewey was to produce 150 catalogs arranged by his system for use by the students and faculty

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of the College, with fifty more to be used for editorial proof.

3. Harris' views in Dewey's scheme

Having a notation and a means of subdivision, but no general system of classification, Dewey then cast about for one. He did not have to look far; he already had in mind the system he wanted to use. On the day after his plan was accepted he wrote to Harris requesting a copy of the catalog of the St. Louis Public School Library, a description of which Dewey had seen in an article published by Harris in 1870 in the Journal of Speculative Philosophy[5].

For longer than they should, scholars have reported that Harris merely inverted the Baconian triad of history, poesy, and philosophy – which Bacon had considered to be the three departments of learning that had developed from the three faculties of man's mind, namely memory, imagination and reason – and then expanded his scheme upon the resulting structure. That is an accurate statement of the sequence of events, but it does not explain Harris' classification. In his introduction to his catalog Harris wrote that Bacon's three categories did not represent departments of learning at all, but rather the three forms, or modes by which literature treats a subject. Harris then broke down the three modes into classes, which were for the most part fields of study. The classes and subclasses were assigned Arabic numerals through 100 apparently on the basis of literary warrant and without regard for hierarchical expression, which explains 79 for History and 93 for British History. The overall order of his scheme reflected Harris' Hegelian definition of the world as seen through man's eyes. (Harris was a leading American exponent of the ideas of the German philosopher.) Since this view provides the skeleton of Dewey's scheme, it will be summarized here.

First there are the three modes of dealing with a subject: In the scientific mode, the conscious system prevails; in the artistic mode the unconscious system prevails; in the historical mode the system, if any can be said to exist that prevails, results from a concatenation of time and place. Within the three modes the contents of books – their subject matter – determine the structure of the classification. The three modes unfold in the following way to produce the Hegelian view of the forms literature may take[6].

Science unfolds into Philosophy, the source of system for all other disciplines and the most general field of study. Theology, the science of the absolute, and the ultimate field of study of Philosophy, follows. (Religion, which is not scientific but is tributary to Theology, is included in Theology.) As man achieves his most spiritual role within his society and in relation to the state, the Social and Political Sciences are logically the next fields of study. The Political Sciences are Jurisprudence, in which society puts constraints upon the individual, and Politics, in which the individual reacts against the constraints of law, thereby producing perhaps an instance of the alteration of the practical will. The Social Sciences are Political Economy, whereby in combination man gains ascendancy over nature and uses it for his ends, and Education, by which man is initiated into the society's *modus operandi*. Placed at the end of the Social and Political Sciences is Philosophy as it is the result of self-conscious thought, a society's best record of itself, and the connecting link between the spiritual and the natural. The Natural Sciences follow Philology and are in turn followed by the Useful Arts. The Natural Sciences reveal the laws of nature; the useful arts apply these laws to social uses. The point of transition between the two fields is Medicine, which is part science, part art. This brings to an end the subjects whose major mode of treatment it the scientific.

The second Major mode is the artistic. Art unfolds into the Fine Arts: Architecture, Sculpture, Drawing and Painting, Engraving, Lithography, Photography, Collections of Pictures, and Music. These are followed by Poetry, Prose Fiction, and Literary Miscellany.

The last mode is the historical. History is comprised of Geography and Travels, Civil History, and Biography and Correspondence. Heraldry and Genealogy also belong here.

In an Appendix to his catalog, Harris provided a class for works which treated subjects falling in several classes and which also combined the various modes of treatment. Whithin the Appendix, he included Collections, Cyclopedias, and Periodicals, several of the bibliographical forms that appear in Dewey's generalia class. It is not difficult to perceive that the structure of the DDC falls within Harris' world view. Further, we can now understand the reasons for the apparently strange positions of Language and the Social Sciences, in the DDC and for the distance between the Social Sciences and History. I also believe that this philosophical underpinning of the DDC has contributed considerably to its success.

4. The first two editions

Comprised of a preface of eight pages, tables of twelve pages, and an index of eighteen pages, the first edition appeared in 1876. There were standard subdivisions at the general numbers for the classes. "Divide-like" was used for geographical subdivisions, though the process was not yet called that. Thus, in the very first edition the ideas of synthesis and faceting were used by Dewey. The index was called the "subject index" and its terms referred not only to terms in the tables but often to subjects outside the tables. For instance, North Carolina appeared in the index, though not in the tables. And, one found Maternity at 136 and 618 and Tobacco at 615, 178, and 633, yet neither of these terms appeared anywhere in the tables. Though not called "relative", the index was already functioning in a relative manner, an aspect of the DDC that would contribute to its success.

During the years preceding the publication of the second edition, in 1885, Dewey continued to develop his scheme. With the assistance of Walter Stanley Biscoe and other scholars, he made some of his changes at Wellesley College and others at Columbia College. Biscoe, who was Dewey's lieutenant from their days together at Amherst until Dewey's death in 1931, was the theoretician of the DDC for most of this period. The introduction to the second edition was seven times longer than the Introduction to the first edition, for in it Dewey explained and

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defended his practices. There were also a great many relocations and much re-using of numbers in the second edition. To prevent the suspicion that succeeding editions would contain equally unsettling amounts of change, Dewey made the following promise: "Librarians making the necessary changes for the revised edition need not fear that a series of editions have begun each of which will call for such changes . . ."[7] He kept his word. Though in the years ahead there would be great expansion upon the numbers of the second edition, there would be very few changes that would result in changed meanings of numbers. This policy which is called integrity, or stability, of numbers, was to be the guiding principle of the DDC for the next six decades.

In the second edition, standard subdivisions, then called form divisions, were now applied to subdivisions of classes. Divide-like had become a standard procedure and part of the classifier's language. The Index was called the Relativ Index for the first time. It was spelled without a final "e", following the rules of Simplified Spelling which also began in this edition. Simplified spelling was to become more intrusive in the DDC in the mistaken assumption that it was what Dewey desired. While Dewey approved of simplified spelling, he also desired international acceptance of the DDC, and simplified spelling was a decided impediment to this goal. Notes were many and helpful in the second edition, and the decimal point appeared here for the first time. (It had not been used in the first edition. A period had been used above the base line to indicate that the next digit represented either size or accession number within that class. For instance, 973 · 4 · 18 was the eighteenth book on the quarto shelf for American History.) There were now geographical and period subdivisions. There were special tables at the end of the volume: one listed subjects divided geographically, another was a list of the subject divisions of languages. Here then were the first auxiliary tables. The index had grown from 2 000 to 10 000 entries. Dewey wrote of the index, "This Subject Index is the most important part of the system."[8] He may even have believed that. Certainly, librarians inexpert in a field could place a book reasonably well with the assistance of the index.

The first edition had been promising and had been accepted by many of the newer libraries. The second edition was the promise fulfilled and is probably the premier achievement in the development of American library classification.

5. More recent developments

During the years of development of the DDC up to 1951, the date of publication of the fifteenth edition, there was a steady acceptance of the DDC in the United States and abroad. In general, during the first seventy-five years of its existence the DDC simply expanded upon its second edition structure. New editions appeared when old ones had been sold out or there was enough new material to justify bringing out a new edition. This line of development of the DDC reached its fullest expansion in 1942 when the forteenth edition was published. This edition, which was almost 2,000 crowded pages long, still followed the structure of the second edition. Most of this development, from the fourth edition on, had been done by the able editors *May Seymour*, editor from circa 1890 to 1921, and *Dorkas Fellows*, editor from 1921 to 1938.

Before his death in 1931 Dewey, his son *Godfrey*, and *Dorkas Fellows* has decided that three levels of the DDC should be published: an abridged edition for small libraries, a library edition for shelf arrangement of middle-size and larger libraries, and a bibliographic edition for classed catalogs and for shelf arrangement of special collections and the largest of libraries. The bibliographic edition has never been achieved. The fifteenth edition – called the standard edition – was an attempt at the library edition and represented radical structural changes. It was a failure, however, primarily because it had no competent editor. The sixteenth edition (which was, in fact, much nearer to what Dewey envisioned the library edition to be) was a return to the line of development of the first fourteen editions. It was not a return to the past, however, for with the sixteenth edition first *David Haykin* and then *Benjamin A. Custer* began modernizing the DDC.

Through the seventeenth and eighteenth editions and into the yet to be published nineteenth edition, Custer continued the modernization. Totally new (phoen'x) schedules were developed for Psychology 150, Law 340, Mathematics 510, Sociology 301–308, and Music 780. (The last two are being done for the nineteenth edition.) Auxiliary "floating" tables were devised to enable synthesis of numbers without class bias introduced by divide-like instructions. (What had been called tables had become 'schedules' by the eighteenth edition, while the special tables were now simply 'tables'.) In the seventeenth edition appeared the area tables. In the eighteenth edition, tables for literature; individual languages; racial, ethnic, and national groups; languages; and persons were provided. A new index that yielded more information was developed by *Marie Henshaw*, Custer's assistant, and by Custer himself. It was not well received in the seventeenth edition, but was markedly improved for the eighteenth edition. Many smaller improvements and modernizations of terms were also carried out.

As for international use of the DDC, a decision was made in the 1960's that where possible the DDC would rid itself of North American and other biases and at the same time attempt to meet the needs of users everywhere. In order to fulfill this goal Forest Press, publisher of the DDC, commissioned *Sarah Vann* and *Pauline Seely* to do a field survey of libraries in Asian, selected African, and Eastern Mediterranean countries. Many of the ideas suggested to them were incorporated in the seventeenth and eighteenth editions. At the same time Forest Press committed itself to meeting the classification needs of libraries in non-English-speaking countries by way of a translation program. Other than the Spanish Edition of 1955, which was a translation of the fifteenth edition, no translating of the full edition had been done in recent time. (This is not to overlook the French translation by Paul Otlet, which was begun in 1896 and which produced the *Classification Décimale* and let to the UDC. These editions of course, modified the DDC extensively in the

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process. Nor are the many adaptations and translations at a lower level of fullness into other languages being ignored in this account[9].) Under the guidance of the Board of Governors of Forest Press (in particular *John Humphry* of the New York State Library) and direction of *Richard Sealock*, executive director of the Press, making the DDC available to non-English speaking users became an almost full-time occupation as the full French edition and the Hindi selective abridgement were published and the new Spanish edition developed[10].

International alliances were also made. The Decimal Classification Editorial Committee, which has guided the development of the DDC since shortly after Dewey's death, now includes a representative of the Library Association of Great Britain and, at the present, a member from Canada. In application, coordinated practice has been achieved with the British National Bibliography, Canadian National Library, and Australian National Library.

By the mid-1970's the DDC had become the predominant library classification in the world. In English-speaking countries it is used by 85 percent of all libraries, in Latin America by almost all of the newer libraries, in Africa by most libraries in those countries where libraries have been developed, and increasingly in those countries now developing libraries. In Asia and Europe it is probably the most popular system, but homemade systems and the UDC are also used in many libraries there.

The contributions of Melvil Dewey to the advancement of librarianship are, of course, many and varied. But non is so important as his contribution to the organization of knowledge; the DDC has made books and their subjects more accessible to generations of librarians and scholars. Through the efforts of Dewey and his successors, the first edition of the DDC, which was some forty pages long and was designed to arrange the catalog and collection of the library of Amherst College, has grown into an opus several thousand pages in length designed for arranging the catalogs and collections of libraries throughout the world.

Notes

1) Cf Maass 1972 and 1973
2) See p. 10 of Dewey 1876
3) The discussion in the following two paragraphs owes much to ideas suggested to the author by John Metcalfe and to Enzo Bottasso's book, esp. here p. 177–207
4) Cf Catalogue of the Apprentices' Library. New York, Chatterton and Parker, 1874. There were several supplements to the initial catalog. This item was one of the supplements.
5) See Harris 1870
6) Cf Leidecker 1945 and Graziano 1959
7) See Dewey 1885, p. 46
8) Ibid, p. 32
9) From the time of Otlet's request to translate the DDC into French there have been many translations of the abridged editions. There have been rather drastic modifications, such as the Nippon Decimal Classification, but most translations have remained close to the structure of the original system. Selected translations are cited here only to suggest the many translations of the DDC that do exist.

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