

Consumption, Criticism and Wirkung: Reception-Infused Analysis of Classification Schemes†

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Abstract: This article outlines a novel dimension to analysing classification schemes: studying their reception.

The discussion draws upon current discourse concerning the aesthetic value of KOS, and extends these ideas by fusing reception theories from literary and artistic domains to classification scheme analysis. The ideas are illustrated using three music classification schemes: *British Catalogue of Music Classification (BCMC)*, *Dickinson Classification* and *Flexible Classification* (Petes). Three concepts from reception theory are introduced, and their potential applications to classification schemes are discussed. “Consumption” considers the usage of classification schemes, including factors such as time, geography and intent; methodological problems pertaining to this concept are outlined, highlighting gaps in our knowledge about classification schemes. The artistic and literary concept of “Criticism” is re-imagined for classification schemes, positioning literature about schemes as critical works; aspects such as authorial intention and temporal position are demonstrated, as well as showing that criticism and consumption are not necessarily concomitant. The effect or influence of a scheme, its “Wirkung,” is discussed, including delineating intra-scheme and inter-scheme connections and types of Wirkung such as publication. Furthermore, this article demonstrates that there is a rich seam of information to be mined when the relationships between consumption, criticism and Wirkung are contemplated. So, a reception-infused analysis indicates a potential new dimension to classification scheme analysis.

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1.0 Introduction

Many a written word has been devoted to discussing and analysing classification schemes; however, formal theories of classification scheme analysis or discussions about the boundaries and criteria of the analysis are relatively rare. Furthermore, discussions concerning the analysis of schemes by those studying, selecting or classifying with them, usually focus on the scheme-as-tool, presenting a description of the classification scheme and a criticism of its

ability to perform specific tasks. This article proposes an additional component to the analysis. It asks what happens if the focus shifts from analysing what the scheme can do, to dissecting how the scheme is received. Considering reception ideas is a novel approach to classification scheme discourse, and some preliminary explorations of this approach to analysis are outlined in this article.

The idea of how a text or artwork is received is significant in a number of domains, including classics, literary theory and musicology; therefore, this article starts

with a brief overview of the general concept of reception and touches upon the ambiguous set of theories loosely categorised as reception theory. This is followed by a discussion about the embedment of classification scheme reception within recent developments and new directions of knowledge organization. The article utilises a small selection of schemes to illuminate various ideas, and before the analytical techniques are introduced, the selected example schemes are briefly introduced and their selection is justified. The main part of this article outlines how three ideas from various discourses on reception could be reworked as analytical techniques for classification schemes: consumption, criticism and influence (*Wirkung*). It should be noted that these three ideas are only part of the cornucopia of reception ideas, and do not necessarily constitute the complete artillery of reception theories. They have been selected, because they offer interesting perspectives on classification schemes. Each of the three techniques is described in general terms, presenting both a brief outline of its pedigree within other domains followed by its potential for classification-scheme analysis. Therefore, this article will demonstrate that expanding the analysis of classification schemes to include how the scheme is received by those studying, selecting or classifying with it, can greatly enrich our understanding of classification scheme analysis as a technique, the classification schemes under examination and ultimately knowledge organization itself.

2.0 Conceptual background

2.1 Introducing the idea of reception and reception theory

A proposal of reception-infused analysis needs a short consideration of what is meant by the term “reception.” *The Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) gives many possible meanings; the definition of “reception” we are interested in (OED Online 2015c) is defined as “The action of receiving, or fact of being received, in a certain manner” and is most often seen with a “qualifying adjective.” This definition is informative in many ways. First, a number of the different meanings of reception within the OED are defined using variants of the verb “to receive;” thus reception is about receiving. The combination of the term “certain manner” and the likelihood of a qualifying adjective (OED Online 2015) hint of reception’s association with value judgement; so “reception” is not a statement by itself, but only takes on meaning through the manner being described and/or the adjective used. However, we also need to consider definitions of “to receive.” The most relevant definition within OED Online (2015b) defines it as “to take, accept, regard, hear, etc. ... in a specified manner or with a specified expression of feeling; to

accord such a reception.” Again, the idea that this type of receiving is not concerned with the act of acceptance of the object itself, but the manner of this acceptance, is espoused. The definition also shows a symbiotic relationship between “reception” and the verb “to receive,” highlighting that discussions about the reception of something can be realigned as discussions about how that something is received. Therefore, for the purposes of this article “reception” will be defined in terms of classification schemes in the following way: the manner in which the classification scheme is regarded and accepted, amongst the communities which have an interest in it.

The idea of theorising the reception of texts and artworks already occurs in a multitude of different domains and techniques. However, there is no single reception theory, only reception theories (Holub 1984); while there is an English term “reception theory,” it is an umbrella term. Furthermore, while there is (arguably) a concept of reception theory within literary theory—it developed as a set of formal theories, originating in Germany in the 1960s, propagated by theorists such as Jauss, Iser and Gadamer (Holub 1984)—its progression and development has been neither smooth nor linear. For instance, Everist (1999) comments that even in the 1990s, reception theory had no confirmed place within the canon of literary theories. In addition, the idea of reception theory has very different nuances depending on the disciplinary sphere being inhabited. For example, Hardwick (2003) suggests that reception theory in classics is concerned with adaptations of texts and the rewriting of classical texts over time and for future generations; Roberts (2011) describes Biblical reception as the usage and re-usage in culture and civilisation of the Christian-Judaic Bible(s). Therefore, to circumnavigate any issues associated with this multi-domain set of amorphous and fluctuating theories, this article will borrow categorisations, ideas and perspectives from reception theories as appropriate to their potential for application to classification schemes, rather than adopting any particular structure or model of reception theory (reception theories) wholesale. Thus, what is presented below is a window into how reception ideas could be used to analyse classification schemes: a reception-infused analysis of classification schemes.

2.2 Grounding and precedence within knowledge organization

All three types of analysis presented in this article are dependent upon a key conceptual assumption: classification schemes have aesthetic value. The link between aesthetics and reception theories is often implied, but there are some important theories that directly link the two. For example, Jauss’s seminal theory of reception, “Rezeption-sästhetik,” translated as “An aesthetic of reception” (Jauss

1982) or “The aesthetics of reception” (Holub 1984, 57), includes reference to aesthetics in its name. Furthermore, “Rezeptionsästhetik” (Holub 1984) includes the notion that the first reception of any artwork must include a comparison of the new work’s aesthetic value with the aesthetic value of existing works. So, establishing whether a classification scheme can be considered to have aesthetic value is vital.

Exploring aesthetics and classification schemes and other knowledge organization systems (KOSs) is foreshadowed by Tennis’s call to arms that classification should be a “living work of art, crafted and re-crafted by aesthetically engaged artisans” (2010, 226-227), and is developed fully by Ojennus and Tennis (2013a; 2013b) in two papers which model aesthetic frameworks of KOSs. These papers (Ojennus and Tennis 2013a; Ojennus and Tennis 2013b) establish a framework to assess the aesthetic value of an information organization framework (IOF)—although an IOF is perceptibly different from a KOS, these differences are temporarily ignored in order to employ the ideas within Ojennus and Tennis’s work; Ojennus and Tennis (2013a; 2013b) utilise and develop a set of philosophic aesthetic properties for application to IOFs, whereupon an aesthetic framework is presented and tested. Ojennus and Tennis (2013a, 811), suggest that existing KO discourse and studies of KOS include an “aesthetic lens,” which they describe as “making judgements based on a conceptualization of what is a beautiful indexing language, metadata scheme or ontology.” This idea of aesthetic value relating to the judgement of beauty is enhanced by Ojennus and Tennis’s description of other values associated with IOFs such as economic factors and ease-of-use (2013a); therefore, we could also think of aesthetic values of a KOS as those values which are left when practical concerns, financial issues, and so on, are taken care of. So, we have an idea of what aesthetic value might mean in reference to a KOS, and Ojennus and Tennis’s work (2013a; 2013b) validates the assumption that classification schemes have aesthetic value through both their delineation of aesthetic value explicitly for IOFs and their successful creation of an aesthetic framework.

Another important theoretical assumption for all three reception-infused analysis techniques is an acceptance that a scheme exists in a temporal frame; in other words, the scheme is born, adapts and will eventually possibly die, all of which can only take place along a temporal axis. Therefore, parts of this paper heavily rely upon work by Tennis on temporal matters; for instance, Tennis (2010) discusses how time is an important element in the development of classification schemes, including the need to understand that there are different categories of temporal change and the difference between “versions” and “states” of classification schemes. The reason that

temporal matters are so important is that in order to consider some aspects of the reception of a classification scheme fully, we need to consider what happens to the scheme after its creation. This is only possible if the scheme is considered to exist at times other than just at the point of its “birth,” and that those later states may have evolved from the original scheme.

3.0 Selection of example schemes

It is difficult to contemplate a reception-infused analysis of classification schemes entirely in the abstract. Thus, it is sensible to draw upon examples from real-life classification schemes; as the universe of classification schemes is large, drawing upon a small, pre-determined set of schemes is useful. One option is to use examples of longstanding general schemes, such as *Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC)* or *Library of Congress Classification*, as these are the most likely to provide a good quantity of reception documents. However, these types of schemes will prove messy for the purposes of this article. For instance, schemes such as *DDC* provoke issues concerning editions, for the reception of one edition of *DDC* will not necessarily be the same as for another; there are also potential extraneous factors surrounding bigger schemes, such as separating out how Melvil-Dewey-as-a-librarian is received from *DDC*-as-a-classification-scheme. Therefore, while reception-infused analysis of longstanding schemes such as *DDC* would be highly illuminating as a future research project and could contribute a new perspective to research into these classification schemes, in order to introduce the analysis method in a contained fashion, they will not be chosen as examples for this article. Selecting general schemes which do not have multiple editions and a high profile is also problematic, as in some respects the examples would only represent so-called non-successful schemes. Therefore, this paper will use as examples special schemes which are limited due to covering a single subject and have also proven to be relatively small-scale in their reach—thus for the benefit of this article, the schemes chosen are somewhat “containable.”

The schemes used are as follows: *British Catalogue of Music Classification (BCMC 1960)*, *Dickinson Classification (Dickinson 1938)* and *Flexible Classification (Flexible 1967)*. These are all special schemes covering the music domain. The domain of music is selected for a number of reasons: it is the research area of the author and some of the theoretical ideas developed in the article were suggested through analysing these particular schemes in the first instance. *BCMC* was created by E.J. Coates in 1958, a member of the UK-based Classification Research Group, and was originally designed for a classified catalogue of music. It was published as a stand-alone scheme in 1960.

Dickinson was created by George Dickinson in the United States, and was designed in the 1920s to arrange the university music library that the scheme's author oversaw. *Dickinson* was first published as a scheme in 1938, and was adapted for use in other American music libraries. *Flexible* was devised by Iván Pethes, who was based in Hungary, and his scheme was written as part of work for the IAML (International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres) Cataloguing and Classification committee, as a universal classification scheme for music. It was published in a pre-print in 1967. Insights from a reception-infused analysis of these three schemes will be used as examples.

4.0 Consumption: analysing uptake and usage of classification schemes

Part of the family of reception theories is the idea of studying how a work has been consumed—see for instance, Everist (1999), who dedicates the first category in his seminal article on reception theory to consumption. This idea could be translated to classification schemes. So, analysing the consumption of classification schemes would involve considering how and how much a classification scheme is actually used.

The reasons for aspiring to understand the consumption of classification schemes are manifold. For example, information about how many and which types of libraries are using a particular classification scheme could be useful to those libraries considering adopting a new classification scheme. There is also a more theoretical interest in the ebb and flow of a scheme's usage, as it could reflect general concerns in knowledge organization or general librarianship. For instance, a high-usage of a proudly faceted scheme, might add to our knowledge about the popularity of faceted classification; a decline in usage of various non-standard schemes might allude to the impact of shelf-ready materials; a decline in usage of special schemes might reflect the changing nature and fortunes of specialist libraries. Consumption is also useful as it exposes prosaic matters; for while we will see in later sections that consumption is interlinked to criticism and Wirkung, consumption can also reflect and be driven by practical concerns such as cost of accessing schemes, logistics of reclassification, and so on. (Consumption's link to practical matters is telling from an aesthetics perspective; in section 2.2, "aesthetic value" was presented as the negation of practical concerns, and thus we could view consumption as having both aesthetic and non-aesthetic values.) It is clear that understanding consumption could provide useful input for practical decisions, understanding knowledge organization and towards more widespread trends and changes within librarianship.

4.1. Consumption criteria

Consumption can be broken down in a number of different ways, which illustrate the richness of considering how a scheme is used: temporal factors, geographic factors and intent. Temporal consumption focuses on how the frequency and ways in which a scheme is used changes over time. *Dickinson* exemplifies how useful information can be extracted using this method. *Dickinson* is simpler to extract consumption information from than most schemes, as its usage has been followed and described in detail by the music librarianship scholar Carol Jane Bradley—in particular, in Bradley's historical description (Bradley 2003) of music cataloguing and classification in the USA. According to Bradley (2003) the scheme first published in 1938 gained more users in the 1950s and 1960s, which Bradley attributes to the upsurge in academic music libraries. The use of *Dickinson* continued in the 1970s and in a 1972 article Bradley (21) even describes the scheme as "newly popular." She (Bradley 1972) gives some suggestions for possible reasons why this might be the case, which range from the practical to the strategic. Colloquial information such as conversations with music librarians, suggest a wane in usage of *Dickinson* in the latter decades of the 20th century: the reasons given include higher usage of standard classification schemes—which itself can be at least partly attributed to the rise of shared cataloguing and shelf-ready stock—and a general trend for music libraries to merge with general academic libraries. (While it is methodologically un-ideal to rely on informal conversations for information about the consumption of *Dickinson* and other schemes, this emphasises the lack of authoritative consumption data.) This brief example of a particular scheme's consumption highlights how temporal consumption can reveal interesting information, such as the links between the popularity of sectors of libraries and specific classification schemes which are housed within those sectors. While this analytical approach can provide rich information about a specific scheme, it can also reveal more general classification trends such as the move towards standardisation of classification schemes.

Another reception-infused analysis method is the geographic dimension of consumption. Again, *Dickinson* provides ideas about what an examination of this phenomenon might yield. *Dickinson* is noteworthy as it appears that the geographic spread has been kept reasonably contained, chiefly limited to a small region within the U.S.—see for instance Bradley's (2003) list of adopters of the scheme in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as McKnight's (2002) indication of a North-East United States web of *Dickinson* users. One possible hypothesis that could be drawn from the *Dickinson* example is that the geographic consumption of a classification scheme is linked to its

place of birth; in other words, the use of a scheme in one geographic location increases the likelihood that it will also be adopted by another organisation in that geographic area. Future research could test this hypothesis, and if found to be true, could explore how geographic consumption patterns work; for instance, how do person-to-person networks contribute to the selection and consumption of classification schemes, and does the influenced of localised usage change in the digital age?

A final example of the richness of analysing consumption can be seen by comparing the actual consumption of a scheme to its intended consumption. *Flexible*, devised by Pethes as part of his work for the IAML Cataloguing and Classification committee, provides a striking example. The teleology of the *Flexible* scheme was to be universal, designed to unite various fractious systems of music classification across the world (Pethes 1967); yet, its real-life consumption appears to be low. It appeared as a pre-print in 1967, with no evidence found so far to suggest that it was ever fully published; while there is evidence that *Flexible* was adopted by a few Hungarian libraries near the time of its creation (Pethes et al. 1968) and an informal conversation (Agnes Hajdu Barát, personal communication) revealed that the scheme is still used in some Hungarian libraries, its intended universality was not realised in its actual consumption. So, there is a question about whether the intended consumption of a scheme should be used as any sort of marker by which to measure its actual consumption, which also brings in issues concerning “success” and “failure.” For instance, if a scheme is only intended to be used locally, and is only actually adopted by three to four libraries, should this be considered a success? Or, is the “consumption failure,” in the case of the *Flexible* scheme, more pronounced due to its intentions as a popular and geographically wide-spread scheme? More pertinently, this example also asks generally about high consumption being assumed as a mark of “success.” Perhaps this is not always the case for every scheme, and care is needed in ascertaining who and what defines the “success” of a classification scheme.

4.2 Methodological challenges of consumption

In practice, determining the consumption of a scheme presents a number of methodological challenges. In order to analyse the consumption of a classification scheme, data about the usage of schemes is needed—either existing data, or information collected as part of a specific study of consumption. An example of existing data about classification scheme usage can be found in a 1968 article (Pethes et al.) in the music library journal *Fontes Artis Musicae*; 28 countries were asked about their classification of music, and the responses are presented. While the resulting article

provides some very interesting reading, it also highlights methodological issues involved with using existing consumption data, such as incompleteness caused by a low response rate (Pethes 1968) and inconsistencies between types of data offered in the responses. Furthermore, literature searches suggest that while some studies of classification scheme consumption have been recorded (such as the example above), this type of data does not appear to have been systematically collected by the knowledge organization community. Even where surveys and similar have been run, they usually only show the usage of schemes at any one given moment, making it difficult to observe long-term patterns of consumption.

Collecting new consumption data also presents the researcher with potential problems. First, any broad study is likely to involve the researcher relying on other people’s definitions and categorisations of their schemes—particularly problematic at the boundaries between schemes with slight variations from standard practice, adapted schemes and home-grown schemes. Second, it might prove difficult to get information about which edition or version of a scheme is being used at any time. Third, there might be variations in what scheme is officially used by a library and what is used by individual subject areas within the library. Fourth, if a study of changes in consumption over time is needed, this introduces problems with comparing historic and new data, which may not have been collected in the same way. Finally, one of the biggest methodological hurdles in using information about consumption is the extreme difficulty proving negativity. If there is information that a scheme has been used in a particular library, this proves consumption—and it is fairly easy to verify the result with individual libraries, if need be. However, proving that generally libraries do not use a scheme is very difficult, because it involves finding classification information from every possible library in the area under study, sometimes including historic information. Hence, stating a scheme has high consumption might be straightforward, but declaring low consumption is more problematic.

This article circumnavigates some of these issues in the following ways. While there is a dearth of systematically-collected data about the three example schemes, this article uses secondary sources which describe usage of schemes, such as academic articles describing the history and comments about the schemes. However the incompleteness and subjective nature of this method is fully acknowledged; if consumption were to be analysed in future as part of knowledge organization research, then this could prompt the establishment of systems to regularly collect data about scheme usage. Nevertheless, the chasm identified is important: doing consumption-led analysis highlights what we don’t know about classification schemes.

5.0 Criticism: critical reception and scholarly response to classification schemes

Another important part of considering how a classification has been received is to analyse the criticism of that scheme. The *OED* definition (*OED Online* 2015a, definition 2a) of the relevant meaning of criticism is “the art of estimating the qualities and character of literary or artistic works the first usage listed, from 1677, describes criticism as “judging well” further emphasising criticism as a considered evaluation, rather than the negative connotations of the word present in alternative meanings in *OED* and perhaps in more colloquial use. The term “criticism” has been used in a number of different domains. For instance, in studies of literature, criticism is a major part of the study of literature. Literary criticism has a long history (Habib 2011); yet, even with this pedigree—and moreover, because of it—to define criticism within the context of the study of literature is described by Day (2008, 2) as “impossible.” So, the purpose of this section is to see how the idea of criticism could be applied to works which examine and make value judgements about classification schemes. There are different types of criticism. For example, for music, Everist (1999) divides his construct of criticism into performance history, critical reception and scholarly/theoretical responses to music. We can borrow the latter two for analysing classification schemes. “Critical reception” in music could translate to professional evaluations of schemes, such as a librarian’s evaluation of a new scheme or new edition of a scheme, or perhaps a comparative criticism of multiple schemes when deciding which scheme to implement in their library; “scholarly/theoretical response to music” could translate as a scholarly account of a particular scheme or perhaps a systematic study of ethical issues within a particular scheme or group of schemes. However, for the purposes of this paper, any divisions between these purposes of criticism will be gently ignored, and these types of criticism treated together. This bypasses any need for differentiating between the two types within this article, which would lead to an interesting discussion but down a diversionary path.

The ideas about criticism discussed in this article are inclusive of different possible types of intent and focus. Possible types include the following: critical accounts of a single scheme or a small group of schemes (i.e. scheme-focussed); analyses of classification of a particular subject, within discussions about individual schemes (i.e. subject-focussed); analyses of particular issues, such as problems with the way gender is treated in general classification schemes, which cross multiple schemes and subjects (i.e. issue-focussed). A summary of these three types of criticism can be seen in Table 1. (The use of three individual special schemes and their shared topic of music in

this article mean that while the ideas proposed aim to cover all types of criticism, the examples of criticism used are taken from scheme-focussed and subject-focussed criticism.) Furthermore, it is important to distinguish an individual work of criticism, such as one journal article, from the body of criticism about a specific scheme/subject/topic.

Type of criticism	No. of schemes	No. of subjects
Scheme-focussed	1 (or a few)	1 or many
Subject-focussed	Many	1
Issue-focussed	1 or many	Many

Table 1. Foci of criticism.

Studying critical responses to classification schemes is profitable, for this type of analysis shows us how particular schemes are valued. For instance, researching whether a new classification scheme is discussed in relevant professional/scholarly journals can help to tell us about the position of this scheme within professional/scholarly circles; the contents of a critical discussion or review of a scheme can tell us much about the scheme itself as well as contextual information about the library Zeitgeist of the time of the review. Studying a scheme’s criticism allows us to see the importance of a scheme, both at its first dissemination and over the period of the scheme’s lifetime. When analysing schemes we are usually producing our own act of criticism, but if we add to our own analysis a study of other people’s criticism, this provides much useful contextual information to our own analysis. The result will be a fuller and richer account of the scheme. So, to fully analyse a scheme, we also need to analyse existing criticism.

5.1 Criticism criteria

There are a number of important criteria when analysing the criticism of classification schemes; for, it is not enough just to accept the contents of the criticism, but also to ask questions about the criticism and the critic. The first criterion is the number of voices represented within the body of criticism: single versus multiple critics. It is also important to question these voices by considering the relationship between the author of the criticism and the scheme itself, assessing the objectivity and motivation of the review. The *Dickinson* scheme provides a case-study where a body of criticism is dominated by one author. Descriptions, criticism and information about the *Dickinson* scheme are chiefly written by one author, the well-respected music librarianship scholar Carol Jane Bradley. It can be argued that Bradley also had an agenda concerning *Dickinson*; her position as author of a user

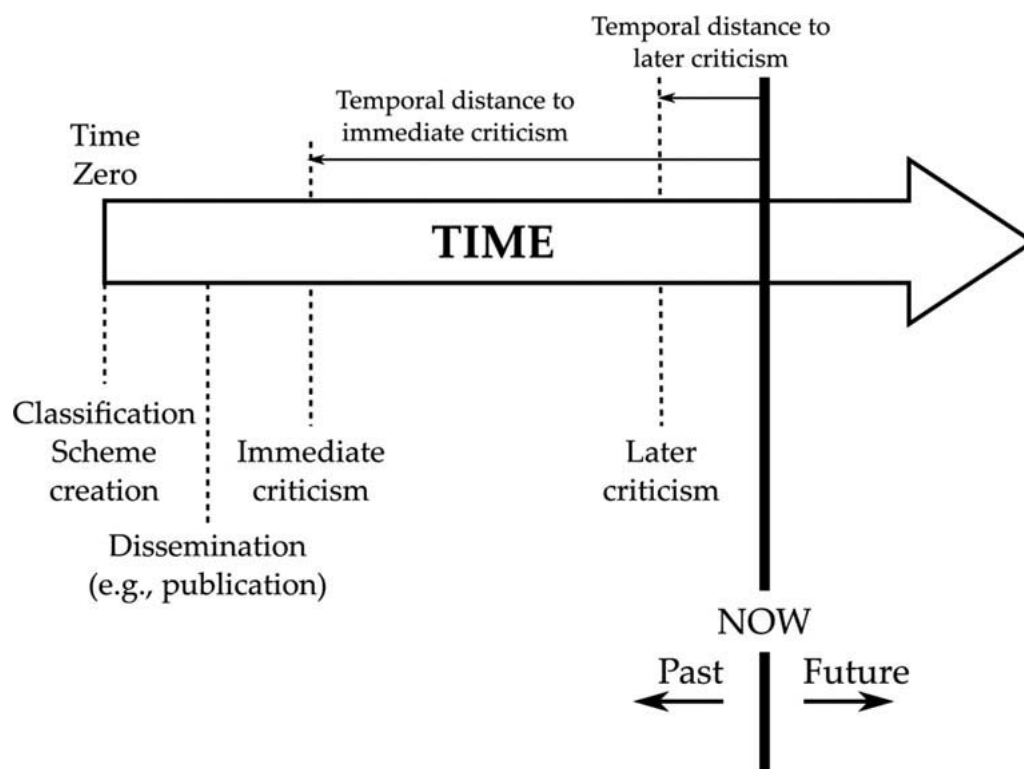


Figure 1. Criticism in relation to time.

manual for the scheme and facilitator of its reprinting are just two activities which lead to a possible label of Bradley as “Dickinson champion.” This does not devalue Bradley’s contributions in any way; instead, it asks important questions about how we read Bradley’s criticism, both in its own right and when compared to criticism by the (few) other critics who discuss this scheme (for instance, Redfern (1978), Buth (1974) and McKnight (2002)). Therefore, it is clear that any study of scholarly and critical reception needs to consider the diffusion of the authors and the motives behind their criticism.

A second criterion analyses whether an individual work of criticism is absolute (discussing qualities of the specific scheme itself) or relative (discussing qualities of the scheme in comparison to other schemes). For instance, Redfern (1978, 33) describes *BCMC* as “the finest classification of music in print;” this criticism positions *BCMC* in relation to other classification schemes for music. A variation on this criterion is the scheme’s relativity not to other schemes but potential users. For instance, Clews (1975, 9)—another of the *DDC Phoenix* schedule creators—goes as far as to suggest that there is a consensus amongst music libraries in Great Britain: “This [*BCMC*] has been widely acclaimed by British music librarians as the best available scheme for music.”

A third criterion of criticism concerns temporal factors of both an individual work of criticism and a body of criticism. Any individual piece of criticism is written at a

specific point in a temporal plane, which stretches from the first dissemination of the scheme into the present, and then the future—see Figure 1. On a theoretical level, criticism cannot exist at “time zero,” the moment when the scheme was created, so there is always some quantity of time between a scheme’s dissemination and the immediate criticism—see Figure 1. (It is best to discount examples where criticism is produced about a preprint or draft of a scheme, so technically criticism exists before the first official version of the scheme; instead consider these drafts as “time zero.”) There are various reasons that prompt scheme criticism to be created, and the reason for creation of the criticism will often reflect where that criticism is located on the time axis. For example, criticism produced as a quasi-book review, discussing a scheme whose importance is such that a journal requires comment from the community, is more likely to be immediate criticism; conversely, for at least some of the schemes discussed, a theoretical comparison of special schemes in a particular subject is more likely to be later criticism. Furthermore, it is important to consider the temporal placement of the reader of the criticism, as this might have an impact on how the criticism is read: standing in the present, there is a longer distance to immediate criticisms than there is to later criticisms—as shown in Figure 1—which means a longer distance to the concerns, issues and classification *Zeitgeist* in which the criticism was written. It is noteworthy that sometimes the authors of the criticism acknowl-

edge and reflect upon temporal elements of criticism, as seen in Buth's (1974) aside that her discussion is dependent on the time in which it was written.

5.2. Criticism assumptions and questions

There are a number of assumptions and insightful questions necessitated by construing opinions about classification schemes as criticism. The first is neatly highlighted by the *OED* definition (*OED Online* 2015a, definition 2a); it says that criticism is something that is done to a "literary or artistic work." Therefore, the application of criticism to classification schemes is dependent on the ideas discussed in section 2.2 of this article, which posits that classification schemes have aesthetic value, which in turn leads to their potential categorisation as artistic or literary works. (The preceding statement relies upon an oversimplification of the relationship between being an artwork and having aesthetic value—see Ojennus and Tennis (2013a) for a discussion about this matter; however, as the nature of the relationship between artworks and aesthetic value is outside of the scope of this article, this simplification will nevertheless be adopted.) Another question that needs to be asked concerns the relatively small number of evaluations and considerations of schemes found in, for example, library and information science literature. While documents evaluating classification schemes exist, they are negligible compared to say 2500 years of literary criticism (Habib 2011) or an overabundance of music criticism (Everist 1999). Does the difference between the numbers of critical documents about classification schemes compared to literary works affect our designation of these documents as criticism? I would argue that the (relatively) small quantity of classification-scheme evaluations does not invalidate their position as criticism as each individual reception document has value, even if the sum of documents on a particular scheme or topic may be un-ideal for performing certain types of analysis. Another question concerns the intention of critical documents; we need to ask whether accounts of classification schemes can be considered to be criticism when their author may not have considered their writing in this way. However, there is no reason to suggest that the only valid criticism is that which is done consciously as criticism, as long as the accounts fulfil the criteria of making value judgements and evaluating the scheme in question.

The documentation of criticism ideas evokes some vacillation about the medium of the criticism; as set out above, criticism is a considered value judgement, but it also errs towards certain mediums to deliver that criticism—for instance, it is unlikely that a considered criticism of *BCMC* will appear in the form of a song! Notwithstanding the existence of aural criticisms such as conference presenta-

tions, in order to be able to refer to an object, it will be assumed that criticism refers to writing. Finally, not all works written about classification schemes can be considered, on ontological grounds, as criticism. This asks vital questions about what we mean by criticism of classification schemes. For the purposes of this article, works which discuss a classification scheme and offer some value judgement on it will be considered criticism (perhaps a large majority); those which only describe the scheme and the mechanics of its working, yet offer no evaluation of the scheme or discussion on the scheme's value, will be labelled as "description."

5.3 Relationships between criticism and consumption

Considering the relationship between criticism of a classification scheme and its consumption offers a novel perspective, and gives context to the study of both the criticism and the consumption. For example, *BCMC* received much positive critical reception; yet, outside of its original purpose of arranging a specific classified catalogue, *BCMC* appears to have had little use as a system for other classified catalogues or items on shelves. For example, the only documented example found so far is at the State Library of Western Australia—see the title of the overall classification scheme for music scores (State Library of Western Australia 2015b), a description of the classification for popular songbooks (State Library of Western Australia 2015c) and the classmarks used in the catalogue itself (State Library of Western Australia 2015a)—though this must be viewed within the methodological parameters concerning stating a scheme's non-usage, as discussed in section 4.2. Furthermore, while scholarly sources such as Inskip et al. (2008, 689) describe *BCMC* as the "dominant notated western classical music classification scheme in music libraries," it appears that its dominance is in the critical sphere rather than in practice. This example demonstrates that consumption and positive criticism are not concomitant.

Another idea emerges from the *BCMC* example: the impact of criticism on geographic location of consumption. We saw with the *Dickinson* example in Section 4.1 that it can be informative to measure geographic consumption of a scheme, and various ideas can be suggested as to why a scheme's consumption density is much higher in the geographic surroundings of the scheme's birth. However, in the case of *BCMC*, the one known current consumption of the scheme is geographically far away from the scheme's birth: London (United Kingdom) to Perth (Australia). Could the impact of criticism have fanned the flames of consumption of this scheme, or is there another, more prosaic reason for *BCMC*'s adoption? There are thought-provoking questions about whether,

and to what degree, criticism of a scheme has an impact on its consumption.

An extra snippet to the consumption/criticism relationship occurs when an individual work of criticism specifically addressed where/how the scheme will be used. For example, Long (1972) endorses *BCMC* as the ideal scheme for large libraries; however, as far as we know, Long's endorsement did not result in any widespread adoption of this scheme. So, were Long's suggestion wrong and the scheme not ideal for the purpose she had in mind, or did some unforeseen event change the course of consumption? There is a theoretical question as to whether criticism that merely describing the expected use of a scheme is just passive, consumption-centric criticism; or, instead is this type of criticism an active agent of change, driving the course of consumption of the scheme, and setting up a symbiotic relationship between critical reception and consumption in the process? These two possible types of relationships between a critical work about a scheme and the scheme's consumption are visualised in Figure 2.

5.4 Methodological challenges of criticism

There are methodological challenges when considering an analysis of a scheme's criticism. While for artworks such as music, there are sometimes methodological issues from the ubiquity of critical reception of a musical work (Everist 1999), the search for criticism of the three example classification schemes reveals an example of the opposite problem: too little criticism. Quantity of criticism about a particular scheme would make a fascinating future line of enquiry, alongside a discussion about whether the quantity of scheme criticism available is itself a component of the criticism. There are methodological questions about how to search for works of criticism; where criticism is an established term within a domain, the coherent use of the term "criticism" will help

searching, as will types of criticism appearing as a search-type—see, for instance, the filtering by document type on the music literature abstracting database *RILM* (*Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale*), which allows users to search by "review of performance" or "review of recording." This article includes criticism taken from monographs and articles which discuss music classification generally—for example, Buth (1974), Redfern (1978) and McKnight (2002)—so their hidden, double identity as works of criticism about specific classification schemes may need extra thought to uncover.

One corollary of the relatively small amount of criticism is that to build up a reasonable body of criticism about a specific scheme might involve using criticism written a long time since the scheme's initial publication. For example, the publication of the 20th edition of *DDC* (*DDC20*) prompted Redfern's review article (1991) of its music schedules; this was accompanied by some insightful scheme criticism of *BCM*, a scheme published over thirty years earlier. While it is not problematic per se to use Redfern's criticism when building a picture of *BCM*'s critical reception, it is important from a methodological viewpoint to note this temporal distance—see section 5.1. However, though re-positioning works about classification schemes as criticism might present some methodological challenges, there is manifold richness in the information uncovered once these hurdles are overcome.

6.0 Wirkung: exploring the influence and effect of classification schemes

A different type of receiving makes up the third reception-infused analysis idea: "Wirkung." The term "Wirkung" is loosely translated by Holub (1984, 1) as "response" or 'effect', and is taken from the German concept of "Wirkungsgasthetik," namely how a work impacts later writers. In order to avoid confusion with the more prosaic uses of "effect" and "impact," as well as an adherence to the precise

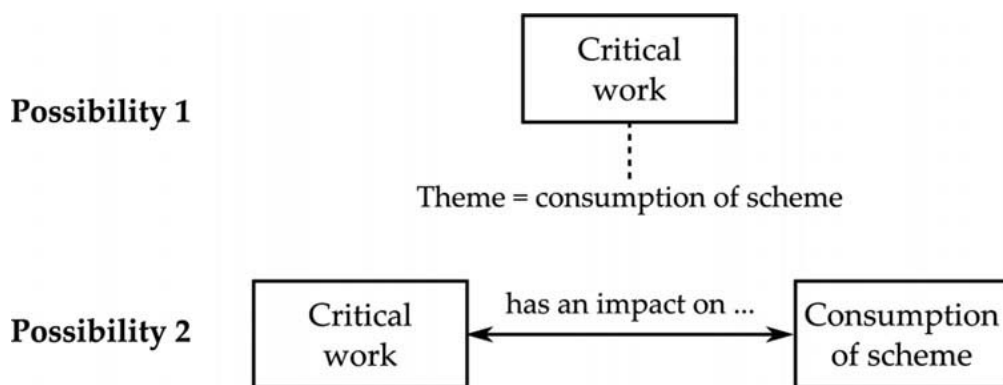


Figure 2. Possible relationships between consumption and criticism.

meaning of the German original term, this article will use the technical, German term “Wirkung” rather than an English approximation. In other domains such as music, the concept of Wirkung includes a far-reaching set of practices, as the influence and effect of a musical work can be felt in a number of different ways.

At this juncture it is useful to borrow ideas from another domain to suggest different types of Wirkung. Everist’s (1999) different categories of Wirkung for music suggest some intriguing possibilities as to how Wirkung could be used to analyse classification schemes. For instance, Everist’s (1999) example of how the nineteenth-century realisations of Mozart’s eighteenth-century opera *Don Giovanni* are part of the Wirkung of the (two) original version(s) of the opera could be reconceived as how different versions of a classification scheme are actually part of the effect of the original scheme; Everist’s (1999) argument of how one musical work by Beethoven is actually the Wirkung of a work by Mozart, could transform into discussions about one classification scheme borrowing from another; Everist’s (1999) illustration of how the “availability” of a musical work, directly affects the Wirkung of that work, using Sibelius as an example, can metamorphose into classification scheme analysis which considers how the availability of schemes affects how they are received. These ideas about Wirkung, extracted from Everist (1999) and repurposed for analysing classification schemes are not exhaustive, but provide three ideas of Wirkung-as-an-analytical-tool to discuss further.

6.1. Wirkung as intra-scheme connection

Classification schemes existing in different versions is a truism, and there is much existing research discussing versions and versioning of schemes; for instance, Tennis’s (2010) typology of versions and states, and work by Žumer, Zeng and Mitchell (Zeng and Žumer 2013; Žumer et al. 2012) which uses FRBR (*Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records*) to model relationships between KOSs. What a reception-infused approach adds is a novel framework. Considered in the light of Wirkung—in other words, considering a new version of a scheme as part of the impact of the original version of the scheme—reception-infused analysis of versions of schemes could be considered an intra-scheme connection. So, we could superimpose Tennis’s (2010) typology of versions and states on to ideas of Wirkung, and hypothesise that any change in version or state of a classification scheme is actually an act of reception.

For example, *BCMC* exists in a single version, as it is only published as a separate scheme once. However, it could be argued that *BCMC* has subsequent states; the British Library holds an annotated copy of the scheme,

which was the working copy of *BCMC* staff (Coates n.d.). While the placement of the annotated copy of *BCMC* on the no-change/new-state/new-version continuum is out of scope for this article, the interest for reception-infused analysis is the lack of definitive new version of *BCMC*. We could ask whether this absence is a mark of its lack of impact, or we could also question whether there is any correlation between lack of subsequent version and the scheme’s very low consumption rate. Conversely, *Dickinson* enjoyed at least one definitive new version, the *Columbia-Vassar* scheme. Its new version can be viewed as a sign of the scheme’s positive reception: it could be argued that propagating a new version of a scheme—however heavily adapted from the original—suggests some measure of positive reception of the original scheme.

6.2. Wirkung as inter-scheme connection

Another analytical tool involves viewing how one scheme influences another, which can be regarded as an inter-scheme connection. This provides reception-infused information about how the original scheme is perceived, and there are many different types of inter-scheme relationship. For example, the *Flexible* classification is an adaptation of *UDC*’s music schedules; therefore, we can perceive part of the Wirkung of *UDC* to be the *Flexible* scheme, as Pethes (author of *Flexible* classification) uses *UDC* as its base. This type of inter-scheme relationship sees a general classification being utilised as the basis of a special scheme, and it is interesting to note that this type of relationship is common in music classification. The *UDC/Flexible* relationships also demonstrates how sometimes the child (the Wirkung) scheme can outgrow its parent (the original); for instance, Redfern (1978) believes that though not the original purpose of the *Flexible* scheme, with editing, the *Flexible* scheme could become the official *UDC* schedules for music. (The exact relationship between *UDC* and *Flexible* is opaque, as different sources give slightly different accounts of *Flexible*’s intentions in relation to *UDC*; however, the narrative described above is at the very least one possible version of events, and it serves the purpose of illustrating this particular type of inter-scheme relationship.)

It is particularly valuable to consider the temporal element of inter-scheme connections, as these types of Wirkung might only appear some time after the dissemination of the original scheme. For example, *BCMC* (published 1960) appears to have influenced a major general classification scheme (*DDC*), but we have to wait over a decade before *BCMC* is used in the *Phoenix* schedules (Sweeney and Clews, 1980), and even longer for the *BCMC*-influenced section to appear in the final version of

a *DDC* schedule (Dewey 1989). Another type of inter-scheme relationship occurs where the *Wirkung* jumps the domain boundary; for example, *BCMC* uses some terminology and ideas from an object organisational system from the music domain, the instrument classification system by Hornbostel and Sachs. This type of *Wirkung*, and the categorisation of intra-domain and inter-domain *Wirkungs*, is discussed in more detail in Lee (2014).

6.3 *Wirkung* as publication and dissemination

Publication and availability of the classification schemes are another type of *Wirkung*. The *Dickinson* scheme demonstrates how publication can be an insightful analysis tool. The original *Dickinson* scheme was published with a print run of only 300 (Bradley 1972), which unsurprisingly meant the scheme was out of print by the 1960s. Bradley published a manual of the *Dickinson* scheme in 1968, which, among other things, included a reprint of the original classification. The reprinting of the scheme can be taken as part of the scheme's consumption, as it was an event necessitated by a perceived desire for the scheme by librarians. (This makes the assumption that the desire to own a copy of the scheme is a desire to consume the scheme, and while the acquisition rate of the scheme is unlikely to be matched by its consumption—perhaps some libraries bought the scheme for reference—it could be argued that there is some approximate correlation.)

However, Bradley goes further than this; she (Bradley 1972) suggests that this re-publication contributed to the new popularity of *Dickinson*. So, it is possible to interpret Bradley's comment that not only is the re-publication of *Dickinson* evidence of the scheme's positive reception and consumption before its re-publication, but the act of (re-) publication alters the future reception of the scheme. Re-

publication means more (potential) consumption, but also more opportunities for criticism. One part of the *Wirkung*, alters the course of the future consumption and criticism.

Bradley (1972) gives other reasons for the renewed interest in *Dickinson*, which suggest that the *Wirkung*-as-availability can be realised in more spheres than just the publication of the actual scheme. For instance, she (Bradley 1972) suggests that the availability of her manual, which discusses the scheme, helped to spread the *Dickinson* gospel, and we could perceive this as a link to consumption and perhaps even criticism. Furthermore, Bradley (1972) links the availability of microfilms of the Vassar College music catalogue to at least one library's uptake of the *Dickinson* scheme; in other words, she suggests that seeing the classification scheme in action, through the conduit of the catalogue shelf list, prompted further usage of the scheme. So, this is an example where the *Wirkung* of a work related to the classification scheme—the catalogue shelf list—effect change in the consumption of the actual scheme; this series of relationships can be seen in abstract in Figure 3. Thus we can see how intricate and tangled webs of *Wirkung*, criticism and consumption can be.

6.4 Relationships between *Wirkung*, criticism and consumption

We have already seen how one type of *Wirkung*, publication, can be conjoined with consumption and criticism, and there are other types of link. *BCMC* provides two additional examples. The first of these involves *BCMC* and *DDC*. The homage to *BCMC* in the *DDC* music Phoenix schedules/*DDC20* onwards is well-documented and can be considered a *Wirkung* of *BCMC*. However, it is also notable that the birth of the *Phoenix* schedule inspires much criticism, not just about the *Phoenix* schedule, but also about *BCMC*. The most important of this criti-

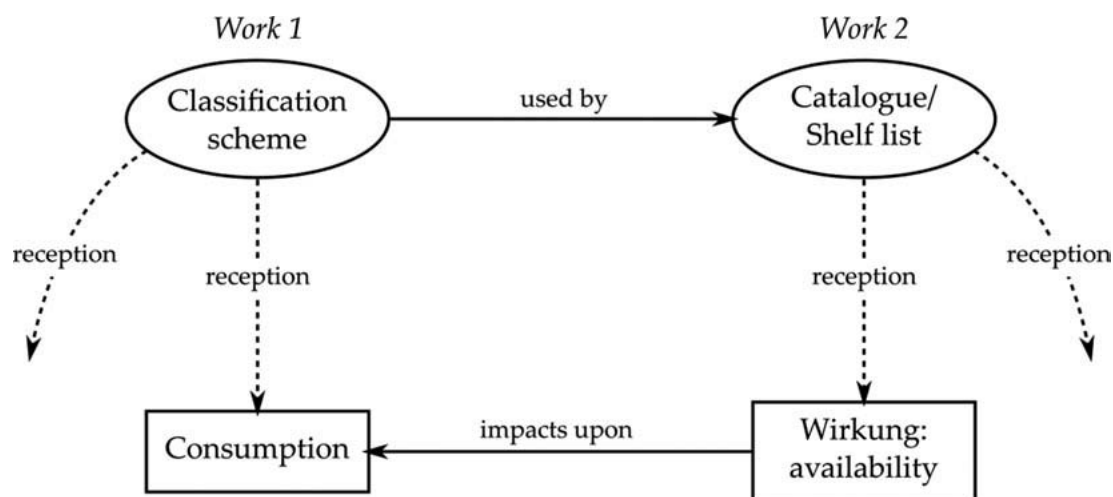


Figure 3. An example of a series of reception relationships

cism is by the *Phoenix* schedule's authors, Clews (1975) and Sweeney (1976), whose criticism of *Phoenix*—if the criticism of a scheme by its author can be considered criticism—includes a positive evaluation of *BCMC*. There is a question about whether you could use an existing scheme to produce a new scheme without a process of reception (either good or bad) on the original scheme. Thus, is the criticism of the borrowed scheme a necessary stage in this type of *Wirkung*?

The second example of a type of linkage between *Wirkung* and other types of reception involves *BCMC*'s annotations. The annotated copy of *BCMC* held by the British Library (Coates n.d.) includes many updates to the scheme; however, these annotations are not only unpublished, but discourse about the scheme suggests that their existence is mostly unknown. As *BCMC* was designed primarily to organise the British Catalogue of Music, it is reasonable to only distribute the intra-scheme *Wirkung* state (the annotations) internally, if at all; however, the problem occurs because the original *BCMC* was published, making it de-facto a public scheme, but these annotations and updates are not. This sets up a fascinating set of relationships. First, we could say that *BCMC* is intrinsically an updated scheme, but extrinsically-speaking, it is perceived as a scheme which has not been updated; this disjuncture between intrinsic and extrinsic properties asks some stimulating questions about qualities of classification schemes, and their role in creating and assessing reception. Second, the supposed lack of updates is directly referred to in criticism—see for instance Clews (1975)—which means that (the perceived version of) this aspect of the scheme's *Wirkung* (lack of new versions) has a negative impact on the scheme's criticism. Furthermore, we could speculate that the (supposed) lack of updates also fuels *BCMC*'s low consumption rate, thus linking extrinsic *Wirkung* with criticism and consumption. Thus, we can start to see the potency of the relationships between criticism, consumption and *Wirkung*—a relationship foretold by a domain with an established use of reception, music (Everist 1999).

6.5 Methodological challenges of *Wirkung*

There are methodological hurdles to researching the *Wirkung* of a classification scheme. Knowing about a *Wirkung* can be problematic—for instance, finding that one scheme has borrowed from another can often involve serendipity, if not relying on encyclopaedic knowledge of all classification schemes in a domain. Proving connections between schemes—as seen earlier in this section—can be problematic, as this requires the notoriously tricky action of proving intention, or else ascertaining what a specific classification-scheme author or editor knew about different classifi-

cation schemes at a given point in time. Types of *Wirkung* that can be ascertained by knowledge about the publication of a scheme or edition of a scheme should be relatively easy from a methodological perspective. However, sometimes even this information can be obscured: classification schemes and their subsequent editions frequently suffer from low print runs and a sense of the ephemeral, if they are even published at all. These methodological issues mean that there are gaps and limitations in potential *Wirkung* research, but this does not devalue the richness of the *Wirkung* analysis that can take place.

7.0 Conclusion

This article has outlined a novel approach to classification scheme analysis that introduces reception-infused factors. Studying the consumption of a scheme asks questions about classification schemes that are (for the majority of schemes) asked infrequently and generally suffer from a lack of systematic research: charting who uses a scheme or an edition of a scheme. Asking these questions also reveals what we don't know about classification schemes, meaning a difficult but rewarding time ahead for future consumption-based research. If more data were collected, it would be possible to track patterns of usage in a systematic way, drawing hypotheses not only about individual schemes but of wider issues that consumption represents, such as economic factors, the fate of specialist libraries and the (frequently economic-driven) desire for conformity in classification schemes, and many more.

Introducing the notion of criticism to classification schemes yields some fascinating results, and relies on previous research which position classification schemes as having aesthetic value. Studying the criticism of a classification scheme utilises documents that already exist, but are repurposed to fit a criticism framework. We know that people write about classification schemes, but this approach requires us to think about their writings as criticism—and thus, part of the scheme itself. This reception-analysis approach also sees the criticism of the classification schemes individually, in order to analyse separate elements, but also as a body of criticism, which give an overall account of the value of the scheme. Studying criticism of a scheme relies on notions of value within classification schemes, but asks questions about which values and who decides. A librarian considering which classification scheme to use in their library is likely to have different criteria for establishing a scheme's value from someone writing about that classification scheme from a purely theoretical perspective. Therefore, as criticism happens whatever we label it and theoretical and practical decisions are based upon it, there is a strong case for improving our understanding of the criticism of classification schemes.

Wirkung provides different types of discussion, and opportunities to see how far the tentacles of a classification can stretch, both within the afterlife of the scheme itself and its influence on other schemes. The web of influences can be dense, and cross over special/general classification divides, and even hop across domains. Considering the links between consumption, criticism and Wirkung is also illuminating. For instance, the *BCMC* example shows how positive criticism does not necessarily lead to high consumption and suggests further hypotheses for future research such as linking the geographic constituent of consumption with the geographic constituent of criticism. Possible links between Wirkung, consumption and criticism suggest that while each of the three types of reception-infused analysis can be studied individually, there is merit in considering all three together, so as to plot and study the links between them.

Possibilities for future research abound. For example, this article has only considered one type of KOS, the classification scheme, so it would be fruitful to investigate how reception-infused analysis could be utilised for another type of KOS, or KOSs generally. Using reception-infused analysis on different schemes, different types of schemes (such as general classification schemes) and a wider sample would be very informative, as would including a bigger selection of types of criticism—such as issue-focussed criticism, as mentioned in section 5.

To conclude, if we consider the classification schemes to represent classification itself, then adding the extra dimension to classification scheme analysis of these three reception-infused ideas can only be beneficial. Considering these types of reception-infused analysis have provided clues to a potential future paradigm, where ascertaining how the classification scheme has been received becomes one of the tenets of knowledge organisation.

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