

311-320) will be interesting reading for anyone interested in multiple bibliographic database vocabulary switching because it "analyses the functional requirements of dealing with NDBs in distributed environments, where the data models used to organize the databases vary, where the data representations are not directly compatible, and where the naming of data item types is not standardized resulting in difficulties in relating data from different sources". As these are common problems in bibliographic databases as well, this analysis can offer some assistance in that area too.

The editors performed a remarkable feat in getting this volume published within the year after the meeting, making the reading of the papers more lively and current. Although the cost would appear to be exorbitant, even for the most affluent library, it still needs to be made available wherever there are students and researchers in the field of library and information studies.

Pauline A. Cochrane

BUCHANAN, Brian: *Bibliothekarische Klassifikationstheorie*. München: K.G.Saur Verl. 1989. 151p. ISBN 3-598-10788-9

Ten years after the publication of Buchanan's *Theory of Library Classification* (London: Bingley 1979) it is good to have this book translated. At last, one may add. For the slim introduction into the intricate business of classification has made its way to the textbook shelves for students of librarianship in English speaking countries. And although similar progress is desired for the translation, there are some reservations.

For two reasons, Buchanan's book should meet a heavy demand in this country. First, surprisingly enough, there is hardly any introduction or textbook on classification that would serve the German speaking and classifying market; the last attempt was, according to the majority of reviews, nothing more than precisely that (1). Second, and what is more, Buchanan's book paves the way to an appreciation of facet classification, an approach which has almost always been considered somewhat exotic in traditional German classification theory and practice. The only book on facet classification for German speaking readers before the present translation of Buchanan's book was published twenty years ago (2).

Yet for all book's virtues, it should be stated that some virtues are only pretended. A major reservation is the title of the book. It simply promises too much. Buchanan does not provide an introduction, let alone an outline of library classification. The book is rather a straightforward, if exclusive, introduction into a pragmatic approach to facet classification. Even with respect to English speaking countries and their tradition of facet classification, any survey of library classification would have to be considered incomplete that dealt only with facet classification and left only some introductory remarks to precombined ones, notably DDC. It is not surprising, therefore, that Buchanan's book is marked "elementary" in Foskett's seminal textbook (3). That verdict may also draw on the misleading title, for the book is hardly theoretic. On the contrary, it is downright pragmatic.

The book divides into 13 chapters. Following two short introductory chapters, Buchanan explains the basic differences between precombined and facet classification systems. He then leaves precombined systems at what they are and concentrates on facet classification. Yet in spite of the book's title, Buchanan's approach is not at all theoretic. He rather tends to the pragmatic side and documents, very often in minute detail, the design of an exemplary facet classification. The chosen example is zoology. Which may not be everybody's cup of tea. However, zoology lends itself to such a demonstrational purpose, being unbiased by any ideological slant and multilingual, as it were: for we all know what a butterfly is, don't we? That explanation takes about half of the book, with due attention being paid to matters such as terminology and its structuring, notation, or alphabetic index.

In order to popularize facet classification in German speaking countries, though, the exclusive realm of zoology should have been extended to include more examples, notably from disciplines concentrating on conceptual systems more abstract than zoology. What about matters such as philosophy, history, politics, economy? To show that facet classification is actually a feasible approach with disciplines involving ideas rather than things would have been tremendously helpful.

The translation preserves what may be regarded the most important feature of the original, its clear and unpretentious style. The steps to be taken in designing a facet classification are laid out in great detail, making the whole process transparent. Occasional references to other classification approaches (notably critical remarks on the DDC) notwithstanding, the translation should succeed in holding its readers to its course very much the same way the original version does. And that course is nothing more (and indeed nothing less) than a plain description of designing a facet classification. As for matters of classification terminology itself, the translation provides helpful references to Buchanan's original text as well as to German DIN standards. What remains to be criticized, if rather formally though, is the quality of the book itself: the word-processing layout, the fatiguing print-area, the offset-printing as well as the soft binding do not exactly look like demanding DM 48. Moreover, the translation renders exactly the original version published in 1979. Ten years later, references should have been updated, and students of librarianship should no longer be referred to the 18th edition of DDC. As for the title of the book, we cannot blame the publisher that the original version was preserved; something like a "demonstration of facet classification" would, after all, hardly meet anything more than a minority's interest in this country.

Heiner Schnelling

- (1) Weisshaupt, K.: *Sacherschließung in Bibliotheken und Bibliographien I: Klassifikatorische Sacherschließung*. Frankfurt: Klostermann 1985. (Among the numerous reviews, see W. Gödert in *Int. Classif.* 13 (1986) p. 39-40, G. Heinrich in *Bibliothek. Forsch. u. Praxis* 10 (1986) p. 136-139)
- (2) Vickery, B.C.: *Facettenklassifikation*. Pullach b. München: Verl. Dokumentation 1969.
- (3) Foskett, A.C.: *The subject approach to information*. 4th ed. London: Bingley 1982. p. 11

Dr. H. Schnelling, Universitätsbibliothek Giessen, Otto-Behagel-Str. 8, D-6300 Giessen