

LANGRIDGE, Derek W. **Classification: Its Kinds, Elements, Systems and Applications.** London-Melbourne-Munich-New York: Bowker-Saur 1992. X,84p. ISBN 0-86291-622-4 = Topics in Library and Information Studies.

Classification is a fundamental activity of every system. It is cerebral, neural, cognitive, social, academic and organizational in nature. Life in every sense of the word would be a chaos, nay impossible, without it. It is manifested in defining, naming, analyzing, discriminating, individualizing, identifying, choosing, selecting, grouping, arranging, categorizing, ranking, ordering, correlating, tabulating, mapping, co-ordinating and controlling. Classification transforms a heap of bricks into a purposeful mansion. Classification is the only difference between an unruly mob (synonymous with terror and insecurity) and a disciplined army (always a symbol of peace and security). John Dewey (1859-1952) has rightly been quoted, though Langridge does not fully agree with him, as saying that „all knowledge is classification“ (p.3). No doubt, knowledge advances by classification. Concepts, information and classification are intrinsically linked. Classification, be it of concrete or abstract entities, be it scientific, philosophical or bibliographic, is always utilitarian in purpose. A successful person is a skilled classifier in her/his domain of living and work, be it with ideas, words, events, or men and material. It is a basic study subject for library and information work. For Langridge, „classification means a way of thinking that pervades all subject work“ (p.X).

This small booklet is the most basic book existing on classification in all senses of the word and its wider applications. The author, Derek Wilton Langridge, who is deeply influenced by Ranganathan, is an outstanding expert and exponent of classification and classification studies and is already known for his fundamental books:

(1) *Approach to Classification for Students of Librarianship* (1973); (2) *Classification and Indexing in the Humanities* (1976); (3) *Subject Analysis: Principles and Procedures* (1989).

The book is a brief but fine summary of his previous work as embodied in the above books. The book is unconventional in the sense that its chapters are unnumbered and brief, consisting merely of a paragraph or two – only a very few spill over to the next page. The book has been broadly divided into two parts.

Part I, „Classification in General“ has the following sections: *The nature of classification. Fundamentals of classification. The classification of knowledge.* This part deals with the nature, definition, and everyday uses of classification; the process of division to form classes by application of characteristics; the nature of knowledge, its division into main classes, and its relation to bibliographic classification.

Part II, „Bibliographic Classification“, has the following sections: *Elements of bibliographic classification. Classification schemes. Applications of classification.* It deals with: documents and their various viewpoints, forms, subject and topical divisions; fundamental categories and their relation to facets, and kinds of subjects. It continues with classification systems, their kinds and ingredients such as main classes,

their order, facets and their sequence and notation, their functions and qualities. Lastly it deals with the applications of classification in subject indexing, in the arrangement of catalogue entries and information in reference works and computerized databases.

There are 58 chapters in all with axiomatic titles of headings full of distilled wisdom and pithy sentences. Savor a few picked at random:

Classifications are made, not discovered. Logic includes the fundamental principles of classification. Main classes are not what they seem. Notation must be acceptable to users. Classification is the basis of all indexing languages. There is no substitute for classification.

Indeed these are quotable quotes and have been elaborated with examples, arguments and citations from authoritative writers. The author is of the opinion that all classifications are artificial – these are made, not discovered – designed to serve a specific purpose. He challenges a deep-rooted doctrine that some classifications are natural and some artificial, depending upon the characteristics of division chosen. Bibliographic classification is a secondary form which goes beyond the simple applications of logical division. In a classification schedule, classification techniques are in full display. In library and information work, what looks like avoiding a classification is in fact opting for an alternative classification. There is no escape from classification even in electronic environments: „Computers are only complex machines, but they provide the means for effective use of classification“ (p.70). Langridge causes some confusion by saying „Forms of knowledge are the basis of subject classification“ (p.32). But in fact by *Forms of Knowledge* he actually means the major disciplines of knowledge.

The book closes with a brief appendix of the terms used, and a small list of suggested readings, and references cited.

It is a fundamental and rudimentary book dwelling on the perennial elements in classificatory techniques and bibliographic classification systems. It is a refreshing summary of all classification work and concepts. Being brief and too concise, it may not be of much help to the novice learner. The treatment is cursory and so requires some prior familiarity with the subject. To the initiated it provides lucid reading which refreshes and reinforces the fundamental concepts of classification and equips the readers with aphoristic and articulated maxims on classification studies.

Despite the two misprints „extravert“ (p.6, para 2) for extrovert and „man“ (p.56, para 3) for „main“, the book in its resplendent binding presents an attractive get-up and has been priced accordingly.

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SEARS, Minnie Earl: **Sears List of Subject Headings. 15th ed.**, Ed. by Joseph Miller. New York: H.W. Wilson 1994. XLVI, 758p., ISBN 0-8242-0858-7

First published in 1923 and designed by Minnie Earl Sears (1873-1933) in deference to the demands of small libraries,

this book is now a standard subject cataloguing tool. It was based on the subject heading practices of 9 small but well-catalogued libraries. Its 2nd and 3rd editions were published in 1926 and 1933, again under the editorship of Sears, who died prematurely. The 4th (1939) and 5th (1944) editions, edited by Isabel Stevenson Munro, also included DDC numbers. The 6th (1950), 7th (1954) and 8th (1959) editions were edited by Bertha M. Frick. The 6th edition incorporated Sears' name to assume its present title.

The book was deemed useful both for small and medium-sized libraries and acquired an internal format of display and cross-references which lasted until the 14th edition (1991) edited by Martha T. Mooney. In the 9th (1965) and 10th (1972) editions edited by Barbara M. Westby the DDC numbers were dropped to reappear again as of the 11th (1977) edition. The 12th (1982) was the last edition edited by Westby. The 13th (1986) edition edited by Carmen Rovira and Caroline Reyes was the first to be in an online form; and it introduced some changes to suit OPACs environment by de-inverting many of the headings. The electronic-age reforms have continued through the 14th (1991) and the present 15th editions. The 13th edition also incorporated headings from the Subject Headings for Children's Literature (Library of Congress). Now the revisions are more frequent and short-spaced in time.

In the present edition new headings have been added in the areas of Technology, Business, People and Environment. „African American“ is a significant new heading added. In the fiction and films areas alone some 120 new headings have been added. Some 500 headings have been newly added, modified, or deleted, mostly at the suggestion of working librarians. A long list of all replaced headings is given. Some headings have been given new terms for old concepts, e.g. „Explorations“ has been changed to „Discoveries“. Changes in Sears were inevitable following the changes in the LC Subject Headings policies, which Sears closely follows. Since the 13th edition, as already said, direct forms of headings are preferred over the inverted forms, e.g. „Islamic art“ instead of „Art, Islamic“. The changes have come full circle with the de-inversion en masse of almost all inverted headings. This will increase the probability of „hits“ in the hit-an-miss location of headings. In the 15th edition the scope notes have been increased in number. It uses the 12th edition (1990) of the Abridged DDC for class numbers consisting mostly of 4 digits. The headings are arranged word by word following the ALA Filing Rules (1980) with punctuations being disregarded. In forms of corporate headings AACR-2R (1988) has been followed.

The most important change is in the display format, which resembles a thesaurus with use of abbreviated labels like BT, NT, RT, UF, USE and SA. The old symbol and abbreviation „see“ has been replaced by „USE“, „X“ has been replaced by „UF“ and „x“ by BT, NT and RT; „See also“ has been replaced by „SA“. The thesaurus format conforms to the NISO standards for thesauri (1993). The headings are now easily accessible and easy to use; and the relations between headings are more vividly apparent. But in the public catalogue the display format of cross-references remains totally unchanged.

In principle the 15th edition continues the fundamental principles of specific and direct entry and user's convenience laid down by C.A.Cutter (1837-1903) in his famous *Rules for a Dictionary Catalog* (1876-1903). It still maintains the age-old balance between theory and practice with a tilt towards practicality. The new edition copes with the developments in new subjects and terminology, and reflects the changes in user's approaches to the subject catalogues.

Paged display augmented by crisp typography is clear, though on each page the margins in which local decision, revisions and additions may be recorded, have been narrowed. The repetition on every page of full expansions of the thesaural terms such as BT, RT, etc. reflects a distrust of the maturity of Sears users, and will hopefully be avoided in the next edition. A fault, though not of the editor or publisher, is contained in the CIP Cataloguing data.

In brief, this timely new edition is in tune with the new environments, and will continue to be useful in OPACs as it was and still is in card catalogues.

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BELL, Hazel K.: Indexing Biographies and Other Stories of Human Lives. London: Society of Indexers 1992. 42p., 37 refs., Index. ISBN 1-871577-18-6 = Occasional Papers on Indexing, No.1.

This booklet describes in detail the peculiarities of the indexing of texts of the type mentioned in the title. Sensitive as such texts usually are, the interpretation inevitably involved in any indexing is a delicate matter here, since the conversion of the finely gradated nuances of expression into keywords is a task which sometimes will be difficult to accomplish with sufficient precision and without shifting the meaning of the fine undertones that may be present. Also, there is a danger of becoming a possible accessory to libel when a text contains scurrilous allegations. As the authoress puts it, indexers of human lives have to „search their souls as well as their thesauri“.

Another peculiarity noted by the authoress lies in the fact that „bibliographical indexers are usually working on unfamiliar topics and can make no claim to expertise“. Particularly complex is the text of novels, where the relationships between the various characters and objects, as well as the significance of the various topics, metaphors, images, etc. for the index, need to be assessed. Peculiar to these texts is also the problem of the indexing of the numerous events in which the main character is involved.

Over and beyond the peculiarities of bibliographies and other stories of human lives, however, advice that may be useful for the indexing of other works as well is likewise given. Thus, e.g., the indexer is advised to read the given text several times most thoroughly to obtain certainty as to the completeness of the index with respect to the vocabulary drawn up. Also, the indexer should always indicate correctly how many pages (or paragraphs!) are covered by a topic, and he should select his subheadings most appropriately and concisely. The various