

Review Articles

Classification Systems

Classification Systems. By Maurice F. Tauber and Edith Wise. Vol. I, Part III. *Gifts* [and] *Exchanges*, Part IV and V, by Donald E. Thompson. ("The State of the Library Art," edited by Ralph R. Shaw.) New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University, Graduate School of Library Service, 1961. 609p. \$8.00.

The reviewer's assignment was "The State of the Library Art," volume 1, part 3, *Classification Systems*, and although confining his attention to this in detail he found he had to relate it to volume 1, part 1, *Cataloging and Classification* by Tauber, and part 2, *Subject Headings* by Frarey, and to all of volume 4, with five parts, all on mechanical and semi-mechanical retrieval systems.

Criticism of a compilation of this kind must refer to organization. These parts overlap so much, and at least the one particularly under review is so inadequately indexed, that for both systematic and selective study of information retrieval they would have to be gone through and, in effect, reorganized.

Even the physical organization of the parts is puzzling. Parts 1-2, volume 1, on closely related subjects, are in one physical volume but with two paginations and two indexes; the closely related part 3 of this volume is in another physical volume with the unrelated parts 4-5, on "Gifts" and "Exchanges," but with one pagination and one index; the closely related parts on punched cards and so on are down the line in volume 4, which is identical with a physical volume, with one pagination and one index.

The set or series as a whole is not as much descriptive or critical of the state of the library art as it is abstractive and anthological of the literature. Some such title as "Survey of the Literature of Librarianship and Information Retrieval" would be more exact, explanatory, and less archaic. Volume 1, part 3, seems more anthological than the others, and many of the writers quoted in it are vigorous exponents of the opposition of the older documentation and the later

information retrieval to librarianship and its cataloging.

Purpose and contents of the part under review are, however, almost entirely to be praised. The reviewer's only reservation is the general one about compendia, which he was taught at school were one of the evidences and causes of Ancient Rome's decline. The writings which are summarized with copious extracts are clearly cited, but will the student always go to the source? Will he check and realize that in some cases extracts taken from one line of argument and interjected into another may not quite fully or fairly represent the writer's views? The preface says, "If we have adequately performed our primary task, it should be unnecessary to search the literature for information on the topics covered." Unnecessary to search, but surely still desirable to take research back to original sources and contexts. And even for searching there is the 'if', and the two stools of the delays of perfectionism and the imperfections or inadequacies of improvisation.

The writer could not help noticing that his own book, *Information Indexing and Subject Cataloging* (Scarecrow Press, 1957), is not quoted in parts 1-2 on subject cataloging and alphabetical subject headings, but is extensively quoted in part 3, *Classification Systems*, both on these and on alphabetical subject cataloging. And there is other evidence of cross division suggesting that there was some overlooking in volume 1, parts 1-2 which is remedied in part 3, and perhaps some overlooking in this which is remedied in volume 4, or the reverse, but not quite satisfactorily for information retrieval purposes.

"Classification systems" in the library art usually means those typified by DC, and in part 3 chapters II-IX are on those from DC to CC, but even in these, and in chapters X to XIX, there is discussion of retrieval systems which are not classification systems of the same kind; writers and writings quoted reject both the old and the new that have gone by the name of "classification" in librarianship and in documentation.

Chapter V is on Cutter's expansive classification. Cutter, of course, was a dictionary catalog man who only intended his classification for the shelf, but this chapter (p. 134) has an excursion on his rules, and on his specific entry, and on Kaiser, who was strongly alphabetical, and on the opposition of classified and dictionary catalogs. This would have fitted better in volume 1, part 2.

Chapter XI is on Mooers Zatocoding, but Mooers emphatically rejects what is usually meant by a classification system as the quotations of him show, and rejects subject name coding based on any classification in favor of random coding. Chapter XII deals with Perry classification, but again, as the extracts show, Perry and his associates rejected what they called "conventional classification," that is, "hierarchical classification," and in their system the only approach to it is their "generic encoding," which has some likeness to the method of the alphabeticoclassed catalog. Chapter XIII, on Taube and Documentation Inc., is also one on systems which are not classificatory in the usual sense and are based on a rejection of "conventional" systems, both alphabetical and classified. Taube is quoted as saying that, "The dictionary catalog, the Library of Congress and Dewey classification systems . . . were pretty much fixed and out." (p. 393). And in what Taube called "coordinate indexing," in which he used a number-matching version of the peek-a-boo method he did not use a classification notation for his subject arrangement as Batten did; he used his verbal "uniterms" alphabetically arranged. Taube, Perry and Mooers, Batten, all reappear in volume 4.

It is, of course, impossible to avoid contrast of alphabetical and classified cataloging in controversial discussion of either, but the general pro and con arguments could have been gathered together instead of scattering some of them through chapters on particular systems. And the so-called coordinate and mechanical systems, which claim to be neither conventional classified nor conventional alphabetical, would have been better organized outside the cover of the title *Classification Systems* and with the material in volume 4.

Indexing is the only way of retrieving both escapable and inescapable weaknesses

of classification, and the index to volume 1, part 3, does retrieve some of its classificatory weaknesses, but not all, because, unfortunately, it is not a good index. It seems to have been done by someone who did not know the comparative importance or the sense of the subject matter, and relied largely on capitals as a guide. For example, "Uniterm" in four phrases has four entries which could have been consolidated into one; the indexer seems to have relied on the capital "U," but not to have realized the unity of the subject. Similarly, the categorical tables of Brown's subject classification have two entries; the indexer apparently did not realize the identity of Brown and his subject classification.

Ranganathan's chain procedure or indexing is discussed in the chapter on his Colon classification, and would be looked for in this chapter by those already informed, but it has been used apart from his CC, and with DC, in BNB and British library catalog. The reviewer happens to think that chain procedure and facet analysis are inflations of old tricks under new names, but they are part of the present state of information retrieval art or abracadabra, and while Ranganathan's term "depth classification" is indexed, his term "enumerative classification" is not, and his chain procedure and facet analysis are not, though this is indexed in part 1.

Books are indexed by title, but not always by author, for example, *Memoirs of Libraries* (Edwards) with no entry under Edwards. And authors' names are given as in the text, with or without initials. An entry under Australia leads only to the fact that Vickery was born there; the same page is indexed under his name. But despite frequent and scattered discussion of alphabetic and dictionary cataloging, there is only one reference under "Alphabetic" to a paper called "Alphabetic subject indexes," and one under "Dictionary index." Under "Decimal," there is a "see" reference to "Dewey," but none to "Universal."

Proofreading, of both the copy and the typing for final photolithographic reproduction, seems to have been hurried. Misprints strike the eye without looking for them; in one quotation (p. 31) an essential "not" is left out; in another (p. 45) an "is" has be-

come "an." A line apparently left blank for a reference to be filled in is still blank (p. 141.)

With poor indexing and overlapping of the parts, at least eight must be scanned to be sure of picking up all there is on a specific topic in information retrieval. But even so, this would be greatly time saving in literature searching as compared with checking the literature indexes and abstracts and working from reference to reference in the literature itself, so the survey serves its intended purposes. The reviewer is himself contemplating another contribution to the literature, and is shocked by the reading which he has to catch up with, but it came under his notice at the cost of no more than a few hours' scanning. He is grateful, as well as flattered, at finding himself one of the writers brought under his notice, and he at least is glad to have the volumes so far issued now and as they are, though more time and care could have given them better organization later on. Something substantial and useful has been done, and substance and use in publication often wait too long on perfection in organization and typography.

—*John Metcalfe, University of New South Wales Library.*

Use of Books

Patterns in the Use of Books in Large Research Libraries. By Herman H. Fussler and Julian L. Simon. Chicago: The University of Chicago Library, 1961. [Microfilm] 283p., Appendices A-M. \$3.05.

The study herein reported makes a frontal attack on a problem of increasing concern to those responsible for the management of research collections. It proceeds on the thesis that the accumulative growth of the general research library must produce stresses that many institutions will find difficult to resolve, and that at least some relief may be achieved through the separation of material deserving a high degree of accessibility from that which, because of limited use, might be placed in less accessible and less expensive storage.

More specifically, the study seeks to develop statistical procedures which will predict with reasonable accuracy the frequency with which groups of books with defined characteristics are likely to be used in a research library. For the sake of simplicity, the study assumed a working library housing the bulk of the research collection operating in combination with a local, expandable storage facility absorbing much of the least-used material. The authors consider the findings, however, as equally relevant to cooperative storage and acquisition programs, and to programs for large-scale microfacsimile operations. The approach has been essentially that of operations analysis of use of groups of books at the University of Chicago, but with some data from other libraries, including Yale, Northwestern, and the University of California at Berkeley.

Two unrelated subject fields in which Chicago's collections are strong were selected for detailed analysis of the use of monographs, namely economics and Teutonic languages and literature. Serial volumes were given separate consideration, as was browsing and non-recorded use. Statistical measures were in turn checked against the judgment of experts in the subject fields analyzed and, finally, such practical matters as procedures for the transfer of books to compact storage, and the economics of book housing receive attention.

The authors themselves have given warning that this volume, based largely on statistical procedures, is not easy reading. In fact, it is clearly labeled as a preliminary edition distributed for review and criticism. Lest this warning be taken lightly, one illustrative sentence is presented here, admittedly taken somewhat out of context: ". . . For any cutting-point, titles fall into two groups: those in the cell to be cut, and those in the non-cut cell. Binomial confidence limits establish the accuracy of our prediction of the number of titles that will fall into these cells in an infinite universe." On the plus side, however, is the fact that readers will find the background, methodology, and essential findings of the study in the introduction and first chapter, p. 1-34, and the summary and conclusions, p. 263-280, quick and easy reading for those interested.