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Access to Fiction: A Problem in Classification Theory and Practice. Part II.

(Abstract see Part I in Int.Classif. 16(1989)No.3, p.134-140)

2.23 General Fiction Systems

2.231 "Problem Child" System: Walker (16, 24)

Walker did not name his system, so the name "Problem Child" has been taken from the title of his 1958 article. He defined fiction as "that art form concerned with the narration in prose of imaginary events and the portraiture of imaginary characters" (16, p.100). He used Vickery's *Faceted Classification: A guide to construction and use of special schemes* (25) as a handbook for designing his system, which appears to be intended for a classified catalogue, but which may have also been used for shelf arrangement.

The Problem Child system has a non-hierarchical mixed retroactive notation. Upper case letters A-H are used as facet indicators and J-Z are used retroactively for subdivision within a facet. U.D.C. schedules (Walker cites the 1961 English Abridged Edition) may be interpolated at any point, and nine relationship signs are available. Walker regarded the schedules "as a first statement only, though they have been tested against a large number of titles over the years (16, p.102).

Walker analyzed fictional works into three facets: author; narrative; and subject. These three general facets were then expanded to correspond to Ranganathan's five fundamental categories, i.e., Personality = author, Matter = subject, Energy = narrative, Space = language and Time = the literary period (16, p.101). A formula may be stated as follows, although Walker did not present it in this way, i.e., $PM_{(PMEST)} E(ST)$, where

P = Author/title cataloguing
$M_{(PMEST)}$ = Subject of novel
      P = characters in the novel
      M = Kind of life portrayed
      E = Theme(s)
      S = Geographic setting
      T = Setting in Time
E = Narrative type of the novel
(ST) = Language and time period of author
This formula is discussed below.

Walker considered Time to be a diffuse Facet. Accordingly, Time and Space are concatenated, so that Space (= language) is subdivided by literary periods. This modification is expressed for purposes of this analysis as PME(ST), where (ST) expresses the composite facet spec-

ifying language and literary period. In practice, Walker's system is heavily biassed toward Britain, so AJ English need not be specified for works in English originating in England. English-language fiction originating elsewhere in the British Isles receives a notation, (e.g., AJN Welsh), and other "sub-literatures of English use the (U.D.C.) Common Subdivisions of Place" following AJZ (e.g., Canadian literature in English AJZ(71)). Literary periods within each language group are provided by the U.D.C. time subdivisions.

Energy (= narrative) contains three sub-facets: B Form (e.g., BJ Adaptations, versions); C Plot (e.g., CJ Allegory, fantasy, legend); and D Style (e.g..., DJ Foreign texts). Walker does not explicitly define the terms, and the enumerated foci for the three sub-facets do not exhaust possible forms, plots or styles. For example, in *B Form*, BN Short novel and BS Short story are available, but there is no notation for either a "long" novel or one of "normal" length. D Style[11] offers only DJ Foreign texts, DM Dialect, DQ Original, invented language and DU Fine writing, prose poetry.

Matter (= subject) is the most theoretically interesting. Subject is "as infinitely varied as the field of knowledge itself, and may be elucidated only through a similar multi-facet approach" (16, p.102), so the entire basic facet formula is reapplied to specify the content of the novel. This expansion of the Subject facet may be expressed as $PM_{(PMEST)} E(ST)$, where $M_{(PMEST)}$ expresses the recycling of the basic formula within the Matter (= subject) facet[12].

In $M_{(PMEST)}$
(I) Time = historical setting; (2) Space = geographical setting: (3) Energy = theme, or the guiding idea, or mood of the narrative as distinct from the plot; (4) Matter = subject environment, or kind of life portrayed; (5) Personality = characters, their social, vocational and psychological classes (16, p.102).

The first two facets are notated by means of U.D.C. Common Auxiliaries of Time and Place.

Walker used a definition of theme from Uzzell: "'an underlying truth about life'". "Theme - Objective" in the Energy facet is used when "a dominating idea (is) implicit in the whole composition". In contrast, "Theme - Subjective" is for works "written under, or catering for, a dominant emotion as distinct from an idea". "Subject environment" encompasses the "Subject setting of the work in question" and if there is doubt, "Subject Environment" is preferred (16, p.114). The schedules do not entirely clarify these distinctions. It is not easy to see how EW Agric-

cultural, rural life as a "dominating idea" is different from GKTV Rural (residential classes) as a "subject setting". In addition, it is not clear why FT(76/9) Westerns is considered to express a "dominant emotion" (Theme - Subjective) rather than a "subject setting" (Subject Environment), since the term "Westerns" commonly refers to works that take place in the Western United States.

Personality (= characters) in $M_{(PMEST)}$ contains subfacets for race, economic group, age, sex, and family relationships. A number of these lack exhaustivity. For example, Family, parental contains: HT Father, husband; HU Mother, wife, widow; HV Brother; HVP Sister; HVU Other family relationship. The omission of, for example, "Son" and "Daughter" would severely limit the expression of relationships in many novels.

After $M_{(PMEST)}$ is notated, the initial Personality (= author) facet in $PM_{(PMEST)}$ E(ST) remains. This facet is not included in the schedules but is to be an alphabetic arrangement of authors' names. One of Walker's examples of a completed notation is:

'1914/192' 1914-1920'a GPK@GK 1914-18 War and after ('1914/192'GPK@GK) MONTAGUE, C E

> Rough justice. Reprint. chatto & Windus, 25/-. July 1969. 390p. 20.5em. SBN7011 1296 4 (Landmark Library) The school, university, war and post-war experience of Auberon Garth, 'an emblem of all that had saved England in war and had now to save her in peace'. (@ is the relationship sign meaning "Causation, making, preceding".) (16, p.124)

Although Walker recognized that a high degree of specificity might be obtained with his system, he recommended that "only the most important facets of each work" be notated (1970:103). The classifier should analyze each work fully according to the $PM_{(PMEST)}$ E(ST) formula and then decide what to omit. Walker suggested, for example, that when the geographic facet coincides with the literary tradition facet, the geographic specification be omitted. According to Walker, less straightforward decisions about omissions should be based on four considerations:

> (a) the particular intentions of the author regarding his or her work, (b) the prevailing climate of public taste or appreciation, (c) the place or standing of a work within the context of our general literary tradition, (d) the policy of the library. (16, p.103)

Of these, only (d) seems to offer a relatively objective foundation for decision-making.

Walker's system is interesting for its direct application of the work of Ranganathan and the CRG fiction analysis. Of particular interest is the use of the $_{(PMEST)}$ device to allow specification of setting and content elements that are independent of the novelist's own time and place and of the novel's other characteristics (e.g., style). It would seem sensible to require that the (ST) concatenated facet be specified for all novels, but that the $_{ST}$ in $M_{(PMEST)}$ need be notated only if it differed to some specified extent from the (ST) in the basic formula. If that rule were established, it would be possible to retrieve, for example, all novels written in a certain time and place that were about a different time and place.

The system appears to have enjoyed some success in the library system for which it was developed, but it has apparently not been exposed to testing outside Lanarkshire, Scotland. The absence of clear direction about how to decide which elements are "most important" seems to invite inconsistent practice. Nevertheless, the system seems to offer potentially fruitful ideas for classifying fictional content.

2.232 Analysis and Mediation of Publications (AMP): Pejtersen (14, 26, 27, 28, 29)

Pejtersen's Analysis and Mediation of Publications (AMP) is deliberately slanted toward public libraries. Pejtersen assumed that the value of a classification system lies in its ability to retrieve what users want and/or need. She distinguised between a shelving system and a search system as follows:

> the search-system might be flexible with respect to exclusiveness, hierarchy and logic. There is no reason to insist on these principles in a scheme which does not function as an arrangement system. The advantage is the possibility of a better match between the classification scheme and users' needs, the latter being characterized by a lack of respect for theoretical classification principles. (26, p.7)

The passage implies that classificatory principles are helpful for shelving, but makes no concomitant attempt to demonstrate that users do not need principles in a search system. Users are generally unconscious of principles at work in any system, but such ignorance may not be used to argue that principles are unhelpful. If that were the case, all document and surrogate systems -- fiction or non-fiction, shelving or searching -- might as well be randomly arranged.

Pejtersen departed from convention in arguing that users should be consulted at the start of system development. She argued that how readers request advice about novels can be used to generate a classification system. To this end, interviews with about 300 public library users in Denmark were monitored. The studies showed that users' intuitive categorizations of fiction could be divided into four dominant "dimensions": 1) Subject-Matter; 2) Frame: Time/Place; 3) Author's Attitude/Intention; and 4) Accessibility. Users also formulated many requests that could not be categorized this way, but, according to Pejtersen, such formulations were vague (e.g., "a good book") or author-related (e.g., "something like Emily Brontë").

AMP uses these four user-requested elements as classes which are further subdivided (e.g., 14, p.234):

1. Subject Matter
  a. action and course of events
  b. psychological development and description
  c. social relations
2. Frame
  a. time: past, present, future
  b. place: geographical, social environment, profession
3. Author's Intention
  a. emotional experience
  b. cognition and information
4. Accessibility
  a. readability
  b. physical characteristics, literary form

Each novel is characterized in as many dimensions as appropriate and further specificity is provided by verbal headings, which would apparently be established by individual libraries. Then an annotation in uncontrolled natural language is written. The system has no notation.

Analysis of AMP reveals several problems. First, Pejtersen defined the scope of the dimensions inadequately. "Subject-matter is defined as the matter dealt with in the

book" (27, p.211) is circular. "Frame is defined as the frame in time or place which the author has chosen as the scenario of his work" (27, p.211) seems clearer, but becomes less so when one notes that "social environment" and "profession" appear among its subclasses. "Author's Intention" is "the theme of the book". "Theme" is undefined, but an example is given: "e.g., the attitude of the writer towards the subject and the set of ideas and emotions which the author intends to bring to his readers" (27, p.211). Here, since an author's intention and attitude are examples of "theme", Author's Intention might have been named "Theme". "Accessibility" is similar in function but not in design to FCS's Literary Information Profile and Walker's P, E and (ST) facets.

A second group of issues arises from the statement:

> There is no logical order in the established classes; one class is not logically dependent on the other classes. So there is no hierarchy of classes. The classes are coordinate and do not comprise uniform subjects, nor do they belong to one definable group. This makes it easier to meet the user's needs which are not centred around one single aspect of the book. The one-sided stressing of the hierarchical relation found in the traditional classification is set aside so as to take advantage of a combination of some of the functions and aspects of fiction. The librarian can enter the system anywhere without first having to place the subject in some super-ordinate class and then go on searching for a subordinate class. The classification system is characterized by the fact that the classes, which are established, are not locked in a hierarchy in the system. On the contrary, any relation between designations and subjects may be expressed. (28, p.152).

Several points require caveats. If there were no hierarchy, then classes cannot be coordinate. Strictly, coordinate classes are derived from a superordinate class by the application of one characteristic of division for each. In fact, however, there are four hierarchies in AMP because each dimension acts as a superordinate to its subdimensions. Subject-Matter, for example, is superordinate to: "action and course of events"; "psychological development and description"; and "social relations". In no case except that of Time can the application of one characteristic of division be readily identified. It is true that there is no hierarchical relationship among the major classes, but the same is in general true of the order of main classes in most systems.

In addition, Pejtersen's characterization of traditional systems implies that these offer no opportunities to demonstrate combinations of or relationships among topics. Yet all major systems except LLC contain synthetic/syntactic devices that enable one to combine and interrelate subjects. Similarly, one can enter a traditional classification system "anywhere", just as one can enter AMP. The difference lies in the smaller number of AMP classes, not in their arrrangement. In AMP one can decide at a glance where to enter the system. In a more highly developed system, schedule familiarity accrues over a longer time, but once it is attained a suitable entry point is not difficult to find.

Exception may be taken to the assertion that "any relation between designations and subjects" is expressible in AMP because no relations can be expressed. AMP states the existence of certain elements (e.g., actions, a time, emphasis on emotion) in a novel, but does not determine relationships between these elements. In this, AMP is like Croghan's SFC Classes O-WZ, but unlike Cameron's

FCS and Walker's "Problem Child", in which some syntactic relational devices are available.

A third problem is that AMP lacks directions for classifiers. Although Pejtersen argued that "redundancy caused by (AMP's) inexclusivity can be of great help to the searcher in his determination of a user's desire" (29, p.255), the opposite argument is equally valid: redundancy caused by inexclusivity can hinder searchers because over time the catalogue may become cluttered with ad hoc decisions made by classifiers who receive little guidance. It should be noted, however, that AMP has no "official" version. It seems unlikely that AMP is immune from the headaches inconsistency creates for all bibliographic systems. These problems may pose fewer threats for public library users engaged in leisure activity than they do for those who study novels professionally. Nevertheless, careful thought is needed before one can be convinced that redundancy, inexclusivity, and inconsistency are virtues in a classification system.

The difference between AMP and a traditional indexing tool seems to be that the first two and in some cases three levels of division are severely restricted and no new main headings can be established: New subheadings begin only at the third or fourth level. The difference between AMP and a classification system seems to be AMP's addition of verbal expressions after the first few levels of roughly hierarchical division. One may say that AMP modulates from a set of conceptually limited classes to a verbally flexible alphabetic system. Each novel would probably be classified in each main dimension, but need not be characterized in the lower levels of division. At the end of the process one arrives at a flexible verbal expression, an uncontrolled natural language annotation.

In effect, AMP creates a kind of template for writing annotations. Moving from the few main classes to subject-heading-like descriptions and then to an annotation may be seen as funnelling the classifier through successive summarizing steps that find final expression in an abstract. In this, AMP seems to be neither an indexing nor a classification system, but a tool for writing annotations. Simultaneously, the "skeleton" on which the annotation was built remains visible, so one may also search the elements that went into developing the annotation. One is not entirely dependent on the final annotation but can gather novels for which annotations were fleshed out from the same "bones". In this sense, AMP may be seen as a tool for writing annotatins and for finding similar annotations by following the classificatory process from main class to annotation.

AMP is the only fiction analysis system that has undergone retrieval tests (e.g., 14, 30), but results have not all been published. In general, good results were obtained, although the reserchers caution that the value of these results appears "to lie in their role as 'trend-indicators', i.e., in the identification of possible patterns of user behaviour in fiction searches" (14). Problems of test construction arose in defining what constitutes "relevance" in fiction, in controlling vocabulary and in deciding on a citation order (31).

AMP appears to be in preliminary stages of development. Its public library perspective appears to provide a rationale upon which a more refined approach may eventually be founded. So little is known about fiction searches that it is premature to predict AMP's future. It needs more evaluation before its strengths and weaknesses can be ascertained; nevertheless, it effectively demonstates the existence of interest in fiction analysis and may stimulate the creation of other fiction systems.

2.3 Summary: The Five Fiction Analysis Systems

These systems were developed because their creators were discontented with the classification-by-creator arrangement of novels. Haigh's adaptation of DDC3, Walker's "Problem Child" and Pejtersen's AMP were or are operational systems, but only AMP has been empirically tested. A rigorous evaluation/comparison is thus impossible. One can, however, note that the systems share certain assumptions.

All the systems assume that some kind of content or subject analysis of fiction is possible and desirable. All assume detailed knowledge of the novel being classified. All assume that with this level of knowledge classifiers will be able to make at least minimally consistent decisions. In this they concur with developers of non-fiction systems, who generally presume that the subject of a document will be "completely and correctly identified" by the indexer (32, p.42).

The systems have different virtues. DDC is familiar to users, so Haigh's adaptation of it seems reasonable, perhaps mainly for historical fiction: Cameron's dedication to isolating science fiction themes generated an innovative if ultimately unworkable system. Croghan's SFC appears to be a lone effort at inventing a system for both "works of" and "works about" science fiction, but SFC lacks rigour in fundamental ways. Walker's "Problem Child" works with modern classificatory concepts and techniques derived from Ranganathan and the CRG and presents the interesting expansion of the PMEST formula to $PM_{(PMEST)} E(ST)$. AMP appears potentially adequate for deeper than usual fiction analysis for public libraries.

Some criticisms of these systems have been noted. In general, in all cases a classifier must make decisions about the relative "importance" of elements in a novel and in no case are directions about how to make such decisions adequate. Whether it is possible for classifiers to evaluate "importance" in fiction consistently and objectively has not been determined. It may also be stated, however, that all bibliographic classification systems are failures in important respects. The literature contains arguments against the whole and/or parts of DDC, LC, UDC, and CC, so it is not surprising that these essentially experimental fiction analysis systems are flawed. The CRG considered its early special schemes as "experimental data that were required" (33, p.131) for testing analytico-synthetic ideas and techniques. In general, we may consider all fiction analysis systems experimental in this sense.

3. Usefulness of Increased Access to Fiction

Complaints about poor access mechanisms for humanities areas have been reiterated (e.g., (34),p.257;

(35),p.223; (36),p.18), and users are requesting increased access to literary works of various kinds (e.g., (37)). For example, indexes have been developed for the Walt Disney Archives (38) and for the children's television program Mister Rogers Neighborhood (38). A publisher requested access to "all Canadian poems on snow" (40, p.16). The question thus arises whether classificationists should provide access mechanisms to augment the conventional author and title access points and shelf collocation.

3.1 Inadequacy of Present Accessing Methods

3.11 Specialist Requirements

It is usually assumed that users need and will use profitably any kind of accessing technique that can be made available. since the major source for literary research is the texts of creative works (41, p.208), one may assume that fiction researchers need access to novels. But conventional access points offer no detail, and researchers need to read on a hit-or-miss basis to discover whether one novel or another is fruitful for current research. One professor of English deplored this situation;

> I found I could not rely on the standard reference works to tell me whether or not a particular piece of fiction in fact depicted a nuclear war. ... I found that there was no substitute for examining the text themselves, and so have had to obtain and read virtually every title listed in my bibliography. ... As of the end of 1986 there were already over 750 items in the collection, with more arriving constantly. Another 390 titles have been requested and more are added to our want list as they are published: between ten and twenty-five a year." (42, p.115, 116)

Scholars have tried to remedy this situation with publications such as Gale's two volume *Plots and Characters in the Works of Mark Twain* (43) which contains alphabetically arranged plot summaries and descriptive lists of characters. This approach produces an aide memoire, but is an ineffective access mechanism for the work of an author with whom a researcher is unfamiliar. Under these circumstances, although shelf arrangement by one of the major classification systems and catalogue access by author and title will continue to be useful, additional kinds of systematic access vehicles for fiction could increase the efficiency of the intellectual search for materials.

3.12 Possible Interdisciplinary Needs

Research has changed dramatically during this century, and multidisciplinary work is done in all fields. For non-fiction, systems such as *Broad System of Ordering* (BSO) (44) and the *Thesaurus of Common Topics* (TCT) (45) may be seen as attempts to keep up with overlapping research areas. Citation analysis in the sciences identified a "multidisciplinary literature core for all of science" (46, p.160). This finding corroborates earlier insights of the CRG into the relationship of special to general classification systems (e.g., 47). Ranganathan maintained that the same kind of relationship existed throughout the world of knowledge and generalized the idea in the formula PMEST.

It seems likely that the phenomena of core and fringe topics and the laws of bibliographic concentration are present not only within the large traditional divisions of knowledge -- science, social science and humanities -- but also increasingly between and among them. The practice

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of dividing the whole world of knowledge by more than one initial characteristic of division allows such a presumption to be made, but studies designed to explore the extent of such cross-fertilization have apparently not been done. Two bibliographies of citation analysis (48, 49) containing a total of 2710 entries listed no such studies. Such cross-fertilizations are, however, generally believed to exist (e.g., 50, 51). A Ph.D. student was found to be working on a thesis combining literature and medicine (52, p.17). In theoretical computer scientist A.K.Dewdney's novel *The Planiverse: computer contact with a two-dimensional world*, the narrator, a professor of computer science, requires his students to read

Abbott's *Flatland*, Hinton's *An Episode of Flatland* and Burgess' *Sphereland*. These works of fiction, or "science-fantasy" one might call them, each set up a model two-dimensional universe inhabited by two-dimensional beings. (53, p.9)

In a non-fictional doctoral level library and information science research methods course students were assigned Josephine Tey's mystery novel *Daughter of Time* to learn to recognize good evidence (54).

Besides such anecdotal evidence, a rough measure can be used to show cross-discipline citation practices. A study was done of about 59,000 references from 140 social science serials and 297 social science monographs published in or close to 1970 (55). Although the study concentrated on cross-disciplinary citations within the social sciences, data were also collected for references made from the social sciences to the other broad divisions of knowledge. An average of 12.1% of references from social science serials referred to serials in non-social science disciplines. Percentages of references from serials in six social science disciplines to non-social science disciplines were higher than the overall average. These were: anthropology (32.6%); ergonomics (15.5%); geography (28.9%), psychology (13.2%); social policy (16.5%); and statistics (26.3%) (55, p.59, Table 23).

References from social science monographs to all forms of work (e.g., serials, monographs, research reports) were to non-social science disciplines 12.7% of the time, and six social science disciplines made higher than average references to non-social science disciplines. These were: anthropology (20.6%); linguistics (13.9%); management (21.3%; psychology (29.2%); social policy (17.0%); and sociology (13.7%) (55, p.59, Table 23). The non-social science disciplines to which these social science references were made were not identified. Such references must, however, have been made to works in the sciences or to works in the humanities. With the possible exception of statistics, the social science disciplines that depend most heavily on non-social science sources do not seem to be those that would particularly rely on the physical sciences.

From this analysis we may tentatively infer that the social sciences use the resources of the other major areas of knowledge and that at least some of these resources may belong to humanities disciplines. The findings of a study of catalogue subject searches strengthen this conclusion. Faculty at the University of Houston-University Park were asked to state the circumstances under which they used subject searching and were given four options: "Update area of specialization"; "Within discipline -- outside specialization"; "Interdisciplinary research"; or "Outside discipline" (56, p.89, Table 3). Of all faculty, 40.1% reported interdisciplinary subject searches and 22.1% reported searching outside their disciplines (apparently for recreational reading).. Science and Engineering faculty reported 26.1% interdisciplinary searches and 20.3% outside disciplinary searches. Humanities and Social Science faculty reported 49.5% interdisciplinary searches and 23.3% searches outside discipline searches. Although there is no indication what other disciplines these interdisciplinary/outside discipline searches involved, we may again tentatively conclude that content access to fictional works might be helpful to researchers in multidisciplinary fields as well as to those working within their own specializations.

4. Conclusion

Dr.Samuel Johnson suggested that Samuel Richardson index his novel *Clarissa* "that when the reader recollects any incident, he may easily find it". The index, Johnson thought, would be "occasionally consulted by the busy, the aged, and the studious", who would then "want nothing to facilitate its (the novel's) use" (57). Richardson followed Dr.Johnson's advice and indexed *Sir Charles Grandison*[13] (58), but modern bibliographic researchers have not thought the need for access to fiction as serious as the need for access to other kinds of documents.

It seems clear that the question of whether consistent and comprehensive fiction analysis systems can be developed has not been definitively answered, but that further research effort would be warranted. In particular, the present investigation shows that research is needed to ascertain which elements in fiction may be extracted in a relative objective manner and how classifiers are to decide the relative importance of elements in a particular novel. No existing fiction analysis system appears to have tackled these problems with complete success. Further study of existing fiction analysis systems and of available classificatory techniques may result in improved service to users who want access to fiction. Computer technology has made the manipulative chores of providing such additional access physically manageable if not intellectually simple, and we would undoubtely need to depend upon computerization to develop systematic catalogues of fictional works for augmenting author and title access and shelf collocation devices. Before a comprehensive system can be developed, however, the warrant of fictional documents needs to be described in some detail, and the limits of our present abilities to analyze the elements of fiction consistently needs investigation.

Notes

(continued from Part I)

11 Ranganthan did not include style in Class ● Literature in CC, but considered that "most of" Class N Fine Arts "will admit of being divided by Style. Style is individualised by the country and the century of its origin" (63, p.1.95). Thus, Ranganathan viewed the concatenation of space and time as a specification of "style". For Class N in CC, these were expressed as two levels of personality, not as Energy. Thus, Walker's (ST) might be viewed as an expression of the style of a novel.

12 This reapplication of the formulary is reminiscent of the CC concepts of Rounds of Manifestation and Levels of Manifestation (e.g., (63), p..1.27ff). In CC, however, these ways of repeating needed basic facets are not prescribed. In Walker's system, M$_{(PMEST)}$ is part of the fundamental facet formula, even though it may be unnessary to notate every facct.

13 The "Index, Historical and Characteristical" refers to the original seven volume edition., It cautions "*A few only of the SENTIMENTS with which this work abounds, are inserted in this INDEX. There is only room to refer to the rest by figures, under the proper heads, as in* Advice *to women,* Anger, &c." A typical entry reads "*Aged* persons should study to promote in young people those innocent pleasures which they themselves were fond of in youth, VI. 859. *See* Mrs. Shirley." (58, 2;1041, original capitalization and emphasis).

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(Continuation from Part 1)

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Reports and Communications

Colloquy on the D B Standard Subject File

On the 5th and 6th October 1989 the Deutsche Bibliothek (DB) at Frankfurt, West Germany, was the scene of a colloquy on the DB's Standard Subject File('Schlagwortnormdatei', abbreviated SWD), a gathering intended to offer both the tenderers and the present and future users of the SWD a first-time opportunity for an intensive exchange of information and views. The colloquy was hosted by the Deutsche Bibliothek together with its two partners in the elaboration and administration of the SWD: the Augsburg University Library and the Munich-based Bavarian State Library. The 60-odd participants, including guests from Switzerland, Austria and the GDR (East Germany), represented practically all fields of the library world, from university and large public libraries down to technical and special libraries and librarian training institutions.

Central points of interest at the colloquy were, on the one hand, reports from the SWD editing bureaus at Frankfurt, Augsburg and Munich and by the current users of the SWD file and the RSWK (subject cataloguing rules), while on the other hand persons and parties interested in future utilization of the SWD developed their plans for cooperation and adoption of SWD data. The concepts entertained here ranged from highly concrete cooperation models, such as developed e.g. by the university library center for North Rhine-Westphalia (a West German constituent state), to arrangements of at best long-term effectiveness, such as proposed e.g. by the Deutsche Bücherei Leipzig or the representatives of the Austrian libraries.

Considerable attention was attracted, and partly controversial comments evoked, by the papers dealing with a further development of the SWD, e.g. toward improved systematization, or with the utilization in retrieval of the RSWK chains developed on the basis of the SWD. Thus the CD-ROM edition of the Deutsche Bibliographie and its possibilities and limits in subject retrieval were presented, also with the aim of arriving at conclusions as to the suitability of RSWK chains in OPACs. If from the DB's point of view positive experiences dominated, the problems encountered by an external user in literature searching with the aid of a CD-ROM clearly showed where improvements in user guidance and user interface are desirable and where the approaches used in the SWD may lead to information noise or even to loss of information. Both papers also took issue, however, with the assumption that a post-coordinating search using individual subject headings renders RSWK chain formation superfluous in an OPAC. In the selection of the documents displayed the pre-coordinated RSWK chains can furnish important additional information.