A Critical Appraisal of New Ideas in Cataloging

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By JENS NYHOLM

The Code in the Light of the Critics

Mr. Nyholm is assistant librarian, University of California Library, Berkeley.

The Challenge

The new preliminary edition of the *A.L.A. Catalog Rules* has once again brought the problem of cataloging to the foreground of library discussion. The new code is four times as big as that of 1908 and more than one hundred times as big as the rules printed in the *Library Journal* in 1883. Still, the most significant thing about the new code would appear to be certain features of its make-up and the ten-line "Publisher's Note" preceding the title page. The new make-up divides the code into two parts, the first dealing with entry and heading, the second with the rules for the description of books. The A.L.A. Catalog Code Revision Committee recommends libraries to conform to the rules in Part I, but does not consider it urgent that libraries should adhere closely to those of Part II. This recommendation reveals a late recognition of a new point of view.

The "Publisher's Note" states that there has been considerable disagreement between some catalogers and some administrators concerning the rules, the administrators believing that the rules are unduly elaborate and frequently too costly to follow. To consider the validity of this claim and to establish a basis for a definitive edition a special committee of administrators and catalogers has been appointed. This note, then, and the policy suggested by the make-up of the code present a direct challenge to the library profession: We are asked to take a definite stand with respect to the future cataloging policies of this country.

Almost simultaneously with the publishing of the new code, Andrew D. Osborn's *The Crisis in Cataloging* burst as a bombshell in the catalogers' quiet realm. Shortly after followed the first thought-provoking issue of Mr. Kellar's *Memoranda on Library Cooperation*. One year earlier, in the summer of 1940, a comprehensive library institute, dealing with acquisition and cataloging problems, was held by the Graduate Library School in Chicago, the papers of which appeared in a four-hundred-page volume. About the same time, Mr. Branscomb in his *Teaching*

with Books, took issue with catalogers for the purpose of "directing attention to the problem [of lowering cataloging costs] and of stimulating its discussion." Finally, at the A.L.A. conference in Boston last summer, administrators, catalogers, and the new youth of the Library of Congress got together in an unbiased search for a balancing of ends and means in cataloging.

While the code represents the development of traditional cataloging, many of the viewpoints expressed by the commentators are less orthodox. It is worth considering the validity of the proposals and the criticism of these commentators, and, if found sound, to see how they might affect the code.

Purpose of Revision

It is fortunate that the profession has now become engaged in a discussion of the principles of cataloging and their application; it is unfortunate that this discussion was not carried to a conclusion some ten years ago—before the code was revised. This, however, is now water over the dam. But it is not out of order to point out that the committee entrusted with the revision of the code is hardly to be held responsible for this state of affairs. It was appointed simply "to make necessary revisions in the *A.L.A. Catalog Rules.*"[1] What was understood by "necessary" was not revealed. The committee, therefore, based its program upon the suggestions of that group of librarians whose demands had been instrumental in its appointment, the vocal catalogers. It was their experience that the code of 1908 was basically sound. But they also found that it was neither inclusive nor explicit enough to take care of such problems as would arise in the course of the cataloging done in

[1] *A.L.A. Handbook* 27:15.

large and scholarly libraries. This fact became more apparent as the movement of cooperative cataloging gained ground. The committee concluded, as put in the preface to the new code, that "expansion was needed rather than change," and proceeded with its work along this line of reasoning. It would seem that the response to the committee's invitation for suggestions supported this point of view, as borne out by articles in our library periodicals.[2] Even when the reverberations from the depression hit the catalogers, the bulwark of the old standards stood firm. In the summer of 1934 the Catalog Section devoted an entire meeting to the problem of economies in cataloging. The conclusion arrived at in the most talked-about event of the meeting, Miss Mudge's famous paper,[3] was that no true economy could be achieved by the reduction of information given on the catalog cards. When the air echoed with rumors of battles between economy and standards, Mr. Hanson jumped the gun in the *Library Quarterly:* "Finally, let it be decided now, once for all, whether the aim of the new edition shall be to cut costs through simplification of rules . . . or to maintain or even raise present standards."[4]

It is not known that any forceful presentation of claims for simplification was ever made to the committee. Consequently, the road once taken was continued.

The new code, then, is based upon the principles laid down in the code of 1908.

[2] "New York Regional Group of Catalogers. Summary of Discussion of Need for Revision of Catalog Code." *Catalogers' and Classifiers' Yearbook* No. 3 (1932), 20-29.
Gjelsness, R. H. "Cooperation in Catalog Code Revision." *Ibid.,* No. 5 (1936), 26-35.
Jacobsen, Anna. "Now Is the Time to Speak." *Library Journal* 61:388, May 15, 1936.
Pettee, Julia. "Code Revision—What Do Catalogers Want?" *Ibid.,* 306-08, Apr. 15, 1936.
[3] Mudge, Isadore. "Present Day Economies in Cataloging. as Seen by the Reference Librarian." *Catalogers and Classifiers' Yearbook* No. 4 (1934), 9-23.
[4] Hanson, J. C. M. "Corporate Authorship versus Title Entry." *Library Quarterly* 5:466, Oct. 1935.

Its scope, likewise, remains essentially the same as that of the 1908 code, being restricted to the rules dealing with descriptive cataloging (entry and book description). The great increase in size is due largely to the inclusion of new rules for special classes of material considered inadequately treated in the old code, and the amplification of already existing rules deemed too general to guide in the interpretation of "specific types of cases of frequent occurrence."

The result is a voluminous opus of detailed and explicit rules, with seemingly only one concession to simplification: the recommendation that it be left to the discretion of each individual library as to what extent the rules for description, given in Part 2, should be followed. Presumably, this is the code desired by catalogers, who want a tool which answers questions, so that cataloging may be made easier. Is it also the code desired by administrators, who want the books they administer promptly and inexpensively recorded, so that they may be made available for use?

The Critics

The code of 1908 was completed during a period that may be called the golden era of cataloging. The Library of Congress was recataloging its collection and the code was being prepared in accordance with the system in development in that library. Moreover, the Library of Congress had begun the printing and distribution of its catalog cards. Catalogers could look the future in the eye with an air of assurance: our rules would be codified in a scholarly and reliable fashion; the products of them, the L.C. cards, would be made available to libraries throughout the nation. The cataloging problem appeared to be nearing its solution. It is not difficult to understand that the attitude of the time should crystallize in a tradition still operative in the formulation of the code of today.

Actually, however, the expectations of that time have not been fulfilled. The nation's book resources have increased at an unprecedented rate, causing cataloging to lag far behind accessioning. According to estimates there are in the United States about twelve million titles, out of which only one and one half million are covered by L.C. cards. Cards for about five million additional titles have been contributed to the Union Catalog in Washington by other libraries but are only sparsely available in printed form. It is estimated that uncataloged titles in the United States amount to between two and five and one half million.[5]

That the production of L.C. cards does not cover the demands from the large research libraries was demonstrated by the survey made by the Cooperative Cataloging Committee in 1931,[6] according to which forty-nine libraries in the East were unable to get (or get promptly enough) L.C. cards for 28 per cent of their English titles and 66 per cent of their foreign titles. In libraries all over the country uncataloged material is piling high in storage rooms, inaccessible to the public, while valuable time is consumed in subjecting even the slightest book which does receive cataloging to all the elaborations required by the craft.

Under such circumstances it is natural that some librarians should take exception to the theory of cataloging exemplified in the code. There developed then, in opposi-

[5] Kellar, Herbert A. *Memoranda on Library Co-operation, I* (1941), 18, 21. (Dr. Kellar has not cited any authority for his figures.)
[6] Metcalf, Keyes D. "Cooperative Cataloging." *Catalogers' and Classifiers' Yearbook* No. 3 (1932), 33.

tion to that trend in cataloging which aims at bibliographical cataloging carrying reference value (represented by such traditionalists as Mr. Hanson and Miss Mudge) another trend concentrating on what has been called "finding cataloging" (represented by such radicals as Mr. Richardson and Mr. Currier). These two trends furnish us with a background for understanding current criticism of cataloging.

Chicago Institute

The Chicago Library Institute's contribution to the discussion was probably chiefly to point out that as yet we have not really assembled sufficient verified data to formulate clear-cut objectives for cataloging. As stated by Mr. Randall, "We supply certain information on the catalog cards in the libraries. We do this at considerable cost, and we do it on the assumption that it is useful. But if we were asked to prove that the usefulness was consistent with its cost, we could do so, I believe, only by stating general assumptions about this usefulness."[7] Similar observations were made in the papers of Mr. Wright,[8] Mr. Miller,[9] and Mr. Rider.[10] The sad conclusion we are forced to draw is that although for years we have been concerned with "how to catalog," we have really never solved all the ramifications of "why we catalog." To establish scientifically sound objectives for cataloging is a task that will take years. The immediate lesson we may draw from the Chicago meeting, perhaps, is this: since we have no demonstrable evidence that our traditional cataloging system is the best possible, we should not be too concerned if, in our ef-

forts to get our uncataloged masses of material made available, we will have to sacrifice some of the standards considered sacrosanct by the traditionalists.

Like so many other administrators, Mr. Branscomb, who follows Mr. Richardson's line of reasoning, is struck by the slowness and the high cost of cataloging. The remedies he suggests insofar as descriptive cataloging is concerned, are the following:[11]

1. Elimination of unnecessary bibliographical details derived in part from the rare book tradition.
2. Simplified cataloging or self-cataloging of certain classes of material, such as public documents, dissertations, and pamphlets.
3. Increased cooperative cataloging, based on correlated specialization in acquisition.

These suggestions coincide with opinions advanced by other critics and will be discussed later. Points one and two appear again in Mr. Osborn's paper, point three in Mr. Kellar's.

Osborn's Crisis in Cataloging

In Mr. Osborn's paper,[12] which cleverly dramatizes the present cataloging situation, we get an effectively formulated theory that strings together certain suggestions—the theory of pragmatic cataloging. Mr. Osborn denounces what he calls the legalistic, the perfectionist, and the bibliographical theories of cataloging—all more or less vaguely in application today. The legalist theory, on which the code is based, calls for rules and definitions to cover every point that arises and tends to promote cataloging for cataloging's sake. The perfectionist theory has as its goal the permanent catalog card so well verified in all respects that it will never have to

[7] Randall, W. M., ed. *The Acquisition and Cataloging of Books.* Chicago, 1940, p. 21.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 117-18.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 220-38.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 136-66.

[11] Branscomb, Harvie. *Teaching with Books.* Chicago, 1940, p. 24-35.
[12] Osborn, Andrew D. "The Crisis in Cataloging." *Library Quarterly* 11:393-411, Oct. 1941. Also published separately.

be done over, but leads to exaggerated research, resulting in accumulation of arrears. The bibliographical theory of cataloging is a branch of bibliography and results in useless details.

To replace these inadequate theories, Mr. Osborn advocates the acceptance of the pragmatic theory of cataloging, according to which cataloging will be conducted "along purely practical lines" on the basis of relatively few and simple rules. Judgment will in many cases take the place of slavish adherence to prescribed rules. Standards will not be defined to "any very great extent" so as to make possible a considerable degree of flexibility in procedures. Individual libraries will adopt such practices as will best meet their particular needs. According to Osborn, a pragmatic approach to cataloging would make cataloging simpler and less expensive and yet produce work that in all essentials would be of high quality.

In advocating his theory, Osborn presents a most enticing picture and one would like to believe that his blueprint would come true. However, one cannot but feel that pragmatic cataloging as such is chiefly an academic concept. All cataloging is to some extent pragmatic, insofar as its rules are, or should be, based upon practical reasoning, and should be applied in a spirit of common sense. All cataloging is also to a certain extent legalistic, insofar as it cannot function without adherence to definite standards. The problem of pragmatic cataloging versus legalistic cataloging is one of degree, not of kind. The difficulty in discussing Osborn's theory is that we do not know the scale of the degrees it spans. We may need to circumscribe the objectives for cataloging, but the rules pertaining to the objectives chosen should be full since work progresses faster when the accumulated experiences of the craft are pooled than when it is left to individual catalogers to figure out the puzzles. Lack of rules would merely lead to the compilation of private files of "decisions." Mr. Osborn admits himself that "it is difficult to systematize cataloging according to the pragmatic theory," but it is precisely systematization we need if we would succeed in sending our uncataloged books to the shelves. If however, Osborn's theory is designed, not to run down the whole way of the scale, but rather to keep us within the limits of the attainable instead of reaching for the unattainable, it may have salutary effects. Perhaps one's disagreement with Osborn is to no small extent to be debited to what is popularly known as semantics, since the suggested nine-point application of his theory is in some particulars very pertinent.

Desirable Practices for Certain Conditions

Consider the first point, calling for a code that would define under what conditions any given practice would be desirable. If the code presented the reasons underlying the rules, ill-founded rules would die a natural death and the good ones would be easier to follow.

Point two, advocating several grades of cataloging, has obvious merits when one realizes the unreasonable cost involved in treating all types of material alike, and is in accordance with practices already partially in effect in many libraries. It is only to be hoped that in our efforts to recognize varying needs we shall not have to preclude the advantage of concerted action.

Point three, the recommendation that self-cataloging methods be extended, is identical with proposals made by Branscomb and Metcalf and seems reasonable, provided it does not militate against hav-

ing the same material cooperatively cataloged.

Point nine, the search for a new and inexpensive method of cataloging serials, echoes a pious hope shared by many.

Kellar's Memoranda

Turning now to Mr. Kellar's *Memoranda*,[13] we find a very positive approach. Kellar recommends a reasonable compromise between finding and reference cataloging, and suggests that the means through which we can hope to cope with our tremendous acquisitions is cooperative enterprises on a nationwide scale. His grandiose plans revolve around the Union Catalog in Washington and reflect the bibliographical visions of Richardson and the beautiful dreams of coordinated book buying. Among the suggestions he has synthesized are these.

1. Current accessions should be divided into two groups: popular material to be briefly cataloged; important material to receive full cataloging, or cataloging according to an intermediate form.

2. Arrears should be searched in the Union Catalog, and the information found there utilized in cataloging the books.

3. A new approach to cooperative cataloging is necessary. *"The ideal to be aimed at . . . is a situation wherein only one card is made for each title in the country, copies of it being supplied promptly on demand to all holding institutions."* One copy of all cards would be kept in the Union Catalog which would serve as a master location file, but printing and distribution of cards could be centralized or decentralized, as desired.

It is obvious that the only way by which we can really make inroads into our accumulations of uncataloged material is through concerted action. A program of such magnitude as the one suggested by Mr. Kellar will encounter difficulties of great complexity. Catalogers should contribute whatever they can to swing the program by insisting upon disciplined adherence to standardized rules and willing departure from established practices, whenever necessary. It should be particularly noted that the rational cataloging envisaged by Kellar calls for a similar application of varying standards as the pragmatic cataloging advocated by Mr. Osborn.

The Boston meeting had symptomatic significance by showing a definite trend toward pragmatic cataloging while at the same time recognizing the need for rational cataloging. "In spite of the fact that cataloging needs for different libraries differ," said Mr. Metcalf, "librarians should help each other. More cooperation should be worked out."[14]

Altogether, recent writers on cataloging have shown considerable dissatisfaction with the traditional cataloging. The same dissatisfaction has led many libraries to formulate simplified rules of their own. In Van Hoesen's *Selective Cataloging,* this trend can be traced back to the beginning of the twenties. The revolt against the code does not, as one might have expected, originate with the small libraries, but rather with the large ones. Among libraries known to have, in one way or another, formulated individual cataloging rules are such institutions as Harvard, New York Public Library, the John Crerar Library, the Enoch Pratt Free Library, and Duke. This development cannot be overlooked in considering the code.

Conclusions

The findings made in the searchlight of the critics may be summarized as follows:

1. We lack definite data for evaluating

[13] Kellar, *op. cit.*

[14] *A.L.A. Bulletin* 35:P-50, Sept. 1941.

our cataloging practices in terms of cost-use balance.

2. With the funds at our disposal we are unable to catalog all the books we acquire. Those we do catalog are cataloged at presumably too high a cost.

3. It is assumed that our shortcomings are due, in part, to unsatisfactorily organized rules calling for too elaborate cataloging and to uneconomical duplication of effort.

4. To remedy this situation, it is suggested that we:

    a) Stress the reasons underlying the rules.

    b) Simplify the rules.

    c) Use varying standards of cataloging for varying types of material.

    d) Extend our cooperative enterprises.

The necessity of eventually working out a set of objectives for cataloging on an empiric basis has already been emphasized. With respect to the immediate issue, Stanley Jast's remark about the 1908 edition would unfortunately seem pertinent also to the present one: "The Anglo-American rules have a certain intellectual unity, though it must be confessed that they are generally presented in a fashion to disguise it."[15]

The code should be redesigned in a streamlined form so as to show whatever unity it has, as an initial step to realize what we are really after. Rules embodying fundamental principles should stand out clearly, while special applications of these rules should be given subordinate presentation. An emerging recognition of the desirability of such a design is found in the stating of general rules at the beginning of certain sections. This method should be extended through the whole of the code, also typographically. Basic rules should not be repeated wherever they apply under special conditions, but be reaffirmed by reference if necessary, so as to let the

[15] Sharp, H. A. *Cataloging.* 2d ed. London, 1937, p. xxi.

users of the code conceive the rules rather than merely consult them.

A clearer arrangement throughout the code would be desirable. Take for example the rules dealing with illustration. These rules are not set off from those dealing with pagination; nor does the phraseology used in the headings always seem pertinent. Thus, rule No. 307 is simply called "Folded Leaves." The first of these rules (303) is termed "Illustrative Matter," although the rules for illustrative matter continue through rule 321. There is a comprehensive rule (304) with the heading "Illustrations in the Text," but no parallel rule for illustrations outside the text.

In the course of redesigning the rules, brief statements bearing upon the functions of the rules should be incorporated wherever pertinent. An attempt in this direction has been made under "Imprint" (page 253). This practice should be extended with a view to establishing eventually the code of rules founded on reasons, called for by Osborn.

Simplifications

Turning now from the streamlining of the code to the simplification of the rules, we are immediately struck by the size of the code. Critics may be inclined to think that the great increase in size is in itself a sign that the new code will result in more detailed and therefore more costly cataloging. This, of course, is not necessarily so, since additional rules, if they are pertinent and exact, may well have the opposite effect: decrease the time it takes to settle points of doubt. The 1908 and 1941 codes should be rationally compared. In this analysis it might be well to classify the amendments in the following three groups:

A. Amendments constituting a time-saving clarification of time-consuming uncertainties.

E.g. Treatment of the names of married women in Spanish and Dutch (Rule 59 f.1. 3) which present special peculiarities not covered by the general rule.

B. Amendments that will require time-consuming research not justified by the cost-use balance. E.g. Rule requiring reference from see, or successive sees, held by a bishop, *giving years of incumbency* (Rule 50c).

C. Amendments that are in effect time-consuming elaborations of nonessentials. E.g. Rule specifying six different ways of indicating that a book includes illustrative music (Rule 316).

Amendments of the first type would be good; those of the second and third type should be curbed.

It is likely that the new code will make cataloging easier and therefore more economical than did the old one. But this should not satisfy us. The superiority of the new code may consist in many instances merely in its being a desirable clarification of an undesirable practice. We should determine whether the code provides for the kind of cataloging called for under the conditions prevailing today and anticipated tomorrow.

Suggestions for Simplification

Numerous suggestions for simplification could be and have been made. It is possible in this paper merely to indicate the character of some of these with the recommendation that they be subjected to close scrutiny and analysis.

First, let us consider some of the rules for entry, now on the way to becoming sacrosanct. Without being taken for a heretic, is it possible to plead for a final reconsideration of the rules for periodicals and corporate bodies? The incessant recataloging and re-printing caused by the rules calling for entry under latest name certainly represent an economic sacrifice out of balance with the alleged contribution to the public's convenience. The luxuriantly flourishing exceptions

to the principal rule that a society is to be entered directly under its name, an institution under place, constitute another doubtful condescension to the supposed desire of the readers. A third questionable feature is found in the rules making choice of entry optional (entry under personal name vs. corporate body, etc.). This new liberality is probably meant to simplify matters, but will rather complicate them by the havoc it may play in union catalogs and cooperative cataloging. As a preparation to a discussion of the possibility of changing these three groups of rules, a study should be made of the extent to which reprinting would be an unconditional prerequisite to effecting a change.

Second, we may simplify the rules by cutting down decorative trimmings, the preparation of which often requires quite some research. The new code has dropped the use of *Mrs.* in headings for married women. Why should we retain titles of honor (Sir, Lord, Lady, Count, Bishop, President, etc.) except when the forename becomes entry word or when necessary to distinguish between persons with the same name?

Third, we may effect economy by giving up esoteric formalism. The example here is, of course, our capitalization rules which abound in subtle distinctions, while a return to ordinary English usage is all that is needed.

Fourth, we might abbreviate long and cumbersome titles, although this is not so important as in Mr. Cutter's days of hand-written cards. When dealing with title pages of rarity and bibliographical uniqueness we may proceed in the opposite direction: reproduce them photographically on our catalog cards in the manner suggested by Leo Crozet.[16]

Fifth, in imprint statement we might be satisfied with one place name and one publisher, under ordinary circumstances.

Sixth, we might reduce our statement of pagination to include only the last page of each group of pagings, with some modifications.

Seventh, we might let "illus." stand for all

[16] Meyer, José. "Catalogs and Cataloging in France." *Catalogers' and Classifiers' Yearbook* No. 9 (1940), 108-09.

types of illustrative matter, whether included or not included in the pagination, and specify only the most important types, such as portraits and maps.

Eighth, we might follow Miss Morsch's suggestion in respect to size, "give both dimensions for a volume which has a width less than half or more than equal to its height."

Ninth, we might cut down on the number and length of notes, particularly those dealing with bibliographical niceties.

Tenth, and finally, we might limit the use of added entries to the bare minimum of strict necessity.

Multiple Standards

The simplification of rules should be seen in relation to the recognized need for different fullness of cataloging for different types of material. We should maintain a comprehensive code to be used for material requiring full description. The standard for such entries might be referred to as Grade A, and would represent standard cataloging, that is, modified bibliographical and reference cataloging. For material not in need of full treatment, deviations would be indicated in the rules, and this standard might be referred to as Grade B, representing simplified cataloging, that is, essentially finding cataloging. A third, seldom-used category C, for rare books, might be added.

The first three types of simplifications recorded above would pertain to both standard A and B; the others might or might not pertain to both standards. Rules for all standards could easily be incorporated in the same code. Classes of material recommended for cataloging according to Grade B should be specified. Section 23 of the *Prussian Instructions* and Van Hoesen's *Selective Cataloging* might offer suggestions both with respect to these classes and with respect to the

simplifications that could be made.

There has been considerable discussion concerning the wisdom or folly of introducing such simplifications. Mr. Bishop[17] has been rather skeptical as regards selective cataloging, Mr. Bay[18] hopeful. It has been maintained that simplifications will neither be wise nor particularly cost-saving. For instance, it has been said that we cannot safely cut our pagination statement since it is an essential clue to variations in editions. This contention has been repudiated by Mr. Currier[19] and by the New York Public Library's continued successful use of brief collation statement. Nor does the omission of pagination in sets seem to cause trouble.

As to cost, it has been argued that the most time-consuming elements of cataloging are the establishing of entries, subject headings, and classification numbers, while book description is usually a relatively simple matter. This is probably true. However, the suggested simplifications do entail the limitation of added entries. As to short-cuts in book description, it would appear that elaborate pagination statement is either time-consuming or—unreliable. If we really were to follow the rules and account for any and every irregularity in paging, we would have actually to *collate* the book, from the first page to the last. This we do not do, with the result that bibliographers don't trust our cataloging. Under these circumstances had we not better restrict our application of the detailed collation rules to those infrequent cases where it is wise to follow them—and we actually do it?

[17] Van Hoesen, H. B., ed. *Selective Cataloging.* New York, 1928, p. 104.
[18] Bay, J. Christian. "Activities of a Scientific Reference Library." *College and Research Libraries* 2:100-01, Mar. 1941.
[19] Currier, Thomas Franklin. "What the Bibliographer Says to the Cataloger." *Catalogers' and Classifiers' Yearbook* No. 9 (1940), 32-35.

Cooperation

We now come to the final and most important point concerning the future of cataloging—the idea of cooperation in cataloging. The savings arrived at through individual libraries' acceptance of simple rules may not be impressive. The savings achieved by effectively linking simplified rules with cooperative cataloging may be enormous.

We have learned that there are in the Union Catalog cards for about five million books, only vaguely exploited by libraries needing them. The system, for some time in operation in the Library of Congress, of searching titles in the Union Catalog, has not been particularly successful. The chief reason for this seems to be that the quality of the cards copied was undeterminable in advance, and that these cards therefore, could not be used in place of local cards. It is obvious that a library cannot with any degree of satisfaction use in its own catalog, to cover its own holdings, catalog cards the idiosyncrasies of which it may not be able to interpret. The resulting difficulties for the *exchange of cards* may be largely overcome by the systematization of multiple standard cataloging. The card-producing library will simply indicate on all its cards, by a symbol, the standard (A, B, or C) it has followed in cataloging. The card-buying library will simply indicate the grades of cards it will accept. If all sizable libraries would adhere to some prescribed standards, a tremendous impetus would doubtless be given to the establishment of an exchange pool for producers and consumers of catalog cards.

It is difficult to see why it would not be feasible to set up some machinery through which the Library of Congress would be able to supply complete sets of printed, mimeographed, or otherwise duplicated copies of cards contained in the Union Catalog, on terms similar to those governing the sales of its own cards.

Apparatus Necessary

However, the apparatus necessary for effective exchange of catalog cards is a subject that falls outside the scope of this paper. What we are emphasizing here is that the code must be conceived with the vast perspective of cooperative ventures in mind. For union catalog purposes, adherence to a uniform method of entering is as a rule satisfactory; for card exchange purposes standardized book description becomes imperative.

We must therefore go beyond the simple device of adhering to Part 1 of the code, but treating Part 2 *ad libertum*—a suggestion which at best was a temporary expedient only.

The cataloging discussion now charging our thoughts extends far beyond the realm of technicalities. It knocks at the door of the treasurer, challenges the administrator, conditions the scholar's access to his books.

We have not been able to realize what we dreamt when the Library of Congress began the printing of cards. But if we blame this on the Library of Congress, or its system of cataloging, or the code, and say, as it has been said too often for comfort, "Forget about the Library of Congress, forget about any code, go ahead and do your cataloging according to your own standards," then we are lost. But this is exactly what will happen if we do not get together, cool-headed, in a spirit of constructive collaboration. It is very well to point out that different libraries have different needs. It is more important to find

a common denominator for these needs. If the criticism of traditional cataloging degenerates into rugged individualism, we are bound to retrogress; if it develops into a planned economy of cataloging, we shall be on the road to the future. It is suggested that we make the code a guidepost to that road.

By MAURICE F. TAUBER

Subject Cataloging and Classification Approaching the Crossroads

Mr. Tauber is chief, catalog department, University of Chicago Libraries.

Despite the criticisms that may justifiably be directed at descriptive cataloging, particularly its expense and its detailed, bibliographical nature, it generally has been found that the procedures in this sphere of cataloging in university libraries are fairly well standardized on the basis of either the A.L.A. or the L.C. rules. Standardization is less prevalent in the areas of subject headings and classification, although standard lists of headings and systems of arrangement are commonly used. It is not surprising, therefore, that there should be some suggestions for reforms in subject heading and a few in classification policies. This paper will deal first of all with some of the reforms that have been proposed. It will also discuss the extent of our knowledge of current subject-heading work and classification practices and of their effects upon use of library materials. Finally, it will record briefly some data concerning centralized and cooperative cataloging and classification, aspects which I assume will be treated by Mr. Haykin.

The participant observer of library use generally is in a better position than the armchair philosopher to discuss these matters in full detail. The latter can raise questions and make suggestions for changes, but unless careful analyses and accurate tests are made, many of our statements regarding subject headings and classifications remain assumptions. Actually there are few data derived from systematic research, as Randall recently pointed out.[1] Since this lack of data makes complete documentation difficult, the following résumé should be regarded as being primarily exploratory. As yet, there are no clear signposts which indicate the procedures which will accomplish the things administrators have come to regard as important in the technical processes—economical practices which serve the users and enable the staff to aid the users.

Subject Headings

Under the rubric of subject headings, it may be said that we think we know why we do certain things, but are pretty

[1] Randall, William M. "The Technical Processes and Library Service," in his *The Acquisition and Cataloging of Books*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1940, p. 1-29.