

original, and uncorrupted by French and Anglo intermediaries. In short, whether agreeable or not, a library must choose one among the three possible terms. The alternatives are either to assign no term whatever, which would render the material inaccessible by a subject-approach, or to use all three, which would produce terrific chaos, wrongly intimating the existence of three distinct groups instead of one. We deeply regret the "problem," but respectfully insist that it's not of our making.

Still needed and welcome are advice and guidelines regarding correct terminology for Native American groups commonly known by indisputably alien--i.e., French or English--names (e.g., Blackfeet, Flatheads, Nez Perces). It may also be worth emphasizing here that European colonizers and conquerors have frequently and often willfully mis-labelled Third World peoples and nations, thereby undermining their pride, unity, and self-identity. The process, which might be dubbed "semantic subjugation," is by no means unique to Native American experience. Subsequently, an important element of group-liberation is usually the replacement of inaccurate, imposed, and defamatory names with self-created or historic forms. To cite merely a few examples from Africa:

Kaffirs	➔	Xhosa	Northern Rhodesia	➔	Zambia
Bushmen	➔	San	Southwest Africa	➔	Namibia
Hottentots	➔	Khoi-Khoin	Gold Coast	➔	Ghana

And from the U.S.:

Negroes ➔ Blacks or Afro-Americans

Implicit in these changes is the recognition that even long-standing, habitually-employed terms may be seriously flawed and can powerfully impede real self-determination.

The section

▷ "Cataloging philosophy": a prose-poem delivered at the HCL General Staff Meeting, 2-21-74

I'm supposed to rap briefly on "Cataloging Philosophy."
Which sounds kind of high-falutin', maybe also a little dry & ponderous.
But I don't think it is.
Because what's really crucial here are ATTITUDES:
How we catalogers view what we do & why we do it.

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To venture into history for less than 30 seconds:
Too much of cataloging attitudes & practice in the past
has been frankly self-serving.
Cataloging has too often been performed for the exclusive satisfaction
of catalogers themselves,
who seemed to conceive of themselves as members of a special mystery cult.

Only the properly initiated could really decipher or comprehend what they were into.

Well, we don't dig that approach.

And there's growing evidence of what amounts to a "cataloging revolution" elsewhere in the country.

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Our basic attitude--

however imperfect it may be in application

(after all, we're human, hallelujah!)--

is that we catalog for the people who use the library and for our colleagues who help people to use the library.

Stated another way:

We DON'T catalog just for us.

What that attitude means in practice is, first:

trying to move stuff out as fast as we can.

Second: Trying to tag materials, especially non-fiction, with a classification number

that best expresses what the items are all about.

(And when Dewey or LC doesn't give us the best number,

we either change it

or make a new one.

For instance, within the past few weeks we innovated specific numbers for "War games," "Landsailing," & "Abortion."

Earlier, we'd done the same thing for "Workers control" & "Counter-culture."

And for whatever it's worth,

the people at the Decimal Classification Office in Washington

have indicated a definite interest in our number-making.

Even now we've got in the works an expanded breakdown for "Popular Music," which at the moment DDC limits to a single notation: 780.42.)

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Third: In assigning added-entries & subject tracings

we try to consider as a top priority

how to make the particular work most accessible to users

who might want it.

For instance, reports by governmental commissions are typically entered under "Commission...", "Great Britain," or "United States."

But very often they're better known by the chairperson's name or catch-title-- like the Wolfenden or Kerner Reports.

So, besides the "straight" main entry,

we give them extra tracings for, say,

"Wolfenden Report" or "Kerner Report."

If LC--as it frequently happens--

hasn't chosen to accent particular subject aspects of a fictional or other work, we add more tracings to do so.

Two recent & horrendously classic examples of this sort of "under-cataloging" are Alternatives in print and the Somewhere else living-learning catalog.

The first title complements Books in print,

providing bibliographic & ordering data for publications issued by over 850 Movement, counter-culture, Feminist, & radical groups.

The one tracing LC gave it was: STUDENT MOVEMENT--BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Which didn't exactly do the trick.

That's one I hope we made more accessible through additional tracings for RADICALISM, COUNTER-CULTURE, and SOCIAL CHANGE. The Somewhere else title is a directory of things like free schools & universities, women's networks, and alternative vocational guidance centers. Unbelievably (or maybe not so unbelievably), the only LC tracing it got was: ASSOCIATIONS, INSTITUTIONS, ETC. That, too, we corrected slightly.

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Related to all this is the recognition that a library catalog-- whether we personally like it or not-- is also an instructional tool, even an attitude-moulder. Employing a particular term or form in a catalog can have definite social effects. Not all by itself, of course, but certainly in tandem with terminology in literature, daily speech, & the mass media. "As" constructions, for instance, clearly imply that the persons or group denoted as doing a specific job or thing maybe shouldn't be doing it. Or only do it on an exceptional basis. That's surely the implication of JEWS AS SCIENTISTS, WOMEN AS LIBRARIANS, or GURKHAS AS SOLDIERS. In other words, these forms make a judgment about the group or persons in question. And almost invariably, that judgment is negative. So what we've more-or-less systematically done is to truncate those constructions, dropping the "as" so they become simply (and inoffensively) JEWISH SCIENTISTS, WOMEN LIBRARIANS, and GURKHA SOLDIERS.

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Much the same criticism can be levied at obviously sexist terminology, which still flourishes in most subject heading schemes, like LUMBERMEN, FIREMEN, SALESMEN AND SALESMANSHIP. Again, the implication is that these work or occupational categories are strictly male. Well, the U.S. Government itself has lately changed such stereotyped nomenclature. And so--to a large extent--have we. Thus, you'll shortly find LUMBER WORKERS instead of LUMBERMEN, FIRE FIGHTERS rather than FIREMEN, etc.

★

Another objective here has been to strive for both authenticity & fairness. Granted, most of the world knows about the "Bushmen" of South Africa. But there are no people in South Africa who ever called themselves by that name.

It's a monicker that Europeans laid on them.
Without asking.

Their real name is SAN: S-A-N.

And that's the one we use,
of course cross-referencing
from the wrong form,
printed in quotation-marks.
The same is true of NEGROES,
now AFRO-AMERICANS,
and several other peoples.

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One more wrong-headed LC tendency we've tried to overcome
is that of either too slowly recognizing--
or altogether failing to recognize--
that many peoples of a distinct ethnic or national origin
at some point have become bona fide Americans.
Thus, we continue to find headings
for JEWS IN THE UNITED STATES, CHINESE IN THE UNITED STATES,
and UKRAINIANS IN THE UNITED STATES,
even though the works assigned these headings may deal largely,
if not wholly,
with 2d, 3d, or later generations
of Jews, Chinese, & Ukrainians "in America."
In such cases,
we recognize their Americanness--
together with their ethnicity--
through headings like JEWISH-AMERICANS, CHINESE-AMERICANS,
and UKRAINIAN-AMERICANS.

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And then there's the unabating problem of new
(sometimes even old)
concepts & topics
that unmistakably appear in books & other media,
but which LC hasn't yet got around to formally noticing.

As examples:

BERMUDA TRIANGLE, LAMAZE TECHNIQUE, RACISM, WOMEN STUDIES, SEXISM, NATIONAL LIBERATION
MOVEMENTS, NATURAL FOODS, POLICE MALPRACTICE, RAPE CRISIS CENTERS, SONGWRITERS, STEELBAND
MUSIC, ROSEMALING, WOMEN'S PUBLISHERS AND PUBLISHING, and the TRANS-ALASKA PIPELINE.

To illustrate quickly:

The LC tracings for a volume we lately received titled Sexism in education and society
were 1) EDUCATION OF WOMEN
and 2) SEX DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATION.

Not alone nor together do those two headings satisfactorily disclose
what the book deals with.

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To enhance searching & finding,
a lot can also be done--
and we're trying to do it--
through cross-referencing.
Key here is that there's often more than one way
to say the same thing,

but only one of those ways will enjoy primary-head status.
To get specific,
someone searching for material on "babies" very well might not realize
that it's all listed under INFANTS.
But the searcher won't go away disappointed
if we've been clever enough to make a cross-reference
from BABIES to INFANTS.

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What I've described as our "attitude"
ramifies into other areas, as well.
For one thing, we WANT feedback & suggestions from the people we serve:
you & the public.
We've begun to get it.
For instance, the BERMUDA TRIANGLE and LAMAZE TECHNIQUE heads just mentioned
were suggested by community librarians.
And another colleague has contributed a well thought-out recommendation
for expanding the Popular Music schedule in Dewey.
So if there are any new subjects or numbers you want,
let us know.
And also feel absolutely free to respond to what we print
in the Cataloging bulletin,
regardless of whether you approve or disagree.
It's intended as a free-for-all forum.
No holds barred.

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Further along this line,
some of us have started to "agitate"
against imposition of the International Standard Bibliographic Description
--or ISBD--by LC.
This was discussed in recent bulletins.
And boils down to a change in cataloging format
that at best will mean nothing to our public
and at worst will toss in more garbage--
like Latin abbreviations and mind-blowing punctuation--
that COULD turn people off,
making them feel pointlessly stupid
and frustrated.
And it's worth underscoring that the "ISBD issue"
is not exclusively technical.
In fact,
it's a public service issue.

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All of this may not constitute
a perfectly cogent statement of
"cataloging philosophy."
But maybe it conveys something
about where our heads are at.
And
our hearts,
too.

--S. Berman