

Madras Library Association

Publication Series, 7

THEORY OF LIBRARY CATALOGUE

Madras Library Association

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Theory of Library Catalogue

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WITH A FOREWORD

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MADRAS

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TO
ŚRĪ SĪTĀLAKṢMI
MY MOTHER

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PREFACE

BY

THE MADRAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

With the object of spreading the essential ideas of the Library Movement and of directing thought towards the creation of a library service suited to our country, in 1929 the Madras Library Association inaugurated its Publication Series. The first volume, *The Library Movement*, was by Divers Hands. The next five volumes were all by S. R. Ranganathan. As their titles show they dealt with technical and practical aspects of library work: *The five laws of library science*, 1931; *Colon classification*, 1933; *Classified catalogue code*, 1934; *Library administration*, 1935; *Prolegomena to library classification*, 1937. All these volumes have circulated well both in India and abroad.

As another instalment of this Publication Series the Association now publishes the present volume, *Theory of library catalogue*, the manuscript of which Mr. S. R. Ranganathan has been good enough to place at its disposal.

The Association hopes that this volume will circulate as widely as its predecessors and that it will help libraries in India and elsewhere to organize their work in an efficient, scientific and serviceable way.

FOREWORD

I have much pleasure in writing this Foreword to the *Theory of library catalogue*. In this book, the author examines the theoretical foundations of cataloguing practice, and formulates the principles which should underlie the preparation of a library catalogue. After a careful and critical appraisal of the merits of different types of catalogues, he comes to the conclusion that the classified catalogue, though its arrangement may seem somewhat elaborate and complicated to the general reader, is the most efficient means of enabling him to get at the book or books dealing with the subject in which he seeks information, and that it most nearly fulfils the canons of library science.

Mr. Ranganathan brings to his task not only a very thorough knowledge of his subject but also a wide experience of all aspects of library organisation and administration gained as the Librarian of the Madras University Library for several years. The book in spite of the technical nature of its subject is written with great lucidity and a wealth of illustrative detail, and should make interesting and profitable reading both for the professional librarian and for the general reader.

The library movement in India is still in its infancy, but there are indications of its rapid extension in the near future. The work of the Madras Library Association, under whose auspices this book is published, in stimulating the growth of the movement in this Presidency has been wholly praiseworthy. I trust that this book along with the other publications of the Association will contribute in increasing measure to the proper organisation and efficient service of libraries in our land.

UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS,
CHEPAUK, MADRAS,
28th November, 1938. }

S. E. RUNGANADHAN
Vice-Chancellor.

INTRODUCTION

Said the philosopher: You think that I have learned a
Great deal and keep the whole of it in my memory?
Sse replied with respect: Of course. Isn't that so?
It is not so. I have reduced it all to one principle*

—Confucius.

In the *Five laws of library science* (1931) most of the major tendencies in library practice were traced to five fundamental principles. In the *Prolegomena to library classification*, published last year the foundations of library classification were examined and twenty-eight canons were isolated. These canons will be of use to originators of classification schemes and to classifiers who apply them in their daily work. They also furnish an objective method for comparing schemes of classification. In this book a similar attempt is made to examine the theoretical foundations of cataloguing practice.

* * *

In his introduction to Sharp's *Cataloguing* Jast rightly points out that the "Many rules in a comprehensive code . . . have a certain intellectual unity though it must be confessed that they are generally presented

* Pound (Ezra), *Guide to Kulchur*, 1938, p. 15.

in a fashion to disguise the unity behind. All the more reason for a text book to explain all this." In *A manual of cataloguing and indexing* Acomb begins his contribution thus: "Cataloguing is not an art, for self-expression in a catalogue would lead to disaster; nor it is a science, for it does not depend upon ascertained and unalterable facts." My feeling is that cataloguing has so long been practised as "simply a technique" that we may now attempt to evolve a theory.

The irreconcilable views of the British Library Association and the American Library Association on certain Author Entries, the undecided and self-conflicting statement of Cutter on Subject entries, the facile evasion by most text-books of moot questions connected with the latter and the difficulties presented by Periodical Publications and Corporate Authors are some of the things about the present state of technique that left me dissatisfied. Personally, I was taught only a bundle of detached rules; all my attempts in those days to understand their organic interrelation failed. As a practising cataloguer I had neither time nor freedom to go beyond the code put into my hands. Even when I was working out the *Classified catalogue code* my understanding of theory was not yet ripe, though no doubt it was guiding me preconsciously. Only the attempt to teach cataloguing finally matured it.



Like the *Prolegomena*, in fact this book owes much to the classes of the Madras School of Librarianship.

All teaching is reciprocal, particularly if the subject taught has not yet reached the stage of deduction from principles. Rule of thumb really satisfies neither teacher nor taught. There can be no rest for a teacher till he arrives at a few easily remembered fundamental principles from which rules to meet any practical situation can be promptly and unerringly derived.

This self-educational effect of teaching has been well emphasised by the Upanishadic seers. According to them four stages can be recognised in education:

- (1) *Adhīti* (Study)
- (2) *Bōdha* (Understanding)
- (3) *Ācaraṇa* (Practice)
- (4) *Pracāraṇa* (Teaching)

and one's education is not complete till the last has been lived. It is usually at this stage that principles are crystallised.

* * *

Part 0 is concerned with definitions, terminology and guiding principles.

Part 1 (the longest) is devoted to Subject Entries. After theoretical analysis of the concept "Specific Subject of a book" a practical method (Chain Procedure) is evolved for determining it and representing it in the Heading. Use of this procedure in the choice of Headings for *See Also* References is also explained. The last chapter (15) of this part discusses the syndetic

vs. systematic arrangement and establishes the essential similarity between the Classified and Dictionary Catalogues.

Series Entries, Analytical Entries and Periodical Publications (all topics easily isolated) are studied in Parts 2, 3 and 4 and serve to illustrate the application of the principles enunciated in chapter 05 to specific problems and to the comparative study of standard cataloguing codes. The *Classified catalogue code* and the *Guide to the cataloguing of the serial publications of the societies and institutions* are closely compared in Part 4.

Part 5 deals with the difficulties relating to Name Entries, personal and corporate. Its last Chapter (54) makes a systematic study of some of the outstanding rules of the *A. A. code*. It singles out certain unsolved Author Entry Problems and shows that in certain cases the *A. A. code* mixes up Author and Subject Entries.

Part 6 deals with various odds and ends. In chapter 64 the concept of Gestalt Value of items in an Entry is introduced to clarify the problem of alphabetisation. In Chapter 65 the case is summarised for preferring the Classified Form of Library Catalogue.

The book does not consider the organisation and routine of the cataloguing section of a library which has been fully dealt with in Chapter 5 of my *Library administration*.

KEY TO REFERENCES

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <i>A. A. Code</i> | AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION and (BRITISH) LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. Catalog rules: author and title entries. 1908. |
| Acomb | QUINN (J. Henry) and ACOMB (H. W.). A manual of cataloguing and indexing. 1933. |
| <i>C. c. code</i> | RANGANATHAN (S. R.). Classified catalogue code. 1934. |
| Childs | CHILDS (James B.). Author entry for government publications. |
| <i>Colon classification</i> | RANGANATHAN (S. R.), Colon classification. 1933. |
| Cutter | CUTTER (Charles A.). Rules for a dictionary catalog. 1904. |
| <i>Five Laws</i> | RANGANATHAN (S. R.). The five laws of library science. 1931. |
| <i>Guide</i> | PIERSON (Herriet Wheeler). Guide to the cataloguing of the serial publications of societies and institutions. 1931. |
| <i>List</i> | AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. List of subject headings for use in dictionary catalogs. 1911. |
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| Quinn | QUINN (J. Henry) and ACOMB (H. W.). A manual of cataloguing and indexing. 1933. |
| Quinn (old) | QUINN (J. Henry). Library cataloguing. 1913. |
| <i>Readings</i> | ARNETT (L. D.) and ARNETT (E. T.), Readings in library methods. 1931. |
| <i>Rules</i> | CUTTER (Charles A.). Rules for a dictionary catalog. 1904. |
| Sharp | SHARP (Henry A.). Cataloguing: a text book for use in libraries. 1937. |
| <i>Subject headings</i> | LIBRARY OF CONGRESS. Subject headings used in the dictionary catalogues of the Library of Congress. |
| <i>Yearbook</i> | Catalogers' and classifiers' year book. |

PART 0

PRELIMINARIES

- 01 What is a Library Catalogue?
- 02 Shorten the Main Entries
- 03 Kinds of Library Catalogue
- 04 Name the Entries
- 05 Guiding Principles