

WORTH NOTING
EDITORIALS,
LETTERS,
ESSAYS,
AN
INTERVIEW,
AND
BIBLIOGRAPHY

by
Sanford Berman

With
a
Foreword
by
Bill Katz



McFARLAND & COMPANY, INC., PUBLISHERS
JEFFERSON, NORTH CAROLINA, AND LONDON

WHERE HAVE ALL THE MOONIES GONE?

According to the Good Book, Chapter 24, Verse 1: "Enter a corporate body directly under the name by which it is predominantly identified. . . . Determine the form of name of a corporate body from items issued by that body in its language. . . ."¹ Doubtless, Library of Congress (LC) cataloguers faithfully and properly applied that rule when constructing corporate name-forms—which, incidentally, also serve as subject headings—for Lech Walesa's now-banned labor federation and Reverend Moon's religious organization. That is, they must have examined materials produced in the home language—Polish and Korean—and determined the "predominant" form of name in each language. So, instead of "Solidarity," we find in MARC and CIP entries, "NSZZ 'Solidarnosc.'" And, rather than "Unification Church," we get "Segye Kidokkyo T'ongil Silyong Hyophoe." Let's call these Exhibit A.

In June 1982, Temple University Press issued a 521-page, triple-column anthology, *Alternative Papers*,² containing about 200 reprinted articles arranged into 11 sections:

- The Press
- Nukes
- Appropriate Technology
- Third World
- Corporate Connections
- Repression
- Women
- Lesbians & Gay Men
- Work
- Organizing
- The Movement

What would seem a decent minimum of subject tracings? Perhaps RADICALISM, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, and SOCIAL CHANGE? Maybe also THIRD

Reprinted with permission from Reference Librarian, no. 9 (Fall/Winter 1983), pp. 133-43.

WORLD, NUCLEAR POWER, FEMINISM, GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT, and ALTERNATIVE PRESS PUBLICATIONS — EXCERPTS?³ What subject tracings did it actually get? None. Nada. Zip. Nichts. Call that Exhibit B.

At a Twin Cities' conference in late 1982, people like Harlan Cleveland, Toni Carbo Bearman, Paul Zurkowski, and Anita Schiller talked about "information as a resource and commodity," particularly discussing the merits and possible implications of the NCLIS Task Force report on private sector/public sector responsibilities.⁴ During that weekend event, certain notable themes or topics recurred:

- FEE-BASED INFORMATION SERVICES
- GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING POLICY
- INFORMATION INDUSTRY
- INFORMATION POLICY
- INFORMATION SOCIETY
- TELEMATICS

Most libraries have material on those subjects. The Awful Truth, though, is that in most libraries such material cannot be identified nor retrieved through the catalog by means of those terms. Because they haven't been validated yet as nationally-acceptable headings by LC. That's Exhibit C.

In 1982, Little, Brown published what the jacket blurb described as an "adventure-filled memoir" by Robert MacNeil, co-host of PBS' *MacNeil-Lehrer Report*. Titled *The Right Place at the Right Time*, the work was classed in 813.54 — i.e., contemporary American fiction — and accordingly got no subject headings.⁵ Make that Exhibit D.

As Exhibit E: Marilyn Sachs' juvie novel, *Call Me Ruth*, appeared in 1982 (published by Doubleday). The jacket says: "A warm and moving story about the struggles of a young Jewish immigrant in New York City at the turn of the century." And the first page of text includes these passages:

In the old country, my name was Rifka and my mother's name was Faigel. But when we came to America, I became Ruth and my mother became Fanny. . . . Mamma was standing bare-legged in the water, her skirts hiked up around her waist, rinsing off the large, white Passover tablecloth, for the holiday had just ended.

Okay. THIS is the annotation supplied by LC's juvenalia catalogers:

The daughter of a Russian immigrant family, newly arrived in Manhattan in 1908, has conflicting feelings about her mother's increasingly radical union involvement.

And this is the first — and only ethnic-related — subject tracing: RUSSIAN AMERICANS — FICTION.⁶

Well, the "exhibits" could continue to "Z" and beyond. The object in this litany of error and omission should be fairly transparent: to weaken confidence in centrally-performed cataloging and standard cataloging tools. Not for any personal nor mean-minded reasons, but simply because the fact is that our national cataloging products and services can't be completely trusted and

should not be accepted automatically nor uncritically by anyone who genuinely believes that cataloging should make material *more* rather than *less* accessible and retrievable.

To become more systematic: these are three basic principles that ought to underpin cataloging:

- *Intelligibility*: The catalog format, entry-elements, and terminology should make sense, should be understandable not just by staff, but also by ordinary patrons.
- *Findability*: Ideally, searchers should be able to “hit” what they want, especially when subject searching or author-browsing, on the first try.
- *Fairness*: Various *kinds* of materials—like print-AV and adult-juvenile—should be treated equitably; subject nomenclature should be unbiased; subject coverage should be fullsome, especially for women’s, ethnic, sexual, political, and age-connected materials; and individual works deserve accurate representation, together with maximum accessibility.

Now, with those principles as a basis for evaluation, here’s what’s “wrong”—that is, dysfunctional and unhelpful—in currently-practiced descriptive and subject cataloging:

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGING

Choice-of-entry

The new rules mandate entry of story or essay collections under title, rather than under editor or compiler.⁷ So *Before the Golden Age: a Science Fiction Anthology of the 1930s*, compiled by Isaac Asimov, would be main-entrined under “Before.” Does that really make any difference? It does. Both studies and personal observation strongly suggest that people look for a *name* associated with a given work, not the title, and that they don’t make fine distinctions between monographs and edited collections.⁸ The practical effect of this AACR2 rule is to dictate shelf-location among the “Bs” instead of “As,” where fiction-browsers might reasonably be looking for “Asimov” items. And in single-entry catalogs, the title would be the *sole* entry point.

Punctuation/Abbreviations

While not wishing to re-hash earlier debates, it still needs to be said that typical library users do not comprehend what “[s.1.]” or “[s.n.]” means, and that a significant number of users and staff alike plainly don’t understand such cherished, long-standing bibliographic conventions as “min.,” “b&w,” “pt.,” “in.,” “b.” (for “born”), “l.” (for “leaves”), “d.” (for “died”), “v.,” “tr.,” and “c” (for “copyright”). A 1979 Hennepin County Library survey strongly supported this.⁹ And an earlier study regarding AV-abbreviations, conducted among Wisconsin college and high school students, did likewise.¹⁰ If these

sorts of data are important enough to include in a catalog entry, then they're important enough to be made comprehensible.

Notes

Non-archival libraries don't need some standard notes like "Includes index" or "Includes bibliography." However, other sorts of notes could prove extremely useful in helping potential readers decide whether they truly want a particular item, but these are less frequently supplied. For instance, HCL catalogers added this note to the record for Gloria Kaufman's *Pulling Our Own Strings: Feminist Humor and Satire*: "Includes anecdotes, songs, cartoons, poetry, essays, jokes, and comic routines." And they regularly make notes about sequels and cycles; e.g., "The 2d volume of the author's Dirshan The God-Killer saga, the 1st of which is The Leriouss mecca, the 3d, Sword for the empire, and the 4th, The maneaters of Cascalon." Further, "Includes more than 50 photos, some in color, and over 70 traditional designs and projects to piece by machine and quilt in your lap," seems more likely to aid erstwhile borrowers than LC's cryptic collation for the same work:¹¹ "ill. (some col.)."

Added Entries

While not explicitly prohibited by the rules, a variety of helpful added entries simply don't get made—unless they're done locally. At HCL, for example, public service staff and patrons appreciate added entries for small, alternative, and regional presses, for notable people who contribute forewords or prefaces, for translators and illustrators, and for professional or community groups associated with a given work. Also, HCL catalogers routinely make title added entries for pieces of titles or rearranged titles *if* there's cause to believe that people might seek that entry-point. To illustrate: the orthodox title tracing for Wayne Dyer's 1976 best-seller, *Your Erroneous Zones*, was purely for "Your," filing in the Ys. But HCL made another for what may be the much more memorable permuted title: "Erroneous zones," filing in the Es.¹²

Form-of-heading #1

The "Solidarity" and "Unification Church" cases nicely exemplify this kind of dysfunctional rule. Nobody will score a "first hit" because nobody will look first under "NSZZ" or "Segye." And many libraries, for whatever reason, will not have introduced cross-references from the sensible forms to the *insensible* ones, so the material may be permanently hidden and irretrievable. Obviously, either the rule should be revised to mandate name-establishment according to the predominant form in the language of the country where the

material is being cataloged¹³ or, paraphrasing George Orwell, a caution should appear in boldface at the bottom of every AACR2 page: **BREAK ANY OF THESE RULES SOONER THAN CREATE AN OUTRIGHT BARBAROUS ENTRY.**

Form-of-heading #2

AACR2 Rule 22.2C (p. 351) belatedly, but justly, liberated Sholem Aleichem, Orwell, Moravia, Celine, and Stendhal from a kind of bibliographic imprisonment, a confinement under the “real” names that they hadn’t actually used when writing and that most readers wouldn’t easily recognize, much less search for, in a catalog or on the shelves. This is Rule 22.2C1:

If all the works by a person appear under one pseudonym, or if the person is predominantly identified in reference sources by one pseudonym, choose the pseudonym. If the real name is known, make a reference from the real name to the pseudonym.

That departure from the “real name” tradition represented a genuine improvement in catalog access and credibility. Indeed, it was a significant step toward demystification. (Why, for so many years, did the profession insist that patrons look under “Rabinowitz” or “Blair” or “Pincherle” or “Destouches” or “Beyle” when only “Aleichem,” “Orwell,” “Moravia,” “Celine” and “Stendhal” appeared on title pages, on covers, on spines, on dust jackets, in reviews, and in bibliographies?) If Rule 22.2C1 (“One pseudonym”) may be rightly regarded as a great advance, Rule 22.2C2—nestled just below it (pp. 351-2)—cannot. Captioned “Predominant name,” it reads:

If the works of a person appear under several pseudonyms (or under the real name and one or more pseudonyms), choose one of those names if the person has come to be identified predominantly by that name in later editions of his or her works, or in other reference sources (in that order of preference). Make references from the other names.

The practical outcome of this instruction is that while novels in the Lavette Family saga by Howard Fast are expectably and properly entered under “Fast, Howard” and therefore shelved among the Fs, the Masao Masuto mysteries by E.V. Cunningham (a Fast pseudonym) are *also* entered under “Fast, Howard” and similarly shelved among the Fs. How come? Presumably because the author has written *more* works as “Fast” than as “Cunningham.” The name form (and consequent shelf-location) thus derives from mathematics, not from common sense or utility. And the result is just as foolish and dysfunctional as the earlier “real name” practice. It could, of course, have been obviated if the rule-makers had merely validated the principle of “title-page cataloging.”¹⁴

SUBJECT CATALOGING

One aspect of the subject cataloging problem is assignment practice, demonstrated by the *Alternative Papers* and *Call Me Ruth* examples. To *Alternative Papers* LC catalogers applied no vocabulary, and to *Call Me Ruth* they applied the wrong vocabulary. Still another defect inheres in LC assignment-policy regarding fiction, poetry, essays, humor, drama, and letters. Rarely, apart from adult anthologies and children's books, do such literary works get either topical or genre headings. (Robin MacNeil's richly-thematic memoir almost certainly went headingless due to its mistaken classification as "Fiction," an error that probably stemmed from cataloging "front matter" instead of the book itself during the CIP process.)¹⁵ But school and public libraries, in particular, could greatly benefit from precisely such subject access to individual novels, plays, and other literature.¹⁶

While there's much to complain about concerning assignment, the vocabulary itself probably constitutes the largest part of the subject cataloging malaise. To begin with, too many active, primary headings remain awkward, archaic, or unfamiliar. They are terms not likely to be "first" sought by catalog users. For example:

<i>LC form</i>	<i>Common form</i>
AERONAUTICS — ACCIDENTS	AIRPLANE ACCIDENTS
CARGO SHIPS — PASSENGER TRAVEL	FREIGHTER TRAVEL
CLOTHING, COLD WEATHER	WINTER CLOTHING
DWELLINGS	HOUSES
INFORMAL SECTOR (ECONOMICS)	UNDERGROUND ECONOMY
MICROMYS MINUTUS	HARVEST MOUSE
MILITARY SERVICE, COMPULSORY	DRAFT
MOVING PICTURE INDUSTRY — COLLECTIBLES	FILM COLLECTIBLES
ORTHODOX EASTERN CHURCH, GREEK	GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
PARENTING — RELIGIOUS ASPECTS — CHRISTIANITY	CHRISTIAN PARENTING
TRADE UNIONS	LABOR UNIONS

Secondly, a number of palpably biased or inauthentic descriptors persist in standard thesauri. MAN has not yet been transmuted into HUMANS. Alien ethnonyms still denote the Inuit and Sami. And neither JEWISH QUESTION nor YELLOW PERIL have been reformed or replaced.¹⁷

Thirdly, and most critical, is a continuing failure to promptly recognize and legitimize new topics, as well as finally validating "old" ones. Among the "old":

BROWN LUNG DISEASE
CLASSICAL MUSIC¹⁸

FAMILY PLANNING
HOME REMEDIES
HUMAN SERVICES
INTEREST RATES
MARXISM
NEW LEFT
PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT
POLLUTION CONTROL

And among the “new”:

ANTI-PORNOGRAPHY MOVEMENT
“BABY BOOM” GENERATION
CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING
DIVORCE MEDIATION SERVICES
HOMOPHOBIA
NEW AGE
NEW FEDERALISM
NEW RIGHT
NUCLEAR FREEZE CAMPAIGN
SAGEBRUSH REBELLION
SMALL BUSINESS LOANS
STARCH-BLOCKER DIET
TUITION TAX CREDIT
VIDEO DISPLAY TERMINALS
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
WELLNESS LIFESTYLE

If it's agreed that at least some of these things are really “wrong” with cataloging—and we take cataloging seriously—what's to be done? Well, there's no instant “fix.” For instance, replacing LC subject headings with another system, like PRECIS, won't miraculously make subject cataloging “work.” In fact, the same people would be applying and developing the new system who made a mess out of the old one. And the impact on existing subject catalogs could easily be disastrous. Nor is there a technological “fix.” Merely changing from a card to an online catalog doesn't automatically change the *content* of the cataloging nor will it fully compensate for the lack of a good, modern, controlled vocabulary and user-oriented descriptive data. So what then? It may be hard medicine, but we *can* do two things, “inside” and “outside.”

Outside: If we can identify a product or policy that's not working but can be repaired, we should let the responsible parties know about it. With respect to that “Solidarity” rule, it would be a matter of communicating—either individually or through professional groups—with the appropriate LC office and ALA committee. It's most effective to precisely specify what's wrong—and propose a remedy. (That goes for subject headings, too.) And it would be wise to publicize your communications in the library press. The more

publicity, the more leverage, and the greater chance of getting things changed.

Inside: While admittedly tougher, given staff and money cuts everywhere, it's a matter of critically examining—and, when necessary, altering—“outside copy,” as in the Robin MacNeil case. It's a matter of locally creating and assigning subject headings when you need them.¹⁹ And it's a matter of trying to perform as much catalog maintenance as possible, especially adding essential cross-references between subject and name forms.²⁰

To sum up: The Moonies haven't gone anywhere. It only seems that way. Which is lamentable. But also correctible.

NOTES

1. The “Good Book”: *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*. 2d ed. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1978). For “Basic Rule” 24.1, see p. 402.

2. Edited by Elliott Shore, Patricia J. Case, and Laura Daly.

3. Except that LC employs UNDERDEVELOPED AREAS and ATOMIC ENERGY instead of THIRD WORLD and NUCLEAR POWER. ALTERNATIVE PRESS PUBLICATIONS, of course, would be an altogether new heading.

4. *Public Sector/Private Sector Interaction in Providing Information Services: Report to the NCLIS* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1982).

5. The error has since been corrected. The current MARC record shows the title is classed in PN 4874 and 070.924 (biographies of journalists).

6. For more on how LC mis-cataloged this work, see my “‘Jewish Question’ in Subject Cataloging (Continued),” *Technicalities*, v. 3, no. 1 (Jan. 1983), p. 9, and v.3, no. 3 (March 1983), p. 6.

7. See AACR2 Rule 21.1C, p. 286.

8. See, for instance, Phyllis A. Richmond, “The AACR, Second Edition, What Next?,” in Maurice J. Freedman and S. Michael Malinconico, editors, *The Nature and Future of the Catalog* (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1979), pp. 192-3.

9. See Larry Legus, “Sure, They Save Space, But Who Knows What They Mean?” *HCL Cataloging Bulletin*, no. 40 (May/June 1979), pp. 24-9.

10. Jane Schlueter and Robert D. Little, “The Mystery of Ips and Mono; Or, Do Students Understand AV Card Catalog Terms?” *Wisconsin Library Bulletin*, Nov./Dec. 1973, pp. 381-3.

11. The work: *Lap quilting with Georgia Bonesteel* (Oxmoor House, 1982).

12. For more on title added entries, see my “Title Access: the Need, the Policy, and the Practice,” *Technicalities*, v. 1, no. 1 (Dec. 1980), pp. 6-7; Janet Swann Hill, “Letters to the editor,” *ibid.*, v. 1, no. 2 (Jan. 1981), p. 2; my response to Hill, *ibid.*, v. 1, no. 4 (1981), p. 2; and my “Missing Titles,” *ibid.*, v. 2, no. 3 (March 1982), p. 11.

13. On March 24, 1983, at the PLA National Conference in Baltimore, I made this “action-recommendation” to the Cataloging Needs of Public Libraries Committee: Replace the 2d paragraph of Rule 24.1 (“Determine the form of name of a corporate body from items issued by that body in its language. . .”) with: “Determine the form of name of a corporate body from items issued by or about that body in the language of the country where those items are being cataloged, provided that the translation is a true rendering of the original name.”

14. The principle can still be fully validated by means of this proposal, also made in Baltimore: “Compress Rules 22.2C1 (One Pseudonym), 22.2C2 (Predominant name), and

22.2C3 (No predominant name) into a single instruction: If the works of a person appear under one pseudonym, under several pseudonyms, or under the real name and one or more pseudonyms, enter each work under the name specifically associated with it, making references from and to the person's other names.

15. This continuing situation prompted another Baltimore suggestion: Institute stringent quality control at the Library of Congress, ensuring that LC catalogers and classifiers work from substantial, if not full, galleys rather than frequently misleading and inaccurate "front matter." See also my "Time to Blow the Whistle on CIP," *Technicalities*, v. 3, no. 4 (April 1983), p. 6.

16. For more on theory and methods, see my "Reference, Readers and Fiction: New Approaches," *Reference Librarian*, nos. 1/2 (Fall/Winter 1981), pp. 45-53, later updated in "Fiction Access," *Technicalities*, v. 2, no. 7 (July 1982), pp. 7, 16.

17. For further discussion, examples, and sourcelists, see my *Prejudices and Antipathies* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1971); "Access/Equity," in *Joy of Cataloging* (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1981), pp. 61-155; and "Where Have All the Women Gone?," *Technicalities*, v. 2, no. 12 (Dec. 1982), p. 15; v. 3, no. 1 (Jan. 1983), p. 10; v. 3, no. 2 (Feb. 1982), p. 11.

18. Randall W. Scott addressed the "classical music" issue in "Sour Notes," *Technicalities*, v. 2, no. 4 (April 1982), p. 9.

19. For aids and ideas, see "Do-It-Yourself Subject Cataloging: Sources and Tools," *Library Journal*, April 15, 1982, pp. 785-6, later updated in *Technicalities*, v. 2, no. 6 (June 1982), p. 8; v. 2, no. 8 (Sept. 1982), p. 7.

20. In some catalogs, for instance, material is subject traced under either NEAR EAST or MIDDLE EAST -- i.e., both terms appear in the catalog -- but there's no link, no connection, made between the two sequences.