SUMMING UP

The rapid growth in the number of special libraries and the absence of suitable classifications has provided the opportunity to test the newer theories of classification in the construction of special schemes and the experience gained from the newly created classifications has thrown much light on the problems of notation, helpful order and the arrangement of highly specific and complex documents. The stock of a special library often puts a very strong emphasis on 'non-book' material; the periodical article, the patent, the research report may be just as important as the bookstock. It is often more important, because the most valuable or most current information may be rarely found in a book. A specialized library works as an information centre and it has to not only to provide a particular book, but 'a vital piece of information'.

Defining a special classification Mr. Arthur Maltby states, "it is one which, rather than covering all areas of knowledge deliberately restricts itself to one subject field or a group of kindred subjects". 18

O. W. Pendleton 19 and B. C. Vickery have greatly stressed the necessity of having a special classification for a special

library. The reasons being the absence of a thorough and speedy revision policies in many schemes which cover all knowledge, the lack of helpful order, and the fact that the users of a special library tend to look at many other branches of knowledge, from the point of view of their own activity. The growing acceptance of the technique of facet analysis in Great Britain since 1951 resulted in a rapid increase in the number of special schemes that are now available and provided an opportunity to prove the worth of the new theories propounded by Ranganathan and his followers.

Several advantages emerged from the use of these faceted systems, although the increase in their adoption is necessarily shown in many libraries including special ones, for they are firmly committed to older classification. The faceted schemes are based on a careful analysis of the subject field concerned and the clear recognition of the vital characteristics of division. The total number of foci produced by the application of any single characteristic form a definite category (or facet) and the classificationist merely enumerates the foci within each facet in their most helpful order - this may be chronological order, geographical order, or some other sequence which offers a rational method for listing them -- allocates a symbol to each focus, and decides upon the best order for combining foci from the various facets. Preliminary assessment of the characteristics of the subject field in this
manner makes unwanted cross-classification virtually impossible. Also the careful control of the sequence in which the facets are to be combined to build up a class-mark for a compound subject results in a order of the optimum helpfulness. Also, it has been claimed that faceted classifications make it possible to specify many subjects that cannot be dealt with accurately in an enumerative classification.

Other advantages claimed by the entirely faceted special scheme are that it is easier to compile than the traditional type of classification, that it enables precise classification to be achieved; that it is less bulky as each recurring concept is listed once only in the appropriate category, also that many new themes which emerge, will, in fact, simply involve fresh combinations of concepts which the synthetic scheme has already recognised and listed. This means that the faceted scheme will not outdate as readily as the enumerative type; an important factor to be considered in libraries specialising in scientific and technical fields. Ranganathan summing up this point states "that the Analytico-Synthetic Classification is needed for the turbulent universe of knowledge embodied in microdocuments". Also some of the British Libraries have claimed that the reader in a special library understands and appreciates

the idea of synthesis in classification for more readily than the approach which tries to chart the whole subject field by listing every conceivable theme. Mrs. J. Aitchison who constructed the English Electric Company's faceted classification for Engineering, indicated that despite certain faults in the synthetic scheme, its superiority and utility for a special library was clearly recognisable, by both staff and readers.

In the English Electric Thesaurus facet terms are first presented in the form of a faceted classification which displays the generic relations between them and from which compound subjects can be synthesized. The thesaurus part of the scheme acts as an index to the classification schedules and displays further relationships between terms in the manner of a subject-heading list.

Hence, a special librarian has a greater choice with regard to a suitable classification and the newer principles have proved especially significant in documentation and information work. There are today, many methods and possibilities open to the modern special librarian or information officer. He may take the benefit of a modern theory and use a faceted classification on the lines described; and if a suitable one is not available, he may take over the task of making one.

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