Art Books and Periodicals: Dewey and LC

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When it works successfully, a classification system may be a topic of relatively little interest to most librarians except the catalogers and classifiers who wrestle with it. Of little interest, that is, compared with their concern for the accompanying mechanism for intellectual access, the system of subject headings. Perhaps a case can be made for the argument that, to the library user (including, perhaps, the reference librarian), a classification system works best when it does not call too much attention to the mechanics of its own working, like a good Swiss watch. The user is directed by card catalog or librarian to the section of the book stacks that is alleged to hold the subject that he believes he wants, and there, without worrying about what the call numbers mean, he finds the book he is after, then another on that subject, and another, and several volumes away another title that promises to be of interest. As he works his way along the shelves, he may, if the collection is a large one, move through a changing spectrum of viewpoints, arguments, and conclusions on his topic and related ones, with one type of literature following another in orderly succession.

That, at least, is how a classification system should work; otherwise, why classify? But the librarian who takes a stand on the value of this or that classification system must be reminded that it is misleading to expect any classification system to do full justice in analyzing complex books, or to get a library user to all the books on a desired topic. Still, with the awareness that classification alone, however good or close, is only one of the necessary means of access to library material, one sees that there is value in a well-planned, intelligently applied system.

The classification systems used in art libraries in the United States are generally enumerative, with a prescribed notation (usually numerals or letters) assigned to an outline of the subject or discipline being classified. The schedule outline may be based on an ideal outline

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of knowledge, as the Dewey decimal classification is, or it may be a practical scheme based on what is found in a particular collection of library materials, as is the Library of Congress classification system. While other approaches to classification systems have been pioneered by art librarians in the United States and abroad, e.g., the faceted classification for fine arts devised by Peter Broxis and special systems prepared by other English art librarians, most art libraries in the United States use the Dewey decimal classification system (DDC) or the Library of Congress system (LC), or systems modified from the Dewey or LC systems. For example, the systems used in the libraries of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Art Institute of Chicago are derived from the notation principles used in Dewey, while a number of sections of the LC classification schedules used in the Brooklyn Museum Library were modified there, reassigning LC-type notation to extensively revised outlines of classification.

Because Dewey and LC are so widely used in art libraries, this study will concentrate on an examination of these two systems. The question of whether to use Dewey or LC has undoubtedly been asked by the administrator of any large or specialized library that had adopted Dewey from the outset. Each succeeding edition of the Dewey schedules, with more changes and additions, might have caused the question to be raised again, when large numbers of titles would require reclassification in order to keep the system up to date. No simple answer to this can be given, but an examination of some of the highlights of the fine arts sections of Dewey and LC will enable us to compare the values of the two systems.

For general discussion of the history and principles of organization of the Dewey and LC classification systems, the reader is referred to studies on library classification by Wynar, LaMontagne, or Immroth, as well as the extensive introduction to the 18th edition of the Dewey schedule itself. The highlights of the fine arts sections only will be summarized here as a basis for our comments.

DEWEY DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION

Undoubtedly the best known system of library classification in the United States is Dewey. Its use in classifying art books predates the use of LC Class N by about thirty-four years, the Dewey system, including the 700s for fine arts, having been used since its publication in 1876. Since then Dewey schedules have gone through eighteen editions, as well as ten abridged editions, with many changes and modifications.
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being made along the way. The eighteenth edition of Dewey, which shall be used in our comparisons with LC, was published in 1971.

In his ideal outline of all knowledge, Melvil Dewey set aside the 700s for use in classifying literature of the fine arts. The topics were grouped as follows:

700 The arts (general)
710 Civic and landscape art
720 Architecture
730 Plastic arts. Sculpture
740 Drawing, decorative and minor arts
750 Painting and paintings
760 Graphic arts. Prints
770 Photography and photographs
780 Music
790 Recreational and performing arts

The number groupings for the various art media (e.g., 720, 730, 740) have been assigned such subgroupings as are appropriate to each medium. Used in conjunction with these outlines are several tables which are applied interchangeably in all classes of Dewey, and which give the Dewey classification its characteristic mnemonic, or memory, features. Most notable here are the tables for standard subdivisions and for geographical areas. The standard subdivisions are:

01 Philosophy and theory
02 Miscellany
03 Dictionaries, encyclopedias, concordances
04 General special
05 Serial publications
06 Organizations
07 Study and teaching
08 Collections
09 Historical and geographical treatment

As will be seen by an examination of the overall Dewey outline, the tables for geographical areas are a reduction from the 900s class, and follow the same order, e.g., 4, Europe; 7, North America.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CLASSIFICATION

The various classes of the entire Library of Congress classification system, A-Z, were prepared over a number of years by teams of
librarians, many of them subject specialists. Their deliberations on the value of existing classification systems and proposals for LC's own system had been underway for more than a decade, and some other classes were already published, when the first edition of the Fine Arts Class N was issued in 1910. Class N was prepared under the direction and supervision of Charles Martel, Chief Classifier at the Library of Congress. Revisions of Class N were published in 1917 and 1922. The third (1922) edition was reprinted a number of times, with additions and changes appended, until 1962. In 1970 the fourth edition was issued, extensively revised. It is this edition which will be discussed at some length.10

In considering other systems, the Library of Congress had paid special attention to Dewey's decimal system, Cutter's Expansive Classification, and Hartwig's Halle Schema. The Dewey system was an object of special study, and in 1898 Martel summarized in a memo to the Librarian of Congress the relative advantages and disadvantages of Dewey. Among those cited by Martel were:

A. *Its advantages*
1. It exists in printed form, elaborately worked out and must therefore save a great amount of time and money to any library adopting it.
2. Its extensive use and the later editions having profited by actual tests in . . . various libraries.
3. A library adopting it may derive benefits from cooperative work undertaken . . .
4. Advantages of a figure notation over letter. Figures being written quicker, with less danger of mistake than letter combinations, which are difficult to catch with the eye and to remember.
5. Relative location and possibility of indefinite intercalation of books and subdivisions.

[6.] Mnemonic features.

B. *Its disadvantages*
1. The system is bound up in and made to fit the notation, not the notation to fit the classification.
2. A rigidity of notation, which renders intercalation of new sections difficult and prevents a proportionate adjustment of the notation . . . Long and complicated marks cannot, therefore, be avoided. . . . Example of lack of proportion in the allotment of figures is philosophy with 1 figure, history being allotted the same. . . . The Library would with the Decimal

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Classification have over 36 times as many books in the 900ds as in the 100ds.

3. The divisions are fixed and any library adopting the classification stands committed to its defects of arrangement.

4. Divisions and classes will arise for which the Decimal has not provided. Its division into 10, and again 10, does not readily allow of intercalation of new divisions, except as subsections.

5. Mnemonic features are of no consequence to the reader. It does not pay in a large library to sacrifice simplicity of notation to mnemonic elements.¹¹

Thus, with the benefit of the examples set by Dewey, Cutter, and others, the Library of Congress developed its own classification system, incorporating into the notation alphabetic elements such as the Cutter system used. The fine arts section, N, provides for subdivision by the major media, somewhat in the way that Dewey does:

N  Fine arts (general)
NA  Architecture
NB  Sculpture
NC  Graphic arts in general. Drawing. Design
ND  Painting
NE  Engraving
NK  Art applied to industry. Decoration and ornament

The two chief differences between this outline and that of the Dewey schedule are the placement of decorative arts in relation to the other media enumerated, and the exclusion from LC fine arts classification of photography, music, and the "recreational" and performing arts.

No movable table of standard subdivisions is provided for class N, as is done in Dewey. Of the LC system overall, Wynar observes a general principal of arrangement within classes:

1. General form divisions
2. Theory, Philosophy
3. History
4. Treatises
5. Law, Regulations, State Regulations
6. Study and Teaching
7. Special subjects and subdivisions of subjects.¹²

From one subclass to the next in N, however, this principle is easily lost
Within a subclass, one subdivided section (e.g., NK 4700-4799, Costume) may serve as the pattern for subdivision of some later sections (e.g., "NK 5100-5199, Glass. Divided like NK 4700-4799"), or a dummy table may be introduced in the outline at the head of a long run of numbers (e.g., ahead of "Special countries") to show how numbers are to be distributed when geographical tables are applied. The only tables in Class N that stand independently of the subclasses, for use throughout the schedule, are the geographical tables. These, furthermore, have been rather fully developed. In addition to four tables of differing length, each covering all parts of the world, the third edition of Class N contains a table of "art cities" and a list of English counties.

A second look at the 1898 Martel list of disadvantages of the decimal classification will assist in comparison of the two systems, and provides the occasion to make another list:

1. Unlike Dewey, the LC notation is made to fit the classification, rather than vice versa.
2. Unlike Dewey, the LC notation is flexible, allowing insertion of new sections by the addition of new letters to the class mark (e.g., NX), new whole numbers not already assigned, or new decimal divisions where the numbering is close. The flexible notation allows the schedule outline to be as long or short as the nature of the subject warrants.
3. Unlike Dewey, with fixed divisions of 100s, 10s, units and decimals, LC may divide in several possible ways, using letters and numerals.
4. New classes can more readily be interpolated into LC, with its alphanumeric notation.
5. Having pointed out the advantages for Dewey of mnemonic features in his first list (item 6), Martel dismisses them in the case of large libraries. It is fair to say that for library users conditioned to the use of Dewey, they will sooner be at home working in small and medium-sized library collections classified by Dewey, for the mnemonic feature of Dewey is attractive in that case. For large or specialized library collections, the length of decimal subdivision needed to achieve close classification in a Dewey number will be so cumbersome as to defeat the purpose of the system: it will be impossible to "read" the meaning of the number anyway.

Wynar observes the problem of the long and correct but unwieldy Dewey number, citing also the difficulty of labeling the spine with such
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a number and the difficulty for the patron in recording and locating such numbers without error. He adds, however: “Nevertheless the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme has many advantages. Its schedule is compact, consisting in the 16th and in the . . . [17th] edition of one volume for the classes and one volume of index. It makes use of many mnemonic devices which can be applied from one class to another.”

What is the ideal sequence for subclasses within an art classification outline? Both Dewey and LC place architecture and sculpture immediately after the general numbers, apparently creating no problems. Both systems, however, separate the drawing subclass from the engraving, or print media subclass—an unfortunate split, since both media are essentially linear in character and would logically come one after the other. In the case of Dewey 740s, drawing is also separated from painting by numbers for the decorative and minor arts.

It seems natural to many librarians to rank the art forms in a hierarchy, separating the fine arts from the minor or decorative arts. If that approach is accepted, then LC’s relegation of decorative arts to NK, after all the other art forms, seems a reasonable solution. There one can find material on general design, antiques, interior design, furniture, ceramics, textiles, woodworking, costume, and so forth. If that bias is accepted, then Dewey’s disposition of the various decorative arts media is inconsistent and unreasonable. In the 730s, along with “pure” sculpture, there are class numbers for carving in all materials, numismatics, ceramics, and metalwork. The operating principle seems to be the inclusion of three dimensional materials, but other decorative arts are assigned to the later 740s, after drawing, including not only textiles but also antiques, glassware, furniture, and interior design. The logic of how or why the decorative arts have been split becomes difficult to follow.

However, that flaw in Dewey is balanced elsewhere by the distinct advantage of having photography placed with the arts, while Class N affords no place for this modern art form. It is also logical and satisfactory to have music and the other performing arts included in the 700s. Less reasonable is the presence of the “recreational” arts (i.e., sports) in a fine arts classification.

Neither Dewey nor Class N manages to bridge the gulf in their schedules between the subclasses for architecture and interior design. These closely related topics are widely enough separated in Dewey—720 and 740—but in LC they are hopelessly split, from NA to NK. There is probably no satisfactory outline which can pull together
related subclasses in one ideal sequence, for what may be gained in one set of reasonable juxtapositions will require compromises elsewhere.

Nothing has been said so far about indexes to the two classification schedules. The Dewey scheme has a single "relative index" to the entire schedule, 000-999, so that there is extensive cross-referencing in the fine arts, and from the fine arts class to related numbers elsewhere. This is most helpful. On the other hand, the LC Class N is indexed, but there is no comparable index to all LC classes. The list of LC subject headings serves something of that purpose by adding class numbers to many of the alphabetically listed subjects.

For further comparisons of the Dewey 700s and LC Class N, the reader is referred to Chapter II of Broxis's Organising the Arts, "Treatment of Art in General Classification Schemes: DC, UDC, LC, BC, Colon, Rider." The editions of Dewey and LC on which Broxis bases his comments have both been superseded, and some of the faults which he notes have subsequently been corrected. Nevertheless, his comments are interesting and challenging, and his evaluations of other systems are of interest.

REVISION OF LC CLASS N

The publication in 1970 of the fourth edition of Class N by LC brought that classification system more solidly into the twentieth century than it had been. As has been noted above, the third edition of 1922 was reprinted a number of times. The latest printing, 1962, included a number of additions and changes to the classification, printed as an appendix. These changes to the schedule had been made piecemeal, as sections or single captions were needed—an appropriate method, in view of the practical method of developing the LC schedules generally. Nevertheless, the growth of the schedules was not balanced, and had not adequately met the needs of the literature.

By the time a revision of the third edition of Class N was undertaken in earnest (in the mid- and late 1960s) the committee engaged at LC in drafting the revision resolved to conduct a detailed review of the entire N Class. Considerations of what might be most desirable, ideally, in terms of collocation of topics and sections, and extensive development of parts of the schedule, were weighed against some of the practical realities of having to live with a large collection of books, already classified. In some instances it was possible to transfer or close out numbers, expand other older numbers, or develop entirely new sections. For the first time a few of the sections of the class were
developed on an ideal basis, before there were specific titles at LC to be placed there, thereby clarifying the intent of the schedule and insuring a balanced development in the future. In other cases it was necessary to accept the reality of leaving as they were some sections which are less than wholly satisfactory.

In the comments that follow, differences between the third and fourth editions of Class N will be examined, and the characteristics of the fourth edition of Class N will be compared with corresponding parts of the Dewey classification, where applicable.

The distinctive changes introduced into the fourth edition of LC Class N fall into eight categories, to be discussed in following sections:15

1. Creation of a new subclass to cover the arts in general—literary and performing arts as well as the visual arts: NX.
2. Retitling of sections or subclasses to reflect currency of usage.
3. Development of new sections of the schedule where coverage did not exist, or was inadequate or obsolete.
4. Relocating sections of the outline in order to get more logical arrangement of material on related concepts, and to end the splitting of material on a topic into two or more locations. Series of new numbers were sometimes established and interpolated at logical places in the outline. In other cases, where material on a topic had unintentionally been split into two locations, the better location was determined and the series of numbers in the other location bracketed. Cross references were made from all bracketed numbers.
5. Addition or clarification of scope notes, cross references, and "confer" notes to existing captions in order to clarify for all catalogers the preferred usage of the schedule.
6. Standardization of captions, numbering, and cuttering for forms of literature which recur throughout the schedules, whenever possible, e.g., publications on museum collections, private collections, exhibitions, etc.
7. Creation of a full index by the editorial staff of the LC subject cataloging division to reinforce the cross references and indicate better the range of related topics.
8. Review and updating of the geographical tables.

Class NX. The Arts. There had long been a need in the LC schedules for a sequence of numbers dealing with the arts in general, i.e., not just the visual art forms covered in Class N. A section on the arts might logically have preceded classes M (music), N, and P (literature,
including theater) as well as some sections of G (e.g., costume in GT) and T (e.g., photography in TR). In this aspect, Dewey 700s are much better off than LC. No satisfactory way was found in LC to provide for such a “superclass” outside of the existing classes. Because works on the arts in general had traditionally been put by LC into N, and since it was seen to be impossible to provide adequate space for numbering at the beginning of N, it was decided to put the arts well away from existing N numbers. NX was chosen as the subclass notation, and the sections N through NK were recaptioned “visual arts.” NX is used only for works dealing with two or more of the fine arts media (i.e., visual arts, literature, and performing arts including music).

**Retitling.** Currency of usage was the guide for renaming some subclasses, and for recaptioning some sections. NC gave up its broad title, “Graphic Arts,” which could also include printmaking and typography, and was renamed “Drawing. Design. Illustration.” NE on the other hand had too narrow a designation in the older editions, “Engraving” being but one of the printmaking techniques, and so NE was renamed “Print Media,” to indicate its inclusion of etching, lithography, and serigraphy as well as engraving. NK’s caption, “Art Applied to Industry,” was given the broader title “Decorative Arts. Applied Arts,” while keeping the subtitle “Decoration and Ornament.” (It is hoped that in a future edition of N, “Interior Decoration” (NK 1700-3505) will be retitled “Interior Design” in keeping with later, preferred usage.)

**Development of New Sections.** This aspect of revision, along with relocating of sections of the outline, accounts for the most significant changes from the third edition of Class N. Evaluation of the adequacy or inadequacy of the third edition in the light of developments in the world of art since 1920 led to extensive development of a number of parts of the schedule, both for the historical developments themselves and for the extensive growth of the literature on art. In addition, some parts of the third edition of Class N had been misinterpreted and misapplied because of inadequate scope notes or otherwise incomplete instructions for the use of the schedule.

The revolutions in art since World War I—the spread of cubism and abstraction from Europe to America, the rise to international prominence of American art in the 1950s, and the introduction of new materials and technology in the production of artworks, for example—were simply not adequately reflected in the occasional
additions and changes that LC had made through the years to the third edition of Class N. Only extensive development of the schedules would be sufficient to reflect these many changes.

Likewise, the massive publication in the twentieth century of literature on the art of all periods has enlarged, and in some cases caused us to revise, our conception of the art of the past. Revision or development of the N schedule for the literature of pre-twentieth-century art was also necessary.

For example, in the fourth edition of Class N the schedules for the history of art from the Renaissance to the present (N 6350-6494) have been given special numbers to allow for the expansion of “special aspects or movements” under each century, by the addition of appropriate Cutter numbers. These alphabetical lists are especially long for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, enumerating such heavily published subjects as art nouveau, impressionism, neoclassicism, Victorian art and, in this century, abstract art, assemblage, cubism, expressionism, pop art and surrealism, to mention a few.

Where movements are specifically associated with one country, provision has been made for subdividing the geographical numbers (N 6501-7413) under the appropriate centuries within the country, with cross references made from any related terms or numbers in the general chronological section under history, as in the following example:

N 6465.14 Impressionism
  cf. N 6510.5.14, American impressionism
      N 6847.5.14, French impressionism [etc.]

In the third edition of Class N, impressionism, post impressionism, cubism, futurism, and realism were all placed under the section on painting techniques, styles, materials, and methods, rather than in the historical and/or geographical sections of the schedule. Dewey's eighteenth edition places these under the appropriate century for painting, in the number for general works of that century. Scope notes indicate their inclusion.

Increasing support of art programs by government since the 1920s had created the need for better classification coverage of "Art and the State" than was to be found in the third edition of Class N. The appropriate numbers from that edition, N 8700-8850, were expanded in the fourth edition not only to include coverage of the twentieth century but also to recognize such related problems as the effects of
war on art, from antiquity to the present, and to provide a better outline for them. The concepts "Art and State," "State and Art," and "War and/in Art" are not indexed in the Dewey eighteenth edition, although war as a subject in art would probably go under "Other special subjects [in art]." 704.949.

In the process of reviewing the schedules overall, LC addressed itself to a number of details of classification which simply needed expansion. In the third edition, for example, under "Special subjects of art—Religious" LC had made provision for only one number (N 8190) to accommodate all of the non-Christian religions. Sufficient places in the notation were available to expand that number, and it has been done. The Dewey eighteenth edition provides only one number under "Religious art [all media]" for non-Christian art, but provision is made for the application of a run of numbers based on the 200s class for division by religion. Unfortunately we are presented with an example of Dewey's long notation here: the number for Buddhism in art is 704.948943, as compared with LC's (new) number for that subject, N 8193. In both Dewey and LC, there is also provision for dividing specific media and specific subjects by religion.

In the third edition of Class N, "Commercial Art" was provided with only one number (NC 997), with all subdivision being accomplished through the use of cutting. In the fourth edition the notation was expanded to include NC 997-1003, and the cutting of NC 997 itself was better spelled out. Had more unassigned whole numbers been available in that part of the NC outline, it would have been desirable to use them instead of the long cuttered subdivision of NC 997. The Dewey section for "Illustration (Commercial art)" (741.6-741.69) fares less well, with fewer captions provided for the outline, and geographical subdivision of the topics achieved only by the establishment of long class numbers.

In a number of cases no number at all was available in the third edition of N for important media. For example, monotype, a special category of printmaking, had no number in the third edition of NE; therefore, NE 2242-2246, Monotype (Printmaking) was established. Kinetic art and mobiles have been provided for in the fourth edition under both N 6494.K5, Kinetic art, and NB 1272, Mobiles. Kinetic sculpture.

The eighteenth edition of Dewey has no entry for monotype as a printmaking process, listing in the index only entries relating to the type composing process by the same name. The Dewey index does not
cite kinetic art, but does provide a reference to 731.55, for “Mobiles and stabiles.”

In two instances new sections in the schedule were developed, which LC itself will not use. These are established as an alternate option for libraries which use the LC system. In the biography section of N, a new number and line have been introduced: N44, individual artists. This number is bracketed, that is, placed in parentheses to indicate that it will not be used by LC. However it was provided for those libraries which might prefer to classify all works on a single artist together in an alphabetical section rather than under special media, as LC does. Books so classified would be double-cuttered for artist and author, and would collectively make up a section directly analogous to the 920s in Dewey.

The second instance of LC's publishing new numbers which it will not use is found in NK 1151-1158, Industrial design, “especially, 20th century applications of art to industry.” This section of the decorative arts was recommended as being the logical successor to the existing numbers for arts and crafts movement, NK 1135-1149, and is provided as a service to those libraries which would place industrial design in the Ns. LC’s footnote indicates that LC classes this material in TS 171ff, Technology. Dewey has provided one number under “Decorative and minor arts” for industrial design: 745.2.

Not all such proposals to develop hypothetical numbers for other libraries' use could be accepted by LC, nor could recommendations to move into N related art material that LC now classifies elsewhere. For instance, a draft schedule for photography as an art form was prepared as subclass NH by some members of the committee revising the N Class, but was rejected for inclusion in the new edition because of a previous firm policy decision by LC that all photography material be classified together in TR. It is interesting that LC had earlier considered and rejected a section for photography in NF. In his comments on various LC classes, W.C.B. Sayers is quoted by Tauber as having noted that “the tentative section NF, Photography (as art), has been cancelled, all books on Photography finding place in TR.” In an unofficial draft form, “Photography as an art form,” subclass NH, has been published by the Art Libraries Society of North America, and is available from that organization.

Another art subject which LC classifies outside of N is the art of the American Indian, which is placed in classes E and F. While proposals have been made to provide numbers in N, citing the desirability of relating Indian art to the art of other cultures, LC has held to its firm policy of keeping together all material on American Indians. In this
case as in that of photography, larger institutional policy considerations took precedence over the (narrower) viewpoint of the subject specialist. In the Dewey system, on the other hand, the classifier of works on American Indian arts can, by use of the geographical area tables, classify Indian art in the 700s with the art of other cultures.

Relocation of Sections of the Outline. Quite as important as developing and expanding sections of Class N has been the matter in several instances of relocating sections of subclasses already in the third edition in order to get a more logical arrangement of material on related concepts, or to end the splitting of material on a topic into two or more locations. For example, in the third edition, "Painting: Technique, Styles. Materials and methods" (ND 1259-1286) was separated from "Materials of painting" (ND 1500-1650) by the long sequence of numbers for "Special subjects of painting." The better sequence of numbers for books on the materials of painting seemed to be ND 1500-1650, and so LC bracketed ND 1259-1286. The captions for "Painting: Technique. Styles" were moved to newly established numbers, ND 1470-1495. Where "styles" belong with a specific period or nationality, scope notes indicate that they should not be placed here. For comparison, note that Dewey has provided a logical series of subdivisions under 751, Processes and forms: .2, Materials; .3, Apparatus and equipment; .4, Technique [etc.].

In other cases, where material on a topic had unintentionally been split into two locations, the better location was determined and the series of numbers in the less desirable location bracketed. For instance, in practice LC catalogers had not differentiated clearly through the years between N 5210-5297, private collections, which provided a geographical breakdown for books and catalogs on individual private collections, and the similar section in N 8380-8397, art collectors, patrons, etc. This latter section also provided a geographical breakdown. The catalogs of private collections had been classified by LC in both places with no apparent pattern to the choice of one location over the other. Between these sections in N were classified (and shelved) all the books on the general history of art, with subdivisions by periods and by country, and all general works dealing with special subjects in art! While one could make a case for the philosophical difference between catalogs of private collections on the one hand (N 5210-5297) and treatises on the phenomenon of art collecting by individuals on the other (N 8380-8397), it was felt that the two aspects of collecting would be better combined. LC chose the run of numbers that was more logically placed in the overall sequence of topics, namely

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N 5210-5297, near the numbers for museums and exhibitions, and closed out the numbers in the N 8000s on collecting.

Dewey has not provided separate numbers for catalogs and histories of private collections. They are to be classified under 708, "Galleries, Museums, Private collections. . . ." However there is a standard subdivision, -075, "Collecting and collections of objects" which can be added to the class numbers for special media.

A characteristic form of art publication is the book or album of reproductions of works of art illustrating the work of one artist, a special period or nationality (e.g., nineteenth-century French Impressionism) or a special type of subject (e.g., still-life painting). The proliferation of books and catalogs of this nature had caused the drafters of early editions of Class N to provide special runs of numbers for them, apart from the histories and other works largely of a textual nature. In the third edition of Class N these were found under most of the fine art media:

NA 2600-2635 Architecture: Atlases, collections of plans, architectural sketchbooks
NC 1005-1260 Books of reproductions of drawings
ND 1160-1240 Paintings: Books of reproductions
ND 1242-1257 Art treasures of special countries
ND 2160 Reproductions of watercolors
NE 900-950 Collections of prints in book form (including reproductions)
NE 1235-1295 Collections of woodcuts and wood engravings in book form
NE 2150-2210 Etching and aquatint: Collections in book form
NE 2450 Lithography: Collections in book form

In most cases the schedules for collections of reproductions recapitulated the historical breakdown (by period and country) but were separated from the "history" or "special subjects" section for the same medium by the numbers for general treatises, works on study and teaching, or other topics. As Broxis observes: "The separation of books on the history of painting and those containing reproductions is most unhelpful and fails to conform with literary warrant, since many books on the history of the subject contain reproductions; likewise books of reproductions frequently contain an important historical section." It was decided by LC that the value of juxtaposition on the shelves of the two heretofore separated types of publication justified combining
them, and the "Books of reproductions" numbers were bracketed, with cross references being given to the history numbers.

Dewey, in comparable situations, has classified books of reproductions in the history numbers. The scope notes following 709, "Historical and geographical treatment of fine and decorative arts" and the comparable number for painting, 759, make this clear: "Development, description, critical appraisal, collections of works."

One additional group of relocated numbers serves to illustrate the small problems which can arise in the piecemeal growth of a schedule, and the changes made to bring out a more logical arrangement. In the third edition of NE the classification outline for types of print media had been set up generally according to the three basic methods of printmaking—relief, as in woodcut and wood engraving; intaglio, as in metal engraving, etching, and drypoint; and planographic, as in lithography. However, aquatint, which is actually an etching technique, was placed under engraving.

In subsequent additions to the schedule, linoleum cut was correctly added to the relief print group (NE 1330), but the numbers for serigraphy, or silk screen printing, which is a stencil technique, were incorrectly inserted among those for engraving. As this confused what should have been a clear overall order of print media groupings, the aquatint numbers (NE 1820-1840) were moved to a special place in the section on etching (NE 2230). Serigraphy was moved from NE 1843-1846 to numbers following the entire relief and intaglio technique sections, and preceding lithography. New numbers (NE 2242-2246) for monotype, another planographic process, were established between serigraphy and lithography.

Dewey's collocation of numbers for the print processes is generally satisfactory, and the scope notes and brief descriptions are most helpful; for example:

761 Relief processes (Block printing); Printing from raised surfaces
763 Lithographic (Planographic) processes; Printing from flat surfaces
764 Chromolithography and serigraphy
765-767 Intaglio processes; Printing from incised surfaces

Few libraries using the LC schedules would be able to reclassify long runs of numbers bracketed by LC. It is therefore of practical interest that LC does not ordinarily re-use numbers they have bracketed, eliminating the likelihood of conflict for other libraries which keep
discontinued numbers. Dewey, on the other hand, does re-use vacated or discontinued numbers.

*Addition or Clarification of Scope Notes, etc.* Scope notes and definitions of terms in a classification schedule are the guideposts that insure consistent application of a scheme, and are an important part of the system. In general, earlier editions of the Dewey schedule far outshone the third edition of Class N in this respect, and the scope notes and definitions in the eighteenth edition of Dewey are most helpful, as is the typography.

The fourth edition of Class N goes a long way in correcting this deficiency, with many scope notes and "cf." (confer) notes added throughout. As for extended definitions, N 5311, "Primitive art," provides a useful, if labored, example: "Used here to denote art produced outside the traditions of the art of Europe, the Mediterranean area, and Asia. That is, the art of the Negro peoples of sub-Saharan Africa; of the inhabitants of the islands of the Pacific Ocean, Australia, and some areas off the coast of Southeast Asia. Does not include 'primitive' or 'naive' artists who, while seemingly untutored, work in the traditions of European folk art or easel painting." Following that definition are confer notes to seven related classes.

Likewise the scope notes for the class number for catalogs of art reproductions (N 4035) and at the heading of NE 1850-1879 remind the classifier of what is and is not to be considered a "color print." Other examples in which time and effort were spent in detailing the scope of subclasses are to be found above KE 400, "History of printmaking," and in NK, above NK 3600, "Other arts and art industries." Note the importance here in saying what may *not* go into a class.

*Standardization of Captions, Numbering, etc.* The committee reviewing the N revision made innumerable changes throughout the schedule to bring into greater editorial conformity the subdivision of corresponding types of topics at different places in the schedule, and to make clear the cutting procedures. Often the cutting had been prescribed in LC's official copies of the schedule, but never made clear in the published schedule. Specific instructions have been given in the fourth edition whenever possible. In order to clarify the use of the geographical tables, the base number to which tables are applied are specified in each case (e.g., the footnote to N 7901-1996, "Christian art: Special countries," which is subdivided by table I: "For Table I, see pp. 224-229. Add country number in table to 7900.").
It has been pointed out already that the various classes of the LC schedule were prepared by specialists working as a team under the general guidance of the chief classifier. In the third edition of the N Class alone, the fine hand of several classifiers is apparent in slight shifts of sub-arrangement from one medium to the next. In many cases this simply reflects the inherent differences between the media being outlined. The detailed outline of building types in NA, for example, has no correspondingly long counterpart elsewhere.

This lack of uniformity in arranging the larger components of a subclass, from one to the next in Class N, contrasts with the overall uniformity of division to be found in the Dewey schedules, and is one of the strengths of the LC schedule. Within certain limits, each class or subclass of LC has dictated the outline for its classification from the nature of that subject or material itself, rather than being fitted into the more limited numerical range of notation which is characteristic of Dewey.

*Enlarged Index to Class N.* The fourth edition of Class N is more fully indexed than the previous one, and introduces a limited number of references to related subject material in other classes of the LC schedules. See, for example, the index entries to “Human figure in art”: in the third edition there are five references, while in the fourth edition fourteen references are cited. For “Coins” the classifier is referred to Class CJ, and from “Indian (American) art” he is referred to the appropriate numbers in classes E and F. This greater depth of indexing, combined with the greater number of “confer” notes throughout N, renders the contents of the schedules much more accessible.

As we have noted above, in indexing the Dewey system affords a better grasp of the classification possibilities for art-related material than LC does, by virtue of Dewey’s single relative index to the entire classification system. However, a set of computer-generated Combined Indexes to the Library of Congress Classification Schedules has been announced by a commercial publisher, U.S. Historical Documents Institute, Inc., Washington, D.C. This fifteen-volume work, providing separate indexes by person, place and subject, may provide just the sort of access across various disciplines which has been needed.

*Geographical Tables.* Since 1922 LC had made frequent changes and revisions in its geographical tables in Class N, but the preparation of a new edition offered the opportunity to consolidate these changes and review the tables for further corrections of nomenclature, political
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jurisdiction, etc. In a few instances additional detail was added to the tables for non-Western countries. The period subdivisions under Far Eastern countries were reviewed for their suitability, for instance. The tables for China, Japan, and Korea are now subdivided by dynasties or related historical periods, rather than “Before 1800,” “19th cent.,” and “20th cent.,” as appeared in the third edition tables.

In conclusion we might restate an earlier question: Dewey or LC—which shall we use? Some of the features of both systems have been reviewed. The detail into which we have gone in discussing the new edition of LC Class N reveals a certain bias in favor of LC on the part of the writer, who was actively involved in the preparation of the revision of N. For close classification in a medium-sized or large art library, the new edition of Class N is far more satisfactory. Dewey remains a popular system in American libraries, and may be satisfactory in smaller art library collections where close classification is not considered an important factor.

Neither system may be as successful as faceted classification systems in analyzing complex works. However, as Wolfgang Freitag has observed: “A detailed enumerative system, in spite of all its errors and shortcomings, will meet the practical requirements of libraries far better than the few principles and guidelines provided in a system of faceted classification.”

Confronted with the larger field of classification systems, we may find that the similarities of Dewey and LC are more pronounced than their differences. They have in common an outline of knowledge which, while far from perfect, arranges the books on the shelves in such a way as to encourage browsing. That should be recognized by librarian and library users alike as one of the basic purposes of classification.

References

WILLIAM B. WALKER


8. Immroth, op. cit.


11. LaMontagne, op. cit., pp. 223-25.

12. Wynar, op. cit., p. 211.

13. Ibid., p. 185.


18. Broxis, op. cit., p. 34.