



Ranganathan, Shiyali Ramamrita.
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PART M
PLANES OF WORK

CHAPTER MA

THREE PLANES OF WORK

1 Idea Plane

The word 'Man' stems from the Sanskrit root 'man' (Short a) which means "to think". The organ of thinking is called 'Manas' which means "Mind". According to the *Upanishads*, the essence of man is mind. Mind is the place of origin of ideas. The creator of ideas needs self-communication within the mind in order to create more ideas. The destiny of any idea created by one mind is the minds of the others. The others too need the ideas to be communicated to them. Language is the medium for communication of ideas. "Idea first or Language first?" is an everlasting question. There is a Vedic episode, bearing on "Ideas and words run together in pursuit of the Absolute". Word came back first. "Where is the Idea?", it was asked, "I could not keep up. Therefore, I have returned. But the idea was going further ahead." At this moment, the idea comes back with a similar story, "I too could not keep up. The difficulty became unbearable after I got separated from the words". But the word said, "And yet you did go ahead of me. Unless I keep close to you, I become inert." We may, perhaps, apply the Wall-Picture Principle (See Chap RM) and say, "Idea first, word next".

2 Verbal Plane

Along with the capacity to create ideas, came also the capacity to develop an articulate language as medium for communication. Language differentiates man from all the other creatures. Written language made communication even more widespread than mere spoken language. But, language is more lethargic than idea. Homonyms and Synonyms, therefore, grow like weeds. Undertones and overtones grow in abundance.

3 Notational Plane

Therefore, attempts are continually in progress to make language precise—at least among those creating ideas in a specific discipline. It is so at least for newly created ideas. Further, words are often replaced by symbols pregnant with precise meaning. When arrangement is found necessary, ordinal numbers are used as helpful symbols. A distinctive contribution of the discipline of classification, as found and as being cultivated in the field of Library Science, is the Notational Plane. Uniqueness of the idea represented by an ordinal number and the total absence of homonyms and synonyms

are the distinctive features of the notational plane, when compared with the verbal plane.

4 Mental Separability

The work in the three planes is mentally separable. Such a separation facilitates the understanding and exploitation of each plane. No doubt, in the case of a good thinker, the work in the three planes gets unconsciously separated out up to a certain stage. But it is often a very early stage. After this stage, it is not separated out. It is now being increasingly realised that such involuntary separation is inadequate. For, the idea plane and notational plane soon begin to inhibit each other. Further, the verbal plane does not at all get developed. During the first two decades of my work as a classificationist, as a classifier, and as a teacher of classification, I did not think objectively of this problem of separating the work in three planes.

5 Actual Separation

It was only in 1944 that I got a faint glimpse of the desirability and possibility of separating the work in the three planes [137]. I got a better grasp of it in 1952 [132]. Since then, I am endeavouring to separate the work in the three planes at almost every turn. The political weapon of "Divide and Rule" has turned out to be effective in this area also. We are now in a position to solve independently, in the first instance, the problems arising in each of the three planes. This makes for considerable progress. At suitable stages, it is profitable to correlate the work in the idea plane and that in the notational plane. This gives full freedom for the idea plane to spread its wings, as it were, as much as necessary and possible. It also creates an incentive to cultivate the notational plane so as to implement all the findings of the idea plane.

CHAPTER MB

WORK IN THE VERBAL PLANE

I Natural Language

11 HANDICAP OF SLUGGISHNESS

A natural language has necessarily to grow at the pace of the common man, if not of the very last man. But the growth of ideas is in the minds of persons near the top of the intellectual scale. Therefore, when compared with the growth of ideas, the growth of a natural language is sluggish.

12 WEED OF HOMONYMS

As a result of this sluggishness, one and the same word is often used to denote two or more ideas. Homonyms get created in this way. They often grow like weeds. The same word is also used in different senses in different disciplines. This retards the rate of thinking. It also causes aberration in communication (*See also* Sec GA3).

13 KICK-BACK OF SYNONYMS

Reciprocally, there are also synonyms getting created. In the practice of masters of language—such as poets—there is seldom any synonym. What are apparently synonyms are not really so. There is a significant shade of difference. The apt word is used in each context by a master of language, answering exactly the shade of difference in ideas arising in the context. It would be a good exercise to investigate the precision and the significance with which a first rate poet uses the so-called synonyms. For example, in the epic *Ramayana* by Valmiki, 'Rama' is the name of the hero. He is also referred to as 'Dasarathi' --meaning "son of Dasaratha". There is an interesting situation in which a demon does something heinous. Rama sets a missile against him. He runs and runs and runs to escape it. Nobody would give him refuge. His own father, Indra, declines to protect him. In despair, therefore, he comes back to Rama and surrenders himself, addressing him as "Dasarathi" and not as "Rama". The poet has used this term very significantly. For, Dasaratha, gave his very life for his son. Rama is the son of such a Dasaratha, unlike the demon himself who is the son of a father closing his door against his own son. The demon, therefore, appeals to the mercy running in the blood of Dasaratha's son and totally absent in his own father Indra. In the hands of an ordinary user, synonyms cause a good deal of distraction in communication. The kick-back of synonyms is sometimes even more subtle and

more harmful than even the presence of homonyms (*See Also* Sec GA4).

14 GROWTH IN THE LIPS OF THE COMMON MAN

A natural language is 'natural' in the sense that it grows freely in the lips of the common man, totally free from any control whatever. Therefore, it is hardly possible to keep a natural language clear of synonyms and homonyms. In fact, there is a great significance in the statement that "the Cockney of today will be the King's English of tomorrow".

15 MULTIPLICITY OF NATURAL LANGUAGES

Then there is the multiplicity of natural languages. This may altogether arrest communication. The difficulty of precise translation is well known.

2 Object Language

For the reasons given in the preceding sections, the specialists in each discipline are endeavouring to have their own distinctive jargon. A jargon is usually based on a natural language. Its difference from its parent natural language is not in either Phonology, or Morphology, or Syntax; but it is only in Semasiology. Each discipline builds up its own technical terminology. Of late, there is a tendency to agree upon an international technical terminology, in order to facilitate scientific communication breaking through linguistic barriers with minimum obstacle. (*See also* Sec GA6). A jargon built by a discipline may be called its "Object Language".

3 Meta Language

The Object Language has to be built with the aid of a natural language. Viewed from this angle, the natural language forms the first 'Meta Language'. In many cases this single Meta Language may prove sufficient. But occasionally, one or two intermediate Meta Languages may prove helpful.

4 International Effort

The first international effort to have an international technical terminology was made in the field of Biological Sciences. After World War I, the International Standards Association was formed as a Specialised Auxiliary of the League of Nations. It soon developed interest in a standard terminology for each discipline. Its work could not lead to fruition on account of World War II. In 1946, the International Standards Organisation (ISO) replaced it. One of its Technical Committees, ISO/TC37, is charged with the promotion of international standard terms for the diverse discip-

lines. Since then, vigorous work is going on. Naturally the establishment of an international standard terminology for a discipline falls largely within the jurisdiction of the specialists in that discipline (*See also* Sec GA5). However, the library profession has a deep interest in the quick promotion of such international standard terminologies. For, the library profession needs them for use in the part of the classification schedule, belonging to the Verbal Plane. It also wants it in the construction of Subject Headings in catalogues. It wants it also in doing reference service to readers. If there is an accepted standard terminology, the symbiosis between classification and cataloguing, brought about by my Chain Procedure [98], will get well established. It will prevent dissipation of library man-hours in hunting for correct terms. The effect of the absence of standard terminology is seen markedly in the loose verbiage found in the schedules of many schemes for classification such as BC, UDC, and RIC. Due to the same cause DC changes the names of classes from edition to edition. (*See* Sec ET42 and LG32 for examples).

5 Object Language for the Discipline of Classification

The library profession has the total responsibility to establish its own Object Language—technical terminology—for Library Science in general and for the discipline of Classification in particular. *The technical terminology developed in this very book constitutes the Object Language designed for the discipline of classification.* The natural language used as Meta Language is English. At its meeting held in 1955 in Brussels, the International Federation for Documentation emphasised the need for each school of thought in classification bringing out its own technical glossary—that is, the words in its own Object Language [155]. The intention of the FID was to use these glossaries as the basis for a Glossary of International Terminology for Classification. India has been one of the first countries to carry out this recommendation of the FID Conference. The Documentation Committee of the Indian Standards Institution published its Standard Glossary in the year 1959 [63]. Its second edition is now in preparation in the light of the progress made during the last few years.



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CHAPTER MC

WORK IN THE NOTATIONAL PLANE

1 **Classificatory Language**

The terms 'Classificatory Language' and 'Ordinal Language' should be treated as Wholes. The word 'Language' occurring in these terms does not connote every thing it does in the term 'Natural Language'. Classificatory Language does not have the wide use as a Natural Language has. Its field of use is restricted only to arrangement of subjects, isolates, and commodities.

2 **Controlled Language**

A Classificatory Language is a controlled language. It is controlled by the Classificationists. It is, therefore, possible to secure that it does not develop homonyms or synonyms.

3 **Classificatory Language as Object Language**

In the development of a scheme for classification, the Classificatory Language is the Object Language. Its growth will have to be continuous. For, the Universe of Subjects for whose classification it is designed is ever growing. But growth of Classificatory Language will not be capricious. It does not grow in the lips of the common man as the Natural Language does. Its growth is entirely in the hands of the Classificationists and the Classifiers that have gained experience to be deemed to be near-Classificationists. They frame definite rules for its growth subject to the Normative Principles special to the discipline of classification as well as the general ones (See Parts D, E, F, G, J, K, and L).

4 **Past View**

Till recently, a system of Class Numbers was not taken to form an Ordinal Language or a Classificatory Language. Even now many Schemes for Classification build up their notational systems in a casual way without seeking to make them form Classificatory Languages. But there was an unexpressed trace of language-sense in the development of the notational system of DC. RIC, the latest scheme in the field, withdraws itself from any attempt to make the notational system a Classificatory Language with capacity for further development. For this purpose, it distinguishes between "Library Classification" and "Bibliographical Classification". And it will leave to "Bibliographical Classification" to take the responsibility for a systematic, continuous development of a Classificatory Language.

5 Compatibility of "Library Classification" and "Bibliographical Classification"

There is nothing incompatible, however, between the notational system of "Bibliographical Classification". Their difference is only in the difference in the stage of development, brought into use, something like the difference between the language used in children's books and that used in advanced books for specialists. The same Natural Language is used in both. It belongs to an early simple stage in the former and to an advanced complex stage in the latter; that is all the difference. It is not necessary, nor is it practicable or helpful, to have two different languages for these two extreme standards of books nor for the various intermediate standards. So also it is not necessary, nor is it helpful, to have two different Classificatory Languages—one for "Library Classification" and another for "Bibliographical Classification". One and the same Classificatory Language can serve both. The Classificatory Language used by DC is in quite an early stage. The same Classificatory Language appears in a more advanced state in UDC fitted for "Bibliographical Classification". It is said, "It is hard to see whether it (Bibliographical Classification) has any practical value for the librarian of a *General* library, who is seeking nothing whatever except a way to arrange his books on a shelf, in such an order as will enable him to find them there and later return them there just as quickly and inexpensively as possible." [157]. This anti-thesis implies the overlooking of the fact that the Class Numbers, which come into operation in a general library, are as simple as is contemplated in the above quotation, though they are drawn from very stock of Class Numbers which serve also Bibliographical Classification. The statement stems from the traditional faith that the proper tool to serve a specialist is the Subject Catalogue—by which is meant an alphabetical or dictionary subject catalogue. This faith prevents the acceptance of a classified catalogue as a better tool for this purpose than a dictionary catalogue.

6 Too Early for Judgement

It is only in recent years that the notational system for a scheme for classification is being developed as an Ordinal Language. Any new development does not easily get popular acceptance. Old habits die hard. It is particularly so in mental habit. The first withdrawal on the part of the conservative resisters is saying in effect, "We have no objection to your doing anything like that for "Bibliographical Classification". But our dear old "Library Classification" will have nothing to do with it." This itself is a gain in favour of the new development in the notational plane (*See also* Sec WA81). What should be next seen by them is that a Classi-

ficatory Language which gives co-extensive Class Numbers, though long, to subjects of minute extension and deep intension, can give Class Numbers as short as and perhaps even shorter than, the old "Library Classification" has been doing. It is the very same tree that throws out branches for both the purposes. The versatility of a properly developed do-all Classificatory Language is comparable to the versatility of the trunk of an elephant which has at once the amazing strength to uproot a tree with ease and also the nimble simplicity to pick out a grain with equal ease (*See also* Chap SM to SS and Sec XG5).

7 Work Should Go On

Work in the notational plane should go on. It should go on if library service is to become efficient. The service should be efficient to the generalist as well as to the specialist reader. Work in the notational plane should go on until we succeed in finding a single scheme for classification, which will serve with equal efficiency all the needs of book arrangement in a generalist library and all the needs of arrangement of entries in documentation lists for specialists in various subjects. My faith is that we are already at the threshold of such a single scheme for classification. Work in the Idea Plane and work in the Notational Plane have been separated out only recently. It is only during the last few years that persistent work is being done to fit the Notational Plane to do all that the Idea Plane would demand in order to make the arrangement of documents or their entries, as the case may be, as helpful to the readers as the Laws of Library Science require. And so let us march on in spite of old detractors and of the new hardware for information retrieval. In reality, however, the advent of hardware should make us work in the Notational Plane with even greater vigour (*See* Chap XA).

CHAPTER MD

WORK IN THE IDEA PLANE

1 Invisible Plane

Let us look at a schedule of classes or of isolates. We see in it numbers and words only. The Notational and the Verbal planes alone are manifest; the Idea Plane is not. The ideas lie hidden behind the numbers representing them and the words denoting them. These numbers and words are of interest to us only because of the ideas hidden behind them. The Idea Plane is the plane paramount; and yet, it does not manifest itself directly. It is as invisible as God. It is also as tolerant as God. For, it would not drag the other planes beyond their capacity. It would rather wait in patience till they become fit.

2 Occultation by Verbal Plane

It is not uncommon to see the Idea Plane occulted by the Verbal Plane. This plane is ebullient. The fascination of rolling within the Verbal Plane is often inexorable. A person is tempted to re-narrate one and the same idea in several alternative ways; and yet delude himself that he has been all along creating some new idea.

21 WORLD OF SCIENTISTS

This illusion is a source of great dissipation of mental energy among those pursuing any science—pure or applied, natural or social. The scientists are, therefore, deliberately trying to escape this fascination of a role in the Verbal Plane and to avoid the occultation of the Idea Plane. Classificationists too should develop the capacity to avoid such an occultation. For, their mission in life is to conserve the research potential of humanity. They should, therefore, practise perfect economy in the use of words and indeed make the idea move continuously forward without any impediment from words.

22 WORLD OF NON-SCIENTISTS

Even among the non-scientists—even in our day to day work—the world will be all the better if strict accuracy regulates our work in the Verbal Plane and if everyone acquires the power and the habit of expressing his ideas directly and accurately. Faulty work in Verbal Plane can disguise false logic under spacious phraseology. How often we see a damagogue—unfortunately even in the field of science—gaining the easy assent and applause from the unthinking multitude. The showy garb of antithetical phrases or an imposing

pomp of paradox is used to make truism appear as newly discovered wisdom. In some cases of this kind, probably the person that rolls out words is himself a victim of the Verbal Plane and is perfectly innocent and sincere. But in the political world, deliberate use may be made of the occultation of the Idea Plane by the Verbal Plane. An insincere and dishonest demagogue may wilfully suppress truth and suggest falsehood with the aid of the ebulliousness of the Verbal Plane.

23 DISCIPLINE IN NOTATIONAL PLANE

Those who pursue science should discipline themselves not to fall a victim to the temptations of the Verbal Plane. They should strictly confine themselves to the technical glossary of their discipline. If it does not already exist, they should endeavour to establish one. This will minimise the occultation of the Idea Plane by the Verbal Plane. This rule of conduct is particularly important to the library profession. It has to be familiar not only with its own technical glossary, but with that of every other discipline. During reference service, the reference librarian will find even this inadequate. He will have to rescue the idea sought by the reader from getting hidden in the shoals of the Verbal Plane. For this purpose, he should use Facet Analysis in eliciting the wants of the reader and in that process he may have to invoke for himself the aid of the Notational Plane, in order to remove the residue left in the occultation of the Idea Plane by the Verbal Plane.

3 Inhibition by the Notational Plane

31 EARLY BEGINNING

In the discipline of Classification, the development of the Idea Plane has been for long inhibited by limitations in the capacity of the Notational Plane. This inhibition began very early and it still continues. The inhibition got pronounced when DC chose to restrict its base to the Indo-Arabic numerals. It started it off with the words, "Decimal simplicity has so commended itself that many think of it as the only form. . . It is wiser for anyone whose time is of value, to use it in something more practically useful to himself and his library than in trying to construct a 'satisfactory' scheme of classification". [40] And further assurance had been given in the statement "Utility has not been sacrificed in order to force subjects on the 'Decimal Procrustean Bed'." [43] This advice seems to have gone a long way in the inhibition by the Notational Plane. In one of his letters of 1932, Melvil Dewey advised me not to waste time in designing a new scheme for classification and in particular any development of a new Notational System. In those

years, some of my foreign colleagues in the profession even used to suggest obliquely that I was converting classification into an affair of notation!

32 UNCONSCIOUS REACTION TO INHIBITION

When I changed over from Mathematics to Library Science in 1924, after a few months of study of the literature on classification in the library of the University College, London, I felt something unsatisfactory in the notational system of DC. I could not at that time analyse the problem. What I instinctively did was to introduce what is now called Faceted Notation in order to prevent the inhibition of the work in the Idea Plane by the limitations of the Notational Plane (See Chap JG). I found evidence of the Idea Plane abandoning its need to combine the existing numbers in the same Main Class in order to individualise a subject which itself was the result of combining the subjects represented by the respective numbers. For example, we had

371.335 Visual instruction and
373 Secondary education.

But, a number could not be provided to represent "Visual Instruction in Secondary Schools". The Idea Plane, therefore, gave up pressing for a number for this subject. This really amounts to saying that the Idea Plane was inhibited by the Notational Plane.

33 CONTINUING PROBLEM

Though CC was ostensibly designed to save the Idea Plane from such an inhibition by the Notational Plane, during the last 40 years of development of CC itself, the Idea Plane got inhibited by the Notational Plane in several ways. For, the capacity of the Idea Plane to analyse and atomise ideas is unlimited. The moment the Notational Plane shows incapacity to implement the findings of the Idea Plane, the latter abstains from further analysis. But, after a few years, this inhibition of the Idea Plane creates a chaos-in-little at the spot in the shelf corresponding to the stage of inhibition of the Idea Plane. Then, the Idea Plane had to be goaded to assert itself and the Notational Plane too had to be cultivated so as to carry out the findings of the Idea Plane. This is happening continuously.

4 Inherent Inertia

41 MIGHT OF INERTIA

The might of Inertia is well known. But it appears to be greatest in the Idea Plane. That is why it easily accepts the occultation by the Verbal Plane and the inhibition by the Notational Plane.

42 RIVER-BED ANALOGY

When we dig a small pit in a sandy river bed, we get good fresh water. It comes from the underground. But, it refuses to come out unless the old water is taken out. So also, unless the Notational Plane implements the findings of the Idea Plane, the Idea Plane falls a prey to its own inertia. It ceases to function up. Classification is arrested. This arrested state is tolerated until chaos—the opposite of classification—abounds in several places on the shelves of the library or among the entries in the classified part of a library catalogue or of a documentation list.

5 Remedy

The remedy for this danger due to inertia is to separate the work in each of the three planes—particularly in the Idea Plane and in the Notational Plane. Each plane should develop to its very best, independently of any pressure or lack of it from the other planes. Another important factor is to insist that the Idea Plane is paramount and that it is the duty of the other planes to carry out the findings in the Idea Plane. This policy has been of immense help in the development of CC during the last fifteen years. As a result, it has been possible to refine the classification continuously in the measure of the development of the Universe of Subjects. It is this policy that has now given us courage to speak with confidence about Depth Classification and its design for organising nascent micro thought—a piece of work which the library profession owes to Society in order to conserve the research potential of humanity and thereby to add continuously to the betterment of social welfare. It may be repeated here unbridled freedom should be given to the Idea Plane to carry out its incisive analysis of a subject into its facets, whatever be their number. It is equally necessary to the Notational Plane to develop its own capacity to keep step with the Idea Plane (*See also See MC7*).

CHAPTER ME

MASTER AND SERVANT RELATION

1 Role of Notational Plane

As stated in Sec MD1, the decision in the idea plane is paramount and the notational plane should implement it. Viewed from this angle, the relation between the idea plane and the notational plane may be taken to be like the one between a master and a servant. The notational plane should not make its own decision on the sequence of subjects or of isolates or of facets.

2 Analogy from the *Ramayana*

Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana are in exile in a forest near Nasik on the banks of the Godavari. Lakshmana assumes the role of a servant. Rama asks Lakshmana to find out a good site to put up a hut. Lakshmana politely says, "Choice of the site is a matter of judgement. It is solely within your jurisdiction. After you choose the site, my work of putting up the hut begins."

3 Role of Remembrancer

For long, the idea plane had been inhibited from thinking out its best, on account of the inadequacy of the notational plane. As a result of the inhibition, the idea plane may stop short of the right decision. The Notational Plane may then assume the delicate role of remembrancer and tell the Idea Plane, "I only remind you, my Lord, I do not instruct you," using the exquisite words used by Sita to remind Rama.

For example, the use of different sectors in the Array of Order 1 and of the Superimposition Device is now being brought into use in the notational plane in Personality Facet. It yields co-extensive class numbers, such as, "D9c3, ZF-Z4-Z7-9zM-9zC Screw, Hexagonal Head, Flat Point, Dog thread, Metric, Fine pitch" [1]. It takes time for this versatility of Notational Plane to be remembered and made use of.



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