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## **Responsibility and Bias in Soviet Classifications**

**Abstract:** The most recent literature on systemic bias in classification has focused on how to most responsibly handle the bias that is inevitable in knowledge organization, rather than on eliminating it altogether. On the foundation of Donna Haraway's work on situated knowledges, Feinberg has argued for multiple knowledge domains of acknowledged perspectives and care on the classificationist's part for the rhetorical argument advanced by his classification; Mai has argued for the citation of cognitive authorities in classification work. These are all solutions which were implemented for ideological purposes in the Soviet library and bibliographic classifications created in the first half of the twentieth century. Far from producing responsible or accountable classifications, however, the Soviet classifications were one more layer of thought control in the all-encompassing totalitarian state, leading to the conclusion that it is not simply acknowledging bias which makes a classification responsible, but doing so in an open society where individuals are free to choose between systems of knowledge organization and to interrogate those with which they disagree.

### *1. A responsible classification*

Donna Haraway's work has been the implicit basis of much of the systemic criticism of knowledge organization published in the last fifteen years, although she is only directly cited in Melanie Feinberg's 2007 article on multiple domains. Haraway, a feminist scholar of science, argued that scientific research was presented as objective and neutral when in fact it was grounded in a very specific Western Enlightenment context, thus creating a false appearance of objectivity which rendered this viewpoint irresponsible and unaccountable to critics. As a curative she proposed acknowledging perspectives, asserting that embracing the biases inherent in our perspectives and putting them at the forefront of our activities would create a system of knowledge that was both responsible and able to be called to account (Haraway 1988).

Haraway's work has clear implications for knowledge organization, particularly for classifications like the Dewey Decimal and Library of Congress classifications. Both were created in the late nineteenth century with all the accompanying aspirations to universality and scientific objectivity their origins suggest; both remain widely used, and widely problematic, today. There is a rich literature on individual problems related to subject access in both the DDC and LCC (see Olson and Shlegl 2001), but systemic criticism of their failings is rooted in Haraway's analysis: because the classifications call themselves neutral, they shirk responsibility for their failings and thereby avoid true change.

The most recent literature on systemic bias in classifications has therefore focused on responsibly handling bias in classifications rather than eliminating it altogether. Birger Hjørland's domains as interpreted by Melanie Feinberg provide one method for ensuring responsible bias; although he himself does not appear to have initially envisioned domain analysis in this light, he has since written that Feinberg's repurposing of domains this way is feasible (Hjørland and Albretchson 1995; Hjørland 2008). Feinberg, asserting that Hjørland's domains, while encompassing many different points of view within them, still seem to be based

upon discoverability by the classificationist, has argued for the creation of multiple domains, each of an acknowledged perspective, for any given subject area (Feinberg, 2007). Jens-Erik Mai has approached the problem from the angle of cognitive authority, arguing that trustworthy classifications must be based upon the opinions of known cognitive authorities rather than anonymous panels of “experts,” who edit the Dewey tables with the same god-like remove as Haraway’s scientists (Mai 2010; Haraway 1988). Feinberg has also written convincingly on the subtextual rhetorical arguments formed by classifications, reinforcing our inability to build a system that comes from nowhere and also cautioning the classificationist to be aware of the views his classifications advance (Feinberg 2009).

All these solutions appear to be viable means for creating responsible classifications, although to date they have not been implemented. I would like to argue, however, that the conceptual base on which they rest—Haraway’s situated knowledges—is a flawed base for refining knowledge organization. Haraway’s criticism of knowledge claims and her proposed solution of embodied knowledge are built on the condemnation of the post-Enlightenment scientific tradition; however, her solution, as well as those of Feinberg and Mai, is only viable in the kind of open society that the post-Enlightenment scientific tradition played a large part in nurturing. Additionally, Haraway’s assertion that knowledge claims which place themselves beyond a viewpoint by claiming neutrality and objectivity are “unlocatable, and so irresponsible” for the biases they hold implies that those knowledge claims which *are* explicitly based in a viewpoint *are* responsible and accountable (Haraway, 1988, p 583). Such an assertion may hold in a comparison of the so-called neutral and objective DDC and the embodied Women’s Thesaurus, but only because we—and Haraway—are privileged to live in a society where either source may give a valid account of the world. Change the comparison to the neutral and objective DDC and the embodied Soviet library and bibliographic classifications developed in the first half of the twentieth century, and the landscape, no longer moored in a post-Enlightenment milieu, shifts drastically. Created between 1926 and 1946, the Soviet classifications anticipated every quality of a responsible classification specifically posited by Feinberg and Mai and yet they are they are the absolute antithesis of responsible, because they were created in a closed society which forbade free enquiry.

## 2. *Soviet libraries as educational institutions*

Marxism-Leninism, which permeated every facet of life in the USSR from its inception in 1917 to its collapse in 1991, was of no less relevance for libraries and classification systems for several reasons, primarily the importance of self-education to the revolutionaries’ experiences, the pervasive illiteracy upon the Communist Party’s ascent to power in 1917, and the ideological views of the Soviet Union’s most influential librarian, Nadezhda Konstantinova Krupskaja.

Public libraries were seen as critical for education as early as 1830 but were not systematically supported by local governments until the 1860s. As the network of public libraries slowly expanded, so too did the czarist government’s efforts to control access to their holdings (Des Bonnières 1991). At the same time, however, the desire for political reform was growing among the liberal aristocrats, who were being increasingly influenced by Western European thinkers whose works were frequently banned in Russia. Unable to rely on public libraries to access the books they wanted, the members of the liberal secret societies began to circulate banned books amongst themselves and to build illegal libraries which would be hidden

in various members' homes (Raymond 1979). These secret libraries later inspired the Marxist student revolutionaries at the turn of the nineteenth century. Books and newspapers were crucial to their education as revolutionaries and also to their ability to educate others, notably workers, in Marxist thought. Thus they also depended on underground libraries, and because the revolutionaries were educated chiefly through reading and discussion of illegal Marxist texts, they were fully convinced of books' efficacy as a means of self-education (Raymond 1979; Raymond 1991).

It has been estimated that when Lenin and the Communists took power in 1917, more than seventy percent of Russia's population between the ages of nine and forty-nine was illiterate (Chandler 1972). An illiterate population could neither mobilize Soviet industrialization nor attain the political consciousness that was crucial to the forward movement of history, and for this reason, the liquidation of illiteracy was one of Lenin's most pressing initiatives (Lenin 1966a; Lenin 1966b). Given the revolutionaries' formative experience with self-education, it was perhaps natural that libraries became so central to the education effort. Libraries were seen as the most efficient way to bring the masses the books they needed to attain the requisite political consciousness; therefore the construction and promotion of libraries became of paramount importance very early on in the Soviet experiment (Raymond 1979). Lenin's early, emphatic and frequent written and spoken support of libraries in adult education cemented their place in the Soviet hierarchy even after his death, but it was his wife, librarian Nadezhda Konstantinova Krupskaja, who turned that support into programs, buildings and books as head of the Adult Education division of the Commissariat of Education, which had oversight over all cultural institutions (Raymond 1979).

As a trained librarian and a devoted Marxist-Leninist, Nadezhda Krupskaja's interpretation of the library's role in education was the guiding light of Soviet librarianship. For Krupskaja, adult education meant less reading, writing and arithmetic than the doctrines of Marxism-Leninism as explicated by the leaders of the Party (Raymond 1979, Lenin 1966b). The government, wholeheartedly supportive of her attitude, passed a resolution to that end at the First Congress on Adult Education in May of 1919 declaring that Russian adult education "must reflect the policies and needs of the Communist Party" (Raymond 1979, 64). There was a great deal at stake for the new polity. Lenin firmly believed that the masses would never attain the political consciousness necessary to bring about history's culminating socialist paradise without the guidance of the party elite. It was therefore imperative that the proletariat be taught the correct knowledge from the correct books from the very beginning (Megill 2005). On this subject Krupskaja was particularly voluble. Existing collections had to be purged of their monarchist and religious material and restocked with all the Marxist works forbidden by the czarist censors; after the initial purges, collections were developed in accordance with the government's ideological objectives. Because Krupskaja believed wholly that there was no such thing as objective book, she was determined that her libraries be stocked with books that supported the party and its ideology (Raymond 1979). In taking this line she actively worked against the tradition of Russian librarianship dedicated to the pursuit of objectivity in collection development, which had been influential prior to the Revolution, but which was slowly watered down and finally destroyed by Krupskaja's efforts (Raymond 1979).

But even as libraries were preparing to undertake the colossal task of educating the masses of illiterate Russians, they were faced with significant internal obstacles. There were 13,876 public libraries in Russia in 1913 holding a total circulating collection of 9,442 books and periodicals, which made about seven books and periodicals in public libraries for every one

hundred Russians, and also indicates that there were many libraries without any books at all (Poluboyarinov 1971). Underlying the dearth of libraries and the books to stock them was a more serious lack of technical infrastructure. Although decimal classification had been making inroads as the primary cataloguing tool in Russian libraries prior to and immediately following the Revolution, there was no standard Russian version of decimal classification, which would be essential if the national, centralized library system Krupskaja desired and Lenin supported were to become a reality (Raymond 1979; Chandler 1972). Russian decimal classification in the nineteen-teens was instead a hodge-podge of the DDC, the UDC, and a clutch of local variants (Reynolds 1977). Neither had there ever been any regular publication of national bibliography beyond haphazard individual efforts, let alone any standardized system of bibliographic classification (Whitby 1991). These would be the greatest obstacles to libraries' ability to fulfill their educational, ideological purpose in the Soviet Union. Rural areas could be served by small, cheaply-constructed reading huts carrying the essential texts of Marxism-Leninism; private libraries could be nationalized and their stocks collected, purged of 'bad' literature, and redistributed, but appropriate classification systems required deliberate and careful construction, for without them, the library system would not function (Raymond 1991).

### 3. *Developing Marxist-Leninist classifications: mechanics*

It made no sense for patrons to access collections so carefully tailored to the ideology of the Soviet regime through bourgeois catalogues, particularly if the vast majority of those patrons were incapable of attaining political consciousness without the resources the library offered. It made less sense for Marxism-Leninism to be so privileged in discourse and Marx taught as the primary economic theorist of the time, only for the works of Marx and Engels to be buried in the middle of Table 3 of the DDC. Despite the overwhelming antipathy of Soviet librarians towards Western knowledge organization schemes, the Soviet cataloguing system was in fact based on the Universal Decimal Classification, the French documentalists' European adaptation of the DDC which had first appeared in Russia in the late 1890s.

Soviet librarians never questioned the imperative to modify the UDC. The catalogue as a form of knowledge organization underpinned not only the library but also the Soviet view of the world. The UDC, although intended to be a universal classification usable anywhere, was for the Soviets a bourgeois, capitalist system filled with the biases and ideas of Western imperialist society; therefore simply using translated tables of the UDC would be impossible (Delougaz 1947). According to the Committee in Charge of Institutions for Cultural Enlightenment, the catalogue "should be, in the hands of librarians, a keen ideological weapon and a means for Communist education", *not* "a channel for inimical, reactionary literature", and ultimately two separate ideological weapons were created: one for classifying library catalogues, and another based on the DDC for classifying the books and pamphlets in the national lists (Baumanis and Rogers 1958, 182).

The library classification was the work of L. N. Tropovskii, who drafted his edits to the UDC in 1934 and published the complete tables in 1938. Citing librarians' familiarity with the tables as they stood, he declined to reorder them (although he did outline a preferred order of tables for library classification that placed philosophy and dialectical materialism at the head, followed by the applied and social sciences, and ended with literature and art) (Delougaz 1947). Instead Tropovskii concentrated on expanding those tables which contained material on Communism and Marxist thought. Table 1, Philosophy, was renamed Philosophy, dialectical

materialism and historical materialism, and Dialectical materialism and Historical materialism were the first two sections in the table, sections 1M and 1M1. Logic and Ethics were moved into a third new section, History of philosophy, 1F, and following 1F were classes 1FB, Bourgeois philosophy of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and 1F1, Bourgeois philosophy of history (Delougaz 1947). Table 2, Religion, received a special section for religious texts (to be kept as reference materials), section 2R, immediately following Antireligious literature. The UDC subclasses for the different Christian denominations were collapsed into a single section named Christian doctrine and sects, and Comparative religions at 291 became Primitive religions, with the sections for Buddhism, Parseism, Judaism and Islam left untouched (Delougaz 1947).

Tropovskii reserved his most exhaustive and ideologically-thorough emendations for Table 3, Social Sciences. The first section became 3K, Marxism, Leninism, Communism, Socialism, with subsections like 3K1, Marx and Engels—Works; 3K5, Collected works of other writers on Marxism; 3KI, Communist International, and 3KIM, Communist International Youth (Delougaz 1947). Section 32, Political science, was given subsections dealing with internal struggles against counter-revolution and the war against Nazism (32:343 and 32W). Section 33, Economics, was divided between economic matters pertaining to capitalism (33B) and those pertaining to socialism (33S), with the latter class given subdivisions like National economy of the USSR during WWII (33S27) and Organization of socialist economic enterprises (33S6) (Delougaz 1947). Finally, in the cultural tables—4, 8, and 9, Philology, Literature, and History, Tropovskii inserted a new division to head the table for Russian language, literature and history, denoted by the table number followed by an S—4S, 8S, and 9S. Table 9 received a further rearrangement, with European history being redivided such that each period began with a revolution (Delougaz 1947).

Explicit as Tropovskii's edits to the UDC tables were, it was in the realm of bibliographical classification where Marxist-Leninist theory was truly given free play as a basis for knowledge organization. Because the bibliographic classification was intended strictly as a classification accompanying entries in printed publication catalogues and not as a shelving aid, its designers could rearrange tables, create new ones and conflate old ones as they liked, and indeed, the bibliographic classification went through four major revisions between 1926 and 1946 (Whitby 1956). The scheme was sorely needed. Although national bibliographies of books published in Russia had been issued sporadically by the government since 1907, these lists had not been classified except alphabetically by author with an accompanying subject index. After the revolution and the removal of the Book Chamber from St. Petersburg to Moscow, the bibliographies were classified by publication type—Books and pamphlets, Music, Reports and statutes, and so on—until 1925, when a great increase in publishing necessitated a more specific classification scheme for the books and pamphlets section, of course on Marxist-Leninist lines (Whitby 1956).

This first attempt at devising a bibliographic classification, published in 1926, was the least sophisticated. Essentially it expanded the DDC's nine classes to twenty-nine classes, accomplished by making several DDC subclasses from the 300, 600, 700 and 900 classes into classes proper. Rather than the simple heading of Social science in the DDC, for example, the 1926 Soviet classification contained the headings Social sciences, Statistics, Politics, Economics, Labor, Organization of labor and management, the Co-operative, Law, Education, and Textbooks, all of which were derived from subclasses in the 300s. The original order was also generally preserved (Whitby 1956).

The classification's 1933 iteration was drastically different however, in both number and order of classes. The twenty-nine classes of 1926 were collapsed to eighteen by combining several of the classes from the former scheme; the ten social sciences classes listed above became six. More importantly, the order of the classes was changed to more accurately describe the Marxist-Leninist vision of world order. Instead of being headed by Generalia, followed by Philosophy, Antireligious literature, and Social sciences, the 1933 scheme was headed by Economics, fitting in an ideology that saw history in terms of material production, followed by Labor and then Sociology and historical materialism. History, which had been in class 26 in 1926, was moved up to class 4, and the scheme continued after History through the applied and pure sciences, with Atheism and religion, Literature, and Art—the cultural superstructure—finishing the scheme. Interestingly, Historical materialism and Dialectical materialism were separate classes in the 1933 scheme, appearing as classes 3 and 12, elaborations on Sociology and Philosophy respectively (Whitby 1956). They were not united until the 1936 revision, when they were moved as one class to second place in the table, after Marxism-Leninism and ahead of Comintern, All-Union Communist Party in third place. These separate classes for Marxism-Leninism and its related areas were the major innovation in the 1936 scheme, and it was the first scheme that could truly be regarded as an original classification more or less divorced from the DDC. Other revisions included the reversing of the order of the sciences, leading now from pure to applied; Geography was also separated from History and placed as the link between the social and natural sciences (Whitby 1956).

In 1946, the scheme at last became a true Marxist-Leninist classification. It had the greatest number of classes of any of the revisions (thirty-one) and moved from the social sciences to the pure and applied sciences, then to non-political personal and community activity, and finally to the humanities. Marxism-Leninism remained at the head of the classes, with three classes for political and party literature following. The transition between the social and natural sciences was class 14, Military Science, geography having been reabsorbed by class 15, Natural science (Whitby 1956).

#### 4. *Marxist-Leninist mirrors*

By 1946, the Soviet Union was possessed of a library and a bibliographic classification system that explicitly reflected as far as possible the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism, supporting the efforts of Soviet librarians to educate the masses in its tenets. Both classifications also fit the criteria for responsibility posed by Haraway, Feinberg and Mai of embodiment, a defined rhetorical stance, and citation of cognitive authorities. There is no question that the classifications were cemented in the cognitive authority of Marxism-Leninism generally, and the views of Lenin and later Stalin as individuals. The classifications were similarly embodied in a clearly acknowledged Marxist-Leninist perspective. Indeed, a 1944 revision to the UDC library tables by librarian N. V. Rusinov was summarily rejected because it was “anti-Communist,” hewing too closely to the objective Western viewpoint of the original UDC tables rather than properly privileging dialectical materialism, Party history, or Russian language and literature (Delougaz 1947, 150). In other words, although the tables were clearly partial to Marxism-Leninism, their partiality was clearly token, and in fact, Rusinov's objective was not to create a Marxist-Leninist classification but to create a usable one (Baumanis and Rogers 1958). Tropovskii's tables, on the other hand, made the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint explicit and were thus lauded “as a good example of what public-minded Soviet librarians should try to achieve by

way of ‘Sovietizing’” decimal classification (Delougaz 1947, 151). The bibliographic classification was just as unabashedly embodied. As one librarian wrote in the journal *Bibliotekar*: “Bibliography is in the realm of ideological work. The basic principle of Soviet bibliography is partisanship. Soviet bibliography is deeply alien to neutralism and lack of partisanship” (Baumanis and Rogers 1958, 173).

These quotes also show the care taken by Soviet librarians to advance a clear and unambiguous rhetorical argument for Marxism-Leninism through their classifications, and the degree to which their classifications reflect Marxist-Leninist thought prove their success. While both Tropovskii and Rusinov adhered to the same basic methodology in revising the UDC for use in Soviet libraries—to collect categories pertaining to Communism where they were scattered across different subsections, and always to privilege Marxism-Leninism or Russia at the head of a table—it is Tropovskii’s revisions which best reflect the Marxist-Leninist view of world order. They highlight the dichotomy between the Soviet Socialist and bourgeois capitalist ways, reflective of the constant struggle in which the two are engaged according to dialectical materialism; there is also special emphasis on particular struggles, notably in the section 32, Political science, where the war with Nazi Germany is given more than one subsection, further supporting the idea of constant struggle against reactionaries (Volkov 1982). The decision to bring Russian language, literature and history to the forefront of their respective tables is unsurprising and also most innocent of ideological implications; presumably any nation undertaking to create its own version of the UDC would do the same, although Rusinov, with his librarian’s eye, chose not to do so.

The bibliographic classification speaks even more deeply to the way in which Soviets viewed the world. The evolving order of the classes is the clearest example of this. In Marxism-Leninism, history’s advance is based on the continuing evolution of “the mode of production,” which is seen as “the skeleton of society, skeleton that is given flesh and blood by all the other social phenomena, relations, and institutions” (Volkov 1982, 44). Thus the hierarchy of classes was ultimately ordered: first Marxism-Leninism as the reference point and also as the culmination of history; then the social sciences which describe man’s relations to the productive forces and to his fellows. Next came the pure and applied sciences, the means by which man understands and harnesses the material world, with the “cultural superstructure”, literature and the arts, bringing up the rear (Whitby 1956, 126). The classification’s frequent revisions also reflect a world seen in terms of constant struggle, powered by dialectical materialism. Some revisions were undertaken almost wantonly; although there were no major revisions between 1936 and 1946, there were several temporary revisions resulting from the war with Germany. The head class in 1942 was the Great Patriotic War, followed by Military science and Party literature. As victory approached in 1945, the head class changed once again to Comrade Stalin—leader of the people. It was not until 1946 that the prewar order was restored (Whitby 1956).

##### 5. *From embodied to straitjacketed*

Although the embodiment of Marxism-Leninism in Soviet library and bibliographical classifications was all-encompassing and explicit, it quickly became seen as inadequate in and of itself to impress the Marxist-Leninist worldview upon the people. The system’s very lack of neutrality, its defiant grounding not only in Marxism-Leninism but also, as the 1940s progressed, in the Stalinist personality cult, required that more and more information be circumscribed,

edited, and purged in order to not only educate the masses, but also to make absolutely sure they could not venture beyond the bounds of Marxist-Leninist thought. As government figures were purged by the Stalinist regime, so too were their written works, leaving great gaps in the card catalogues that were often filled with sheaves of analytic cards describing the basic works of party theorists, as well as descriptions of party decisions and speeches by party leaders (Baumanis and Rogers 1958). After criticism that library catalogues “simply enumerate[d] the books to be found in the library, instead of promoting only the ‘best’ books”, a new sort of catalogue was created beginning in 1949: the public catalogue, which listed only those books judged fit for public consumption (Baumanis and Rogers 1958, 181). The official catalogue, which listed a library’s entire holdings including its foreign literature—mass or public libraries, in addition their educational responsibilities, were also the repositories for prohibited books—was kept from view (Whitby 1958). Given that the public catalogue was the chief means of accessing a mass library’s collection, this kind of censorship hid vast amounts of material from Soviet readers, all in the name of their proper education (although even scholarly researchers was hard-pressed to access these restricted works, foreign works in particular) (Baumanis and Rogers 1958; Whitby 1958). Just in case any general reader was left in doubt about what books were appropriate to read, starting in 1951 any cards in the public card catalogue for books dealing with the Soviet Union or Communist doctrine were filed first to ensure that the best books were not mixed with those that were inferior (Baumanis and Rogers 1958).

All these efforts were undertaken in the name of library-based education. Although this objective was government-endorsed and mandated, it in no way conflicted with librarians’ own views of their profession as established by Nadezhda Krupskaja in the 1920s. An analysis of more than seven hundred articles appearing in the most important Soviet library journals between 1924 and 1940 showed that the most frequently-recurring topic was the library’s role in political education (Delougaz 1945). It was absolutely critical to the forward movement of history that the masses be correctly educated, for until the masses attained revolutionary consciousness, a sense of their place in history as described by historical materialism, the revolution would go no further than the USSR (Megill 2005; Lenin 1966b). Ultimately the government’s desire to educate adults was more than a practical consideration for the furthering of modernization; it was a way of ensuring ideological compliance with Marxism-Leninism, a way to inoculate the masses against bourgeois reactionism. Therefore, it was crucial that the library system, a hugely important link in the education chain particularly in the early years of the Soviet Union, promote both the underlying framework of Marxism-Leninism through its knowledge organization systems and also those books that would correctly advance the consciousness of the worker. This indoctrination was accomplished through careful collection development and regular purges of material found to be “ideologically unacceptable” and “obsolete” (Baumanis and Rogers 1958, 182).

## 6. *A responsible classification?*

The Soviet classifications combined all the qualifications proposed by Haraway, Mai and Feinberg to ensure responsible classifications—acknowledgement of a classification’s viewpoint, care for the classification’s rhetorical argument, and citation of cognitive authorities—and yet the Soviet systems can be called neither responsible, accountable, nor unbiased because of it. They were instead coercive, even brainwashing, because they were created in and by a society that was dedicated to Marxism-Leninism and only Marxism-Leninism, a closed society where



inquiry was forbidden and reactionaries liquidated. It is only in the context of an open society that embodied classifications can promise a best effort at objectivity, because only a society that sees itself objective and rational can trust its citizens to examine different perspectives on knowledge, and only a cultural superstructure that calls itself neutral can have no stake in how people choose to see the world. In societies where free access to information is not permitted, no knowledge organization system can be called to account. However explicitly one's access to information is blinkered, blinkered it remains; without the user's ability to inhabit multiple bodies in accessing information, embodied classifications are as meaningless.

Similarly, although the DDC is as biased a classification as the Soviet librarians charged, if its biases were to remain unacknowledged or assumed to be nonexistent, it would remain far more responsible and accountable than any Soviet classification. This is because is that the DDC and other Western universal classifications allow for free enquiry within and beyond themselves. The DDC may well assume it is the best system, a representative of a natural, neutral and objective law of knowledge organization, but incumbent on being that best system in the Western liberal tradition is being secure enough in its superiority to allow its users to access and enquire about other systems. Because the DDC takes "the standpoint of the master, the One God," because it positions itself as transcendent and above petty ideological conflicts, it allows people to explore systems it does not endorse or sees as problematic (Haraway 1988, 587). If the DDC truly is the best system based on the discovery of objective laws of science as it represents itself, it can assume that people will eventually return to the one true framework: they will, through the interrogation of other, incorrect knowledge organization systems, discover the laws of knowledge organization for themselves and return to the DDC.

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