Truths Universally Acknowledged?
The Cataloging and Classification of Fiction

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A survey of the literature surrounding the cataloging and classification of “imaginative literature.” This survey seeks to establish why we catalog, who catalogs, and what we can learn about the cataloger and the cataloged from such classification. To borrow from Jane Austen, is an assigned subject heading a “truth universally acknowledged”?

• “The catalog is the integrating force of the library.” The catalog is the library patron’s means of accessing and discovering the institution’s materials. As seen to the right, the chosen subject headings can illuminate what is between a book’s covers.

• “The objectivist or positivistic tradition in classification seems to a large degree to prevent the expression of central themes…”

• Representation in Library Catalogs: What do authoritative headings indicate about how we perceive the content of a novel? Such headings can reveal our biases and can be manipulated to fit a particular perspective.

• Future Directions in Cataloging: Could libraries utilize user tags? And how do catalogers transition in the era of Google?