

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.”¹ 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 objectivistic or positivistic tradition in classification seems to a large degree to prevent the expression of central themes...”²

¹Dunkin, P. S., & Morton, F. F. (1964). Cataloging and classification. *Journal of Education for Librarianship*, 4(4), 248.

²Eriksson, R. The Classification and Indexing of Imaginative Literature, 10.

³Olson, H. A. (2001). The power to name: Representation in library catalogs. *Signs*, 26(3), 639-668. ⁴Rolla, P. J. (2009). User tags versus subject headings: Can user-supplied data improve subject access to library collections? *Library Resources & Technical Services*, 53, 174-184.

⁵Wakimoto, J. C. (2009). Scope of the library catalog in times of transition. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 47(5), 409-426.

Description	442 p. ; ill. (some col.), col. map ; 25 cm.
Note	The text of this edition is essentially that of the first edition (1813). Includes bibliographical references.
Bibliography	Includes bibliographical references.
Subject	Austen, Jane, 1775-1817. <i>Pride and prejudice</i>. Gentry -- England -- Fiction. Social classes -- England -- Fiction. Young women -- Fiction. Mate selection -- Fiction. Courtship -- Fiction. Sisters -- Fiction. England -- Social life and customs -- 19th century -- Fiction.
Genre	Domestic fiction. Regency fiction.
Added author	Spacks, Patricia Ann Meyer.
ISBN	9780674049161 (alk. paper) 0674049160 (alk. paper)
OCLC number	555658419

- 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. ³
- Future Directions in Cataloging: Could libraries utilize user tags?⁴ And how do catalogers transition in the era of Google?⁵