DEPTH CLASSIFICATION

11. SOIL: IS IT ‘ENERGY’ OR ‘MATTER’ OR ‘PERSONALITY’?


0 INTRODUCTION

In my Classification of agriculture, published in Abgila, 1, 1949, 108-129, the personality facet was examined. The schedule of the foci in the first, second and third array of Personality was revised. Newer foci were added in the arrays of utility, part and crop which together give the crop focus. The farming facet was not examined. However the schedule of foci in this facet was also published with slight modification. Some new foci were also added. The farming facet requires a thorough check up in the light of the recent developments in the theory of classification. Some results of such a check up are given below. The first question examined is this. Of what fundamental category is soil a manifestation? Is it ‘Energy or Matter or Personality’? To answer this, we have naturally to examine the concept ‘soil’.

1 SOIL

Soil is an important entity in agriculture. During the last 50 years, considerable work has been done on it. As a result literature has accumulated on it. This discloses many of the proliferations of the concept ‘soil’. Various attempts have been made to assess its nature and to define it.

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Soil is the cap or covering on the solid crust of the earth’s landmass. It consists of:
2. Organic matter - contributed by dead plant and animal residues decayed and finally resolved to a semidecomposed black to brown amorphous powder called humus.
3. Living organisms - teeming millions of micro and macro plant and animal life.
5. Gases.

These are in close association. They are subject to continuous interaction. They form a complex with specific physical, chemical and biological properties. ‘Soil’ denotes this complex. It provides mechanical support and nutrition to the plant. The material and vital constituents enumerated above are essential to soil. A substance in which even one of them is absent is not soil. Interaction between the material and vital constituents is spontaneous and ever-present. The term soil connotes also this, interaction as an essential characteristic.
3 ENERGY

We may first examine if, soil may be regarded as a manifestation of the fundamental category 'Energy'. From the published literature of the Indian school of thought on classification, the following enumerative description of the fundamental category 'Energy' can be composed: "a problem to be solved, a mode of work or approach, action, reaction, interaction, operation, way of manipulating, process, function and structure".

Section 2 has emphasised that 'soil' necessarily connotes "interaction". Therefore soil includes a manifestation of 'Energy'.

4 MATTER

We may next examine if soil may be regarded as a manifestation of the fundamental category 'Matter'. The only clue about the connotation of this fundamental category is found in Ranganathan's Optional facets (15), W Universe, Portion, constituent and organ. (Abgila, 3, 1953, 1-6). There we have the following statements.

1. Constituent Q (W neither having all the attributes of W other than quantity, nor distinctly associated with or uniquely specific to it.)

2. Constituent is a manifestation of the fundamental category 'Matter' woven into the personality of the universes under consideration.

According to this definition 'soil' includes the following as constituents or manifestations of 'Matter': mineral matter, organic matter, micro-organisms, water and gaseous matter.

5 PERSONALITY

The term 'Personality' and its connotation have not till now received as precise a statement as "Energy" and "Matter".

In his Library classification: fundamentals and procedure (1944), Ranganathan introduced the five fundamental categories for the first time. There he began the treatment of personality with the following words. "In the ultimate commodity which is the most concrete form of Matter, the individuating peculiarities are so many that it is more appropriate to group it with the category 'Personality', if we can, for want of a suitable terminology, force this word to represent not only human personality, but everything - Human, Animal, Vegetable or Inorganic or other categories like Languages and Religion - which have an individuality and aroma of their own [Para 6 of Section 5144].

In his Philosophy of library classification (1951), which was written actually in 1948, the following additional elucidation occurs:

"The fifth fundamental category, Personality, which has to be used in a generalised sense as stated above, is unanalysable. We have to treat it gently and as a whole. It is the most concrete category". Section 2525.

In his lecture on Colon classification and its approach to documentation, included in Bibliographic Organisation, papers presented before the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the Graduate Library School, July 24-29, 1950, (1951) ed. by J. H. Shera and M. E. Egan, he explained this term with a concrete example as follows:-

"Let me demonstrate with a concrete example, viz., Painting of iron signboards on the highways in the United States in 1950". Here '1950' is the Focus in Time Facet.

'United States' is the Focus in the Space Facet.

'Painting' is the Focus in the Energy Facet.

'Steel' is the Focus in the Material Facet.

Of what fundamental category is signboard a manifestation? Surely it is not Time or Space, or Energy. It cannot be Matter either. No doubt steel was rightly regarded as a manifestation of Matter. But signboard is more than mere 'steel'. Steel has been impregnated with something intangible to make it a 'signboard'. 'Signboard' is indeed a manifestation of Personality. You see what I mean by Personality. Perhaps some of you may think of a better term to denote this intangible, subtle, unanalysable, holistic, fundamental category. But let us provisionally agree to denote it by the term 'Personality'. Highway Engineering is a manifestation of a still higher order of the fundamental category 'Personality'. Indeed it is the basic manifestation of Personality, the basic focus - which alone gives a meaning to all the other digits in the class number and all the other terms in the name of the specific subject". [Page 102].
describably holistic something of which the other four are attributes".

Applying these ideas, 'soil' is a "holistic something" of which the manifestations of 'energy' and 'matter' mentioned in sections 3 and 4 are "attributes."

Therefore 'soil' is a manifestation of "Personality".

6 APPROACH TO SOIL

In agriculture, a study of soil qua soil without being related to any specific crop or group of crops precedes the study of a specific crop or group of crops. This is the case in textbooks too. The chapter on soil qua soil without being related to any specific crop or group of crops precedes the chapters on a specific crop or group of crops. The courses of studies also follow the same sequence. Thus the traditional or canonical approach demands that in the arrangement on the shelves and in bibliographies, literature on soil qua soil, without being related to any specific crop or group of crops, should be placed anterior to that on any specific crop or group of crops.

7 1P1

In agriculture, crop is undoubtedly the personality prima facie. Therefore the several crops have been accommodated in 1P4.

It is concluded above that soil is also a manifestation of [P]. By assumption [1P2], [1P3], 1P4 etc., are to accommodate only levels or organs of any remove of [1P4]. Soil is not a level or organ of a crop of any remove. It has been established in the Optional facets (15) in the Annals part of Abgila, 3, 1-6, that [1P2], [1P3] etc., should accommodate organ of successive remove, of the isolate in [1P4]. Therefore, soil cannot be [1P2], [1P3] etc. Hence soil has to be accommodated in later rounds.

Let us examine if soil is germane to any one of the foci in the [1E]. Consider isolate number 1. This is denoted in the verbal plane by the term "soil-ing". But it is a term denoting action. The dictionaries provide the following meanings denoting action: making dirty, smear, tarnish, defile, to feed cattle on fresh cut green fodder, to supply or treat land with dung or fertilising matter (obs), to amnur (obs). None of these meanings meet the requirements of the present context. We want a word which denotes "action of providing with helpful soil". This is not available. The difficulty is therefore in the verbal plane and not in the idea or notational plane. The solution should therefore be sought in the verbal plane. We may coin a new word for this. But we may provisionally use the term "soil-ing" as the substantive term for the energy isolate number 1 to denote "action of providing with helpful soil". Accordingly:

J:1 soil-ing (Action of providing with helpful soil).

Thus soil is germane to isolate number 1 in the [1E] and can be accommodated in [2P1]. The facet formula for soil will thus be:

J:1 [2P1].

The facet formula for a book on crops will be:

J[1P1].

The first digit J is common to both the facet formulas. The second digit in the case of soil is '. '. But the second digit in the case of a crop will be an arabic numeral. By assumption the ordinal value of ' ' is less than any of the arabic numerals 1 ... 9. Therefore the facet formula for soil will precede the facet formula for a crop. Literature on soil qua soil will be anterior to literature on any specific crop or group of crops. This satisfies the requirements of traditional or canonical approach.