After discussions during the 2005 American Library Association Midwinter Meeting, the Dewey editors have a question about one point made in the original "Graphic Novels in DDC: Discussion Paper" and confirmed in "Draft schedule 741.5 Cartoons, caricatures, comics, graphic novels, fotonovelas available for testing". We had "tentatively decided to treat everything from single-frame caricatures to three-frame newspaper comic strips to comic books to graphic novels all in the same way" because we had "found no good places to break the continuum so as to separate the material usefully into different categories" (from section 1 of "Graphic Novels in DDC: Discussion Paper"). We now propose for discussion a division of this material into two categories: (A) graphic works with narratives longer than jokes or anecdotes and (B) graphic works with no narrative or extremely short narratives.

Category A includes comic books, graphic novels, and fotonovelas, e.g., Astérix (by Uderzo and Goscinny), Astro Boy (by Osamu Tezuka), Contract with God and Other Tenement Stories (by Will Eisner), Dick Tracy, Nikopol Trilogy (by Enki Bilal), Prince Valiant, Spider-Man, and Tintin (by Hergé). Category A also includes comic strips that have an anecdotal quality and yet have continuing narratives longer than anecdotes, e.g., Doonesbury (by G. B. Trudeau) and For Better or for Worse (by Lynn Franks Johnston).

Category B includes caricatures, single-panel cartoons, and comic strips that have no narrative or extremely short narratives, analogous to jokes and anecdotes, e.g., caricatures by Max Beerbohm, Al Hirschfeld, and David Levine; New Yorker and Punch cartoons; and Far Side (by Gary Larson). Category B also includes cartoons and comic strips that have continuing characters and situations but lack narrative lines that continue for longer than anecdotes, e.g., cartoons by Charles Addams, Family Circus (by Bil Keane), Garfield (by Jim Davis), and Peanuts (by Charles M. Schulz).

We tentatively recommend putting comprehensive works on both category A and category B with category A, and tentatively recommend that a cataloger in doubt should prefer A.

Would it be useful and practical to split graphic works into categories? If yes, is this the right way to do it?

We are still hoping to receive comments and suggestions by March 31, 2005. Please send suggestions and comments to

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