Nietzsche as Indexer

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Much to the disappointment of Cosima Wagner, Nietzsche returned to Basel on 5 August 1869, to continue his work on the index volume to the first 24 volumes of Rheinisches Museum, neue Folge. The index was only one of Nietzsche's febrile concerns in that year; but despite the drudgery of the work, amplified by his growing disaffection with the world of Wissenschaft, he continued to work on the index. Rheinisches Museum, founded in 1827 by Boeckh, Niebuhr and Brandis, was then and still is one of the preeminent German journals of classical philology. Under the editorship of Friedrich Reitschl, the great Classical scholar at Leipzig, Nietzsche had published in Rheinisches Museum his first philological essays: 'Zur Geschichte der Theognidischen Spruchsammlung,' 'Beiträge zur Kritik der griechischen Lyriker,' and 'De Laertii Diogenis fontibus.' Reitschl, Nietzsche's teacher and friend at Leipzig, had been instrumental in securing for Nietzsche the appointment as Professor of Classical Philology at the University of Basel. He had probably asked his brilliant disciple to compile the index, or Registerband as the Germans call it. The index, totalling 176 pages, contains four separate indexes: an index of contributors, a topical index, an index of passages from classical literature, and an index of Greek and Latin words discussed. The index appeared in 1871 as a separate volume without acknowledgement of the indexer! It was one of Nietzsche's last contributions to traditional classical scholarship. In the following year his Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik appeared. The break with Altertumswissenschaft had begun. There would be no more indexes.

Specialized vocabularies

The 19th unabridged edition of Dewey Decimal classification and relative index, 3v. (Forest Press; H. W. Wilson Co., $90.00) is now available. Like its predecessors, it covers all subjects. It has been revised and expanded, notably in the areas of Sociology, Politics, Information Science, Law, Social Welfare, Zoology, Engineering, Home Economics, Management, and History, and also in its geographical tables—reflecting the changes in administration, attitudes and technology of the times we live in, and the vocabulary generated by such changes.

The latest section of the English full edition of the Universal decimal classification (UDC) to be published is on Mining. It is a revision of the 1955 edition, and represents a classified display of topics relating to the exploitation of ores and other mineral deposits, followed by a detailed alphabetical subject index. (BS 1000 (622) 1979. £8.80.) BS publications may be obtained at members' discount through the Society's Literature Manager.

Terminology in Heating and Ventilation is defined in a newly published Glossary of refrigeration, heating, ventilating and air conditioning terms. (BS 5643 1979. £10.70.)

The policy of Aslib library being 'to acquire all significant English language publications and bilingual or multilingual items with English as one of the languages', it follows that the list of subject headings and thesauri published since 1970 held by the library forms a most useful bibliography for indexers. It is printed, under broad subject headings, in Aslib proceedings 31 (6) June 1979, 264-274.

I certainly think that the best book in the world would owe the most to a good index, and the worst book, if it had but a single good thought in it, might be kept alive by it. —Horace Binney, Letter to S. A. Allibone (1868).

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References
