Book Reviews

Nancy C. MULVANY: **Indexing Books.** The University of Chicago Press. Chicago, IL 1994. 320 p., ISBN 0-226-55014-1 (cloth).

This book deals with the indexing of books, but it also throws bridges to other indexing variants by discussing fundamental principles of indexing of every type as well as the peculiarities of the indexing of multi-authored and multi-volume works and of multi-indexer indexing, including the manner of working of entire indexing teams, needed e.g. when many journal articles must be stored in data banks. Already the very first chapter with its parts "What is an index and what is it not?", "The purpose of an index", "The audience: Who uses indexes?" and "How are indexes used?" deals with basic questions that need to be clarified in any type of indexing. Thus the book outlines an overall perspective of the vast field of indexing generally and it illustrates just how book indexing work is to be methodically classified alongside the other indexing variants.

The book not only reflects the great practical experience of the authoress but also the experience of other experts who contributed as good colleagues to bringing it into being. The result - to state this right away - is a work which is exemplary in the clarity of its structuring, in its completeness and in the persuasive power of its presentation.

The sometimes delicate communication with the author, the publisher and the user has been presented with precision, starting from the indexer's concern for adequate knowledge of the subject matter on his own part, down to the details of the negotiation of the contract with the publisher.

The selection and wording of the various index entries, their arrangement and the presentation of their mutual relationships as well as the various possible variants of the final layout are discussed in great detail.

A special chapter is devoted to the "Tools for Indexing", especially the possibilities and limitations of computer-assisted indexing. Embedded and dedicated indexing software are described in detail. Also, a clear limit is drawn between the tasks of the indexer on the one hand and the meaningful tasks of a program on the other hand.

In a wholesome way the book destroys any hope of ever succeeding in attaining through algorithmic means that quality of an index which must be demanded and which an experienced indexer can attain without difficulty. As can be read between the lines, the reason for this is that in indexing we are dealing with a typically indeterminate process which by its very nature defies any satisfactory algorithmization. Deserving of literal quotation are the statements: "All tools are only an adjunct to the intellectual task of indexing" and "There is no tool that thinks for us".

Such a conclusion is convincing to anyone who has attentively read the preceding parts of the book and has become convinced that good indexing is not only a craft, but also an art and that it demands a creativity of its own. This applies to the selection of what is to be indexed and to the shaping of the relational network. The indexer must give proof of his talent also in the linguistic formulation of the entries. Most of what must be formulated in the drafting of an index is not contained in those terms in the text of the authors.

In the chapter "The Future" it is shown, in a realistic fashion dispensing with any utopias, in what respect the present-day tools are still in need of improvement. Quite properly it is particularly in the increased use of thesauri that progress in the future is perceived, since by this means the relational structure of the index can be built up more transparently and logically.

Reading this book is a necessary and even almost sufficient exercise for anyone wishing to acquire knowledge in indexing, to refresh his knowledge or, with the aid of the exemplary index, to read up on specific questions.

In addition, and for reasons given in the above, this book should be recommended to anyone who has set him- or herself the task of devising an autonomously working indexing program or who even claims to be already able to supply such a program.

The book might also be recommended, as required reading, to the publishers, so that they, too, may become more aware of the high intellectual rank of indexing. Then the indexer would not so frequently be forced to keep the quality of his index at a low level or even to reduce it again in order to comply with overly petty demands concerning the scope of the index (space) or the time expended for indexing. Also, the publisher would then less frequently, for reasons of production cost reduction, content himself with amateurishly produced indexes, erroneously believing that indexing is as simple as breathing (as the authoress most aptly criticizes) and that the indexing of a book may safely be left to any inexperienced author.

Together with the vivid style of the authoress, the great variety of practice-oriented examples contributes to making one reluctant to put the book away before having completely finished it.

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S.R. Ranganathan 1892-1972. Edited by Edward Dudley; introduction by M.P. Satija. New Delhi: Ess Ess Publ. 1992. (First published London: Library Association, 1974) 39pp. Cloth ISBN 81-7000 1390 (available from Dr. M.P. Satija, RF/4, GND University, Amritsar-143005, India

This first Indian reprint may fill a gap in any library's or student's collection of library history. It consists of six short papers by eminent British librarians and classification experts, who were also friends, colleagues and followers of Ranganathan. The papers were presented at a memo-

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rial meeting of the Cataloguing and Indexing Group, which was held at the Library Association Headquarters in Ridgmount Street in London on Thursday 25th January 1973. (Ranganathan having died at the age of 80 in Bangalore on 27th September 1972). To this has been added a chronology, compiled originally by Kate Wood and updated by M.P. Satija and introduction written by M.P.Satija.

The value to library historians is twofold. Firstly, Ranganathan's influence of library and information science is so great both for his own direct contribution and for his influence on others. Secondly, these six authors are six of the most famous names in British librarianship whose subsequent influence has been very great.

I worked with Edward Dudley from 1967 until 1972 at the Polytechnic of North London Library School and so I had moved to another library school by the date of this Memorial meeting. Dudley's influence as the editor of the "Library Association Record" and as the Head of one of the largest and most famous library schools in the world at that time is well known. Each of these six authors matched his eminence within their own fields. I can remember talking to Bernard Palmer at the Library Association during the mid-1960's when I was considering writing a history or compiling a bibliography of Ranganathan for a fellowship thesis - in fact similar work was alredy being undertaken in India. Palmer was largely responsible for introducing the idea of Ranganathan to the West having known him personally (and very closely) whilst serving in India. In fact, Ranganathan's own association with British librarianship goes back much further to the time when he first became a university librarian in India with a requirement that the incumbent undertake a period of study in Britain. So Ranganathan presented himself as a student in 1924 at University College, London and was fortunate enough to have contact with one of the great British librarians and writers of classification textbooks, W.C. Berwick Sayers. Thus began Ranganathan's illustrious vocation in librarianship which lasted until his death almost fifty years later, when he was still involved in research. Bernard Palmer was asked to teach classification in 1940 and he used Ranganathan's epic work "Prolegomena to Library Classification" as one of his first starting points. He met Ranganathan two years later in Madras, where Ranganathan was the University Librarian, and a close association developed during the following year and more distant contact the next thirty years (almost). So Bernard Palmer was well qualified to present the paper on "Ranganathan as a Person".

"Ranganathan's Professionalism" was presented by D.J. Foskett, who also knew Ranganathan well. (I can remember lectures from D.J. Foskett on my Masters Degree course at University College, London in 1967 - possibly in the same room as Ranganathan studied forty years earlier). I think that the Institute of Education faceted classification, devised by D.J. Foskett, is one of the premier examples of Ranganathan's very practical influence on British librarianship. Perhaps the example that rivals it in importance is his influence on the British National Bibliography and its classification. Hardly surprising that the founding editor of British National Bibliography, A.J. Wells, presents a paper on "Ranganathans influence on bibliographical services". H. Coblans presents "Ranganathan in the International Scene" and he was very important in the work of IFLA, UNESCO, F.I.D. and I.S.O.

D.W. Langridge has the difficult task of interpreting "Ranganathan and Mysticism" to the Western reader, but I can think of no one better capable of doing so. I worked with Derek Langridge at the Polytechnic of North London from 1967 until 1972 and was constantly baffled by talks on "trans-rational phenomena", the interpretation of dreams, the occult (and jazz) - all topics on which Derek was an expert. Indeed it was the team of Langridge, Jack Mills, Chris Needham and Anthony Croghan who introduced the "Composite" subject which was known as "The Universe of Knowledge" which was a part of my introduction to teaching library science. And all classification students started by learning the Colon Classification of Ranganathan before they were allowed to move on to analyse the Dewey Decimal Classification and other such schemes.

Finally, the force behind this Indian reprint, M.P. Satija is himself a well known authority on library classification and on Ranganathan. A very specialist publication but also a very special one and a truly memorable experience to read these deep incites and appreciations of a truly great man (and mind).

I recomend it to all students of library history who wish to know the real Ranganathan.

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Helmut F. SPINNER: **Die Wissensordnung. Ein Leitkonzept für die dritte Grundordnung des Informationszeitalters** (Knowlege Order. A Guiding Concept for the Third Basic Order of the Information Age). Opladen, Germany: Leske + Budrich 1994. 273 p., Studien zur Wissensordnung (Studies on Knowledge Ordering) Vol. 1.

Helmut F. Spinner has been trying for some time to gain acceptance for his view (or for the fact) that besides the legal and the economic orders *Knowledge Order* constitutes the third basic order of highly industrialized societies. Intended by him as a forum for this idea, the book series now being published by him starts out, not illogically, with a monograph by the father of the above idea on which he, as it were, spells it out. So far, the concept for the series provides also for a second volume, likewise by the publisher of the series, so that one may assume that the idea as such has found only relatively few adherents so far. The book should therefore be read also from the point of view of whether it can help remedy this matter.

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