

Indexes reviewed

Edited by Christine Shuttleworth

These extracts from reviews do not pretend to represent a complete survey of all reviews in journals and newspapers. We offer only a selection from quotations that readers have sent in. Our reproduction of comments is not a stamp of approval from The Indexer upon the reviewer's assessment of an index. Extracts are arranged alphabetically under the names of publishers, within the sections: Indexes praised, Indexes censured, Indexes omitted, Obiter dicta.

Indexes praised

American Library Association: *Serving teens through readers' advisory*, by Heather Booth (2007, 159 pp, \$36.00). Rev. by Sherrey Quinn, *Australian Library Journal*, 57(4), November 2008.

The thorough index includes authors, titles, subjects and series, and its readability is enhanced by the use of different typography for different types of entries. [*An idea to be copied?*]

Bloomsbury: *Everyday drinking: the distilled Kingsley Amis*, by Kingsley Amis (2008, 320 pp, £9.99). Rev. by Christopher Bray, *Financial Times*, 15 December 2008.

Everyday Drinking is a hilarious read – and it even has an index so you can look up what exactly goes into a Pisco Sour.

Chandos Publishing: *The theory and practice of the Dewey Decimal Classification System*, by M. P. Satija (2007, 206 pp, \$69.95). Rev. by Doreen Sullivan, *Australian Library Journal*, 57(4), November 2008.

Satija assumes no prior knowledge from the reader, and the book is very clear in its writing, its examples and its execution as Satija builds concepts from start to finish. There is a well-designed index that includes persons of note as well as subjects, a glossary of terms, a revision or refresher question-and-answer section – all components that make concepts so easy to find.

Collins Press: *The paper wall: newspapers and propaganda in Ireland 1919–1921*, by Ian Kenneally (270 pp, €16.99, £12.99). Rev. in *Books Ireland*, May 2008.

... concludes with an excellent list of sources and comprehensive bibliography and index, but does suffer from a total absence of illustrations. [*Index by SI Irish Group member Helen Litton.*]

Darton, Longman & Todd: *Eco-theology*, by Celia Deane-Drummond (2008, 224 pp, £14.95), and **Canterbury Press:** *Renewing the face of the earth: a theological and pastoral response to climate change*, by David Atkinson (2008, 160 pp, £12.99). Rev. by Ghilleen Prance, *Church Times*, 3 October 2008.

I found both volumes informative and useful, I would have found an index helpful in Atkinson's book, since I found myself frequently using the good one in Deane-Drummond's.

Fourth Estate: *Me Cheeta: the autobiography*, by Cheeta (pseu-

donym of James Lever) (2008, 336 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Charlotte O'Sullivan, *Evening Standard*, 8 December 2008.

Blow me. Even the index is a delight. (It's mostly made up. The entries for Esther Williams are especially wry.)

Rev. by Philip Hensher, *The Spectator*, 27 September 2008.

One chapter, winningly titled 'F***ing Bitch!' [*asterisks in original*], has, when we get to it, been 'removed on legal advice'. Readers will want to know that Esther Williams, the subject of the chapter, is summarily dealt with in the unaltered index, and in Cheeta's description of her elsewhere as a 'two-bit dugong'.

Hodder Arnold: *Musculoskeletal MRI*, by Asif Saifuddin (2008, 1,232 pp, £195). Rev. by Scott M. M. McDonald and Philip W. P. Bearcroft, *European Radiology* (<http://www.springerlink.com/content/100472/?Content+Status=Accepted>), 16 December 2008.

Indeed, at first glance, the size of Asif Saifuddin's *Musculoskeletal MRI* may seem overwhelming, but its thoughtful layout, practical index and table of contents and bullet point style allow easy and rapid access to any specific piece of information needed. [*Index by SI member Laurence Errington.*]

Humana Press: *Controversies in treating diabetes: clinical and research aspects*, ed. by Derek LeRoith and Aaron I. Vinik (2008, 368 pp, \$139.) Rev. by Kristina I. Rother, *New England Journal of Medicine*, 17 July 2008.

The interested reader will find plenty of valuable information with the help of the detailed index, an item that is often less comprehensive in multiauthored, multisubject books.

McGraw-Hill: *General practice* (4th edn), by John Murtagh (2007, 1,560 pp, £54.99). Rev. by Dan Ewald, *Northern Rivers General Practice Network* (e-newsletter), 24 October 2008.

The overall structure of the book is a mixed blessing. As a learning text you can read through chapters based on 'the basics of general practice' and 'diagnostic perspectives in general practice' to clinical presentation syndromes to more focused disease group topics. This may be useful for the student working through the book in blocks, however, as a reference text I found it far from obvious where any given specific topic would be found. However, the index works. [*Index by ANZSI member Max McMaster, who comments: 'The comment about the index is extremely short, but the best words any indexer could hear.'*]

Hodder Arnold: *Textbook of clinical neuropsychiatry* (2nd edn), by David P. Moore (2008, 731 pp, \$149.50). Rev. by Michael D. Schrift, *Doody's Notes* (website), 3 October 2008.

The book ends with a useful index. [*Index by SI member Laurence Errington.*]

Oxford University Press: *The Copts and the West 1439–1822: the European discovery of the Egyptian Church*, by Alastair Hamilton

(2006, 338 pp, £98). Rev. by Sebastian Brock, *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 December 2008.

[This book] is in part organized by topic, and so there are separate chapters on the study of Coptic language, the collecting of manuscripts, and biblical studies. The only disadvantage of having the chapters arranged in this way is that it is sometimes a little difficult to keep the chronology in mind as one moves from one chapter to the next. In effect, however, any inconvenience felt in this respect can fairly readily be avoided by consulting the exceptionally helpful index.

Scarecrow Press: *Literature search strategies for interdisciplinary research: a sourcebook for scientists and engineers*, ed. by Linda G. Ackerson (2007, 132 pp, \$35). Rev. by Sherrey Quinn, *Australian Library Journal*, 57(4), November 2008.

The thorough index includes topics, names and titles of works; it is well set out and easy to use.

Neal Schuman Publishers: *Children's books: a practical guide to selection*, by Phyllis Van Orden and Sunny Strong (2007, 239 pp, £51.50). Rev. by Peggy Johnson, *Australian Library Journal*, 57(4), November 2008.

Four appendices supplement the text: a glossary of selection terms, a bibliography listing resources to aid selectors, a directory of organisations that support the creation and use of children's books, and a collection of selection policy statements and resources. This volume is further enhanced by four indexes: authors, illustrators, book titles that are referenced, and subjects.

Springer: *Ice, rock, and beauty: a visual tour of the new solar system*, by David Brodie (2008, 134 pp, £19.50). Rev. by Emily Baldwin, *Astronomy Now*, October 2008.

From the moment you turn to the cryptic contents page you know you're not in for the monotonous style of a textbook. Who would have thought that the page titled 'A Pretty Face but a Cold One' would be about Europa, or that 'Curiously Normal' would be describing Eros? The planetary guessing game is fun, but fortunately there is also an extensive index should you wish to find a certain celestial body more directly!

I. B. Tauris: *Approaching the apocalypse: a short history of Christian millenarianism*, by John Court (2008, 232 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Martyn Percy, *Church Times*, 31 October 2008.

A helpful epilogue, sensible glossary, and useful index make this volume a valuable resource for students of religion and history.

Weidenfeld: *The phoenix: St Paul's Cathedral and the men who made modern London*, by Leo Hollis (2008, 408 pp, £20). Rev. by Catherine Pepinster, *Independent on Sunday*, 8 June 2008.

Both Hollis and the reader benefit from the trouble taken by the publisher. Too often books of this kind lack decent illustration or even an index, but *The Phoenix* benefits from both, particularly the reproduction of Wren's early designs for his cathedral.

John Wiley & Sons: *Knowledge for generations: Wiley and the global publishing industry, 1807–2007* (bicentennial edition), by Robert E. Wright et al. (2008, 568 pp, \$49.95). Rev. by Eric Newman, *LOGOS*, 19(3).

It is heavily documented and indexed, full of the features of the best undergraduate textbooks.

Yale: *The library at night*, by Alberto Manguel (2008, 373 pp, £18.99). Rev. by Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, *Irish Times*, 5 July 2008.

It's a mine of stimulating ideas, fascinating information, and useful quotations. And if you want to be systematic, there is an excellent index, as one would expect from a writer who recognises that all collectors, readers and writers are 'intent on lending the world a semblance of sense and order . . . while knowing perfectly well that our pursuits are sadly doomed to failure'. A real gem.

Indexes censured

Bloomsbury: *Alasdair Gray: a secretary's biography*, by Rodge Glass (2008, 341 pp, £25). Rev. by Jonathan Coe, *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 November 2008.

From the mid-1960s [Gray] also made a decent living writing plays for BBC television and radio. (The first, *The Fall of Kelvin Walker*, starred Corin Redgrave, bizarrely feminised by Glass as 'Corinne' in his text and 'Connie' in his index.)

Hodder Arnold: *Greenfield's Neuropathology* (8th edition), by Seth Love et al. (2008, 2,400 pp, £475). Rev. by Nicki Cohen, *Advances in Clinical Neuroscience & Rehabilitation*, 8(5), November–December 2008.

The new edition is a similar length to its predecessor. The index, however, is shorter and only present at the back of volume II. This, and the lack of page-keeper ribbons are two oversights that are minor compared to the book's many strengths.

Libraries Unlimited: *Introduction to the library and information professions*, by Roger C. Greer, Robert J. Grover and Susan G. Fowler (2007, 194 pp, \$60). Rev. by Barbara Frame, *Australian Library Journal*, 57(3), August 2008.

Much of the subject-matter of a book like this is inherently, inescapably dry, and this one's strength lies in its comprehensiveness rather than its readability. There is a certain amount of repetition, and the index is surprisingly skimpy.

Memoir Club: *Gordon Fallows of Sheffield*, by John S. Peart-Binns (2007, 230 pp, £18.50). Rev. by Bernard Palmer, *Church Times*, 10 October 2008.

It is also a pity that the book (unlike the author's others) lacks an index.

National Library of Scotland and Sandstone Press: *Scottish printed books 1508–2008*, by Antony Kamm (2008, 51 pp, £5.99).

See review by Moyra Forrest, p. 45.

National Roads Authority Scheme Monographs: *Monumental beginnings: the archaeology of the N4 Sligo Inner Relief Road*, by Ed Danaher (2007, 183 pp and CD, €25). Rev. by John Waddell, *Archaeology Ireland*, autumn 2008.

The CD does not appear to have benefited from any editorial intervention and the data are submerged in a welter of numbered files that are very difficult to navigate. They should have been clearly labelled, preferably with the site names used in the text, and the same site names should have been used in the less-than-helpful index to the CD in the text on pp. vi–vii. It might be helpful to reissue a new and improved version of the disc.

Oxford University Press: *Emergencies in respiratory medicine*, ed. by Robert Parker, Catherine Thomas and Lesley Bennett (2007, 288 pp, \$39.95). Rev. by Carlin M. Olson, *Respiratory Care*, August 2008.

The index does not function well. Influenza and permissive hypercapnia are discussed in the text but are not listed in the index. The index listing 'immunocompromised patients' refers to '13' without indicating that this means chapter 13, not page 13. The page numbers for 'pneumococcal urinary antigen' are wrong. . . . More rigorous editing would decrease distractions in this book, better indexing would make it more functional, and providing the North-American measurement units along with *Système Internationale* units would make it useful to more people.

Pan Macmillan: *The London encyclopedia* (3rd revised edn), ed. by Ben Weinreb et al. (2008, 1,101 pp, £50). Rev. by Rosemary Ashton, *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 December 2008.

The indexing, though generally clear and helpful, has some flaws. There is an Index of People and a longer General Index, under which streets, buildings and institutions are marshalled, along with 'special subjects'. These last ought to have had an index of their own, as there is no simple way of knowing which subjects have been chosen. Only if you go through the whole volume or are sent from a particular place-name entry do you find that there is a (very informative) essay on Railways – which admittedly you might guess to be the case. But what about the previously mentioned Public Lavatories and Public Baths, and what about Football Clubs, Turnpikes, and especially Fogs, famous from Shakespeare through Bleak House to the last recorded serious fog in 1962? These are interesting entries which would have benefited from being listed in a separate index, rather than being left to chance. In the case of turnpikes, the volume correctly states under Dulwich Toll Gate that this is the sole survivor of London's toll gates, but has not caught up with the (scandalous) rise in the fee from 50p to £1, while the entry under Turnpikes is seriously out of date, asserting that it 'was still in operation after the Second World War'.

Sometimes the index suggests there are two people of the same name, when in fact there is only one. The nineteenth-century charismatic millenarian preacher Edward Irving appears twice in this way, once leading the reader to the Church of Christ the King, Gordon Square, built in 1853 as the Catholic Apostolic Church (said here to be a sect founded by Irving, though in fact it was established after his early death in 1834 by the rich banker Henry Drummond). This entry tells us that the church is 'now used by London University', which has not been the case since 1992. The other entry concerning Irving is that for Regent Square; it notes correctly that he preached at 'a lofty Gothic church' built for him in 1824, but perpetuates a dating error from earlier editions, by stating that he was expelled for heresy in 1837, three years after his death. Conversely, two Louis Blancs share a single index entry; one was the French political exile of the 1848 Revolutions, living in Piccadilly, the other the designer of the D. H. Evans store in Oxford Street in 1937. In an error new to this edition, Dickens's father is called Charles instead of John, and the liberal lawyer Thomas Denman is entered separately as '1st Baron Denham' by mistake. Mary Ward and Mrs Humphry Ward are, as in previous editions, separately indexed; neither the index nor the entries themselves show awareness of the fact that this is one person, the novelist and philanthropist, niece of Matthew Arnold and wife of Thomas Humphry Ward. [*The earlier editions of this encyclopedia were reviewed in The Indexer (Vol. 14, no. 2, October 1984, and Vol 19, no. 1), by Judy Batchelor and Elizabeth Wallis respectively, in each case with similar criticisms of the index. It is unfortunate that little seems to have changed.*]

Radcliffe Publishing: *New perspectives in public health*, ed. by Sian Griffiths and David J. Hunter (2007, 376 pp, £29.95). Rev. by Peter Sainsbury, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 32(1), 2008.

Oh, did I mention Jamie Oliver? The index shows him as being referred to thrice. Believe me, it's a lot more than that. The naked chef may not have improved school dinners in England but he's caught the eye of public health workers.

Reaktion: *War and film*, by James Chapman (280 pp, £10). Rev. by J. J. Purdon, *Times Literary Supplement*, 19 September 2008.

In addition, as a reference tool, *War and Film* suffers from a mysterious printing error that curtails the index halfway through the 'p's. The final entry is 'Powell, Michael' – which seems rather unfair to Emeric Pressburger.

Routledge: *Aquinas*, by Eleonore Stump (2003, xx + 612 pp, £65). Rev. by E. J. Ashworth, *Philosophical Books*, 46 (2005).

My main quarrel with the presentation is with the end notes. It is always frustrating to have to switch back and forth between text and notes. . . . Another source of frustration is the index. For a book of this size, a solid thematic index is crucial. Unfortunately, the indexer was punctilious about including references to characters such as Cardinal Wolsey and Hitler who were mentioned in passing to illustrate various points, but was far less punctilious about including doctrines that someone might actually want to look up. For instance, there is no entry for 'participation', although it is defined on page 5; there are no entries for 'internal word' or 'concept', discussed on pp. 267–8; and the entries under 'resurrection' are incomplete, omitting the discussions on p. 208 and p. 211.

I. B. Tauris: *Chaplains at war: the role of clergymen during World War II*, by Alan Robinson (2008, 288 pp, £52.50). Rev. by Bernard Palmer, *Church Times*, 5 December 2008.

Robinson's style is workmanlike rather than elegant. It is a pity, though, that he was not provided with an editor to iron out his grammatical infelicities and correct his punctuation. It is also a pity that his publishers should issue a £50-plus hardback not only with a woefully inadequate index and without a single illustration, but should even deny it the dignity of a dust cover.

I. B. Tauris: *The duel: Castlereagh, Canning and deadly Cabinet rivalry*, by Giles Hunt (2008, 214 pp, £20). Rev. by Simon Jenkins, *London Review of Books*, 18 December 2008.

A reader could easily get lost as Hunt delves into the tedious politics of the age with only a woeful index (as in 'Castlereagh, passim') and without so much as a chronology or table of ministries.

Weidenfeld & Nicolson: *Labour's international policy: the Labour Party in the 1930s*, by John F. Naylor (1969, 380 pp). Rev. in *Catalogue 160*, end of year 2009, Andrew Jones, *Fine, Scholarly and Out-of-Print Books*.

Worthwhile book, worthless lumpen index – an undifferentiated block of 109 page numbers under Germany, 50 for democracy, and 28 for dictatorship. While a follower of Harry Pollitt can quickly thumb his way through seven mentions (drumming fingers at the mis-spelling), what is one to make of 71 pages supposedly tackling 'aggression', which overlap but rarely with the 99 signs of 'League of Nations' activity?

Indexes omitted

Accademia Petrarca – Biblioteca città di Arezzo: *La Biblioteca di Francesco Redi e della sua famiglia*, by Lorella Mangani and Giuseppe Martini (2006, 686 pp, €70). Rev. by L. R., *L'Almanacco Bibliografico* 7, September 2008.

The catalogue's usability is limited by the absence of a numbering system for entries, which would have assisted cross-referencing and external citations, and by the lack of indexes (especially a provenance index), which would have helped research (considering the multiple ways in which the book can be used). The compilation of indexes would have been easier if personal and place names had been standardized (instead of being reproduced as they appear on title pages: this is useful when dealing with cataloguing of modern books, but not so useful for old books). [*Translation by Silvia Benvenuto.*]

Canterbury Press: *Renewing the face of the earth: a theological and pastoral response to climate change*, by David Atkinson. See Indexes praised, under Darton, Longman & Todd.

Church Publishing: *Gradual psalms with Alleluia verses & tracts*, by Bruce E. Ford (CD-ROM, \$85). Rev. by John Henderson, *Church Music Quarterly*, June 2008.

My only slight gripe about the software was that, for the occasional user of plainsong Psalms, it is almost impossible to find a particular Psalm setting unless you know the Sunday for which it is set for there is no index of the Psalms themselves.

Darton, Longman & Todd: *Jesus: a portrait*, by Gerald O'Collins (2008, 352 pp, £12.99). Rev. by Paul Richardson, *Church of England Newspaper*, 3 October 2008.

My only complaint about this excellent book is the absence of an index of the biblical passages discussed which will surely lessen its usefulness to preachers for whom it otherwise has much to offer.

Ebury: *The celeb diaries*, by Mark Frith (2008, 352 pp, £13.49). Rev. by Joy Lo Dico, *The Independent*, 5 September 2008.

There is no index, and given the ephemeral nature of his subject, there might also be a good argument for a glossary. Having to remember the significance of 'Randy Andy' in the first Big Brother or Popstars' band Hear'Say a decade from now may trouble even pre-senile minds.

Guardian Newspapers: *Guardian style* (2nd edn), by David Marsh (2007, 362 pp, £14.99). Rev. by Sara Hulse, *Editing matters*, September/October 2008.

Like many style guides I've come across, it has a couple of really useful short chapters on things such as web style and writing good headlines, but these are hidden away within the text (and not even listed on the contents pages!), so unless you happen to come across them while browsing, they are likely to remain hidden (there isn't an index, either!).

Harper Press: *Grub Street irregular: scenes from literary life*, by Jeremy Lewis (2008, 352 pp, £20). Rev. by Gordon Graham, *LOGOS*, 19(3).

Readers who do not qualify for the last chapter should be warned that they have to read the book to find if there are any references to themselves. I suspect that the omission of an index is seen as a way of discouraging cherry-picking by readers.

Rev. by Lewis Jones, *New Statesman*, 28 August 2008.

There is something boastful about Lewis's modesty, an element of the passive aggressive. It is highly effective in the short term, but at book length I found it increasingly tiresome. One could also have done with an index.

Libraries Unlimited: *A day in the life: career options in library and information science*, ed. by Priscilla K. Shontz and Richard A. Murray (2007, 443 pp, \$45.00). Rev. by Sally Murdoch, *Australian Library Journal*, 57(3), August 2008.

While the book is aimed at those working in the United States and Canada, there are several contributions from around the world, including Australia. The non-North American entries are a little lost, because there is no locality index.

Lowy Institute: *The emerging global order: Australian foreign policy in the 21st century*, by Russell Trood (200 pp, \$A20). Rev. by Glen St John Barclay, *Australian Literary Review*, 1 October 2008.

It's not a hard read: it is written in what a previous century would have termed a most elegant style. All that one would suggest is that it should have an index, so that those responsible for our national security could look up the appropriate pages without waste of time, to see what they ought to be doing about whichever problem is uppermost at the moment.

Molodaya gvardiya (Moscow): *Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn*, by Lyudmila Saraskina (2008, 936 pp). Rev. by Michael Nicholson, *Times Literary Supplement*, 28 November 2008.

Although Saraskina provides a bibliography of unpublished as well as published sources, readers should not expect her to quote chapter and verse at every turn; nor, regrettably, should they hope for an index.

M-Y Books: *A physicist's labour in war and peace*, by W. E. Kellerman (2007, 260 pp, £8.99). Rev. by Drew Rankine, *UC Magazine* (journal of the University and College Union), June 2008.

In spite of the minor typos and lack of an index, this is a thoroughly enjoyable autobiography.

Poolbeg Press: *Ireland's burning: how climate change will affect you*, by Paul Cunningham (2008, 319 pp, €15.99). Rev. by Frank McDonald, *Irish Times*, 28 June 2008.

It's a pity there is no index.

Routledge: *Birds in the ancient world from A to Z*, by W. Geoffrey Arnott (2006, 288 pp, £60). Rev. by John A. C. Greppin, *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 September 2008.

Perhaps a different approach could have increased the value of Arnott's obvious learning and scholarship. He might, for instance, not have arranged the Greek words in simple alphabetic order, but instead arranged them according to order or species, thus allowing for sections on ducks, or owls, or the corvidae. Access would be simplified by an index in Greek, such as the one he already has in English.

SCM Press: *Round the Church in 50 years: a personal journey*, by Trevor Beeson (2007, 279 pp, £19.99). Rev. by Bernard Palmer, *Church Times*, 15 August 2008.

The book, surprisingly, lacks an index.

Obiter dicta

Canongate: *The mighty book of Boosh*, by Noel Fielding and Julian Barratt (256 pp, £19.99). Rev. by Paul Dalgarno, *Sunday Herald*, 2 November 2008.

Those wary of delving any further might want to examine the book's index, surely the first to feature edible frisbees, jazzercise technique and Columbo on the same page.

Facet Publishing: *Managing the crowd: rethinking records management for the Web 2.0 world*, by Steve Bailey (2008, 172 pp, £39.95). Rev. by Alan Poulter, *Library & Information Update*, December 2008.

What if a user is seeking a file by searching for a common word? What if the indexing software has not indexed the word sought? What if the word sought is not the right one? What if the indexing software fails? What if the indexing software is actually more interested in building up a profile of the user for Google's ad business to exploit? What if the user never backs up their files (because they do not know where they are) and the storage fails? There is no easy way to manage information via Web 2.0 or anything else.

Granta: *Coda*, by Simon Gray (2009, 272 pp, £14.99). Rev. by David Lodge, *The Guardian*, 22 November 2008.

Whether by accident or inspired design, there is a larger than normal number of blank pages – 15 – at the back of the book, so as I approached the end, reading slowly to make the most of it, a diminishing but substantial wad of pages under my right thumb, I turned one and suddenly there were the last words – 'to avoid disappointment' – with only a few brief acknowledgments on the facing page and then a flutter of white leaves. Nothing could express more eloquently the abrupt removal of this writer from the world of the living, to the dismay of his friends and fans. But his brilliantly witty, searingly honest diaries will live on. [*But without an index, apparently.*]

Pennsylvania: *Used books: marking readers in Renaissance England*, by William Sherman (2008, 259 pp, £29.50). Rev. by Leah Price, *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 October 2008.

Now that libraries catalogue books as either 'manuscript' or 'printed', marginalia can slip between the cracks. . . . Even after the invention of printing, aids like tables of contents and indexes were added by hand by individuals. Readers would interleave blank pages, rearrange sections, and could even combine sections from different volumes. The printed page was seen as merely a starting place, and marginalia were only one way in which readers – and owners – could personalise their libraries.

The future of such methods forms the end point of *Used Books* Offline, Adobe Acrobat allows readers to add underlinings and marginalia to PDFs; and even Amazon's stripped-down e-reader, the Kindle, supports marginal annotation. And social networking sites promise to make reading more interactive, not less. Wikalong, a new plugin for the Firefox browser, makes it possible to add notes to the margin of a web page. Sites like del.icio.us and furl.net enable individuals to label websites with their own keywords, and to search for sites tagged by other users; the resulting lists have some similarity to the handmade indexes that Sherman describes on the endpapers of Renaissance books.

A come-hither look

The selected works of Alan Bennett were published in October [1994, by Faber] under the title *Writing Home*. . . . Even the index

threw up a steady stream of jokes on the lines of 'College of Cardinals: cardboard urged on as material for papal crown' or 'Marcos, Ferdinand: AB's fellow feelings with'. A good index is like a come-hither look. Who could resist 'Lineker, Gary: thighs the talk of Harlesden'? How could one not want to know more about 'Thorndike Theatre, Leatherhead: lewd ingenuity of schoolboys at' or 'Hailsham, Lord: more humbug from' or, perhaps best of all, 'Wykehamists: improbable claims for genitals'?

Alexander Games, *Backing into the limelight: the biography of Alan Bennett* (Headline, 2002).

Montaigne's stalker

Montaigne had his own literary stalker. Eight years after the *Essays* first appeared in 1580, he received a breathless letter from a young woman called Marie le Jars de Gournay, who declared herself an ardent admirer of his work. Intrigued, he arranged to meet her. . . . By the time of her death in 1645 she had overseen 11 reprints of the *Essays*, and modern scholars acknowledge the value of many of her contributions. For the edition of 1611 she drew up an index of all the subjects and authors referred to, and for the 1617 text she not only traced each of Montaigne's classical references, but set about translating them into French in an appendix of close to a hundred pages.

Elizabeth Lowry, 'That Roomful of Words', review of Jenny Diski, *Apology for the woman writing* (Virago, 2008), in *London Review of Books*, 4 December 2008.

Information by omission

You can tell a lot about a book on Paul by seeing which passages don't appear in the index. John Piper, astonishingly, has no discussion of Romans 2.25–29 or 10.6–9, absolutely crucial passages in Paul and certainly in my exposition of him. Nor does he deal at any point with what is central for me, the question of Paul's understanding of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15.

N. T. Wright, *God's plan and Paul's vision* (SPCK, 2009, p. 15)

[A footnote on p. 229 of the same book reads: 'This remark is directed particularly at Harink 2003: neither of these passages, nor indeed Galatians 2.19f., appear in his index, or apparently in his mind'.]

Indexing the incomprehensible

Academics in English departments who used to write in private code are being gradually introduced to an important fact about language: that a written English sentence exists in order to be understood by other English speakers. Once the habit of writing comprehensible English has been unlearned, however, it can be difficult to reacquire the knack. Here is an example of a sentence which purports to be written in English, but which, we propose, is incomprehensible to all but a few. It is taken from *Coincidence and counterfactuality: plotting time and space in narrative fiction* by Hilary P. Dannenberg:

Historical counterfactuals in narrative fiction frequently take an ontologically different form in which the counterfactual premise engenders a whole narrative world instead of being limited to hypothetical inserts embedded in the main actual world of the narrative text. . . .

Coincidence and counterfactuality is published by the University of Nebraska Press. Just think: someone read the book and endorsed its publication, someone edited it, someone else set it in type,

designed a cover, compiled an index, read the proofs – yet hardly anyone can understand what's in it.

J.C., *NB, Times Literary Supplement*, 12 December 2008.

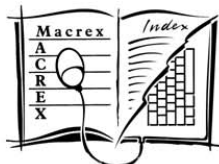
[Some say it is perfectly possible to index a book without actually understanding it. Surely this can't be true – or can it?]

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Contributions of review extracts are welcomed by the editor of this section, Christine Shuttleworth (please see inside front cover for further details).



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MONITOR PROGRESS: MACREX records time taken indexing, entries per page, references per entry, etc.
ACCELERATE large projects by dividing work between several indexers and merging files
CUT COSTS by creating cumulations and updates with minimum re-keying of text
REDUCE WORK by automatically producing indexes in different styles or in different media from one source file
ENSURE CONSISTENCY by setting up style sheets for each project, and by setting up an authority file of acceptable headings
EXTEND YOUR SKILLS by making full use of MACREX's huge range of options for creating, editing, and formatting entries

MACREX VERSION 8 is now available, and runs on Windows™ NT, 2000, XP and Vista. For other platforms please contact us. **NEW FEATURES IN VERSION 8** include the option to use a hierarchical and non-hierarchical autocomplete /authority file; optional automatic heading changes; creation of single-keystroke RTF and text file; comprehensive text-sensitive help; facility to open indexes directly from Windows Explorer as well as from icon or Command prompt; many built-in macros; and a wide range of program enhancements. Many more features will be introduced into the program during the life of version 8, and updates will be sent out free to registered version 8 users.

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