

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

ABC Books: *Eat my words*, by Mungo MacCallum (2012, 149 pp, \$24.99). Rev. by Bruce Rider, *The Saturday Age*, 1 September 2012.

Fortunately, there is a very good index for those who want to find and decipher his chatty recipes.

Cambrian Archaeological Association: *Reflections on the past: essays in honour of Frances Lynch*, ed. by W. J. Britnell and R. J. Silvester (2012, 528 pp, £20). Rev. by MP, *British Archaeology*, September/October 2012.

A lot of work has gone into this fat book ... with 25 chapters, a bibliography of the 'dedicated Cambrian', a good index and many well-reproduced photos and illustrations.

Century: *Rod: the autobiography*, by Rod Stewart (2012, 378 pp, £20). Rev. by Sam Leith, *The Guardian*, 10 November 2012.

It also – excellent in such a book – has a comprehensive index: 'Lumley, Joanna 177–9'; 'nuclear weapons 28, 29'; 'oral sex: Rod advised against 58; untrue stories of 232' and so on. ('Untrue stories of', by the way, refers to the old tale of his being admitted to a West Coast emergency room to have a pint and a half of semen pumped out of his stomach. He denies it.) [*Index by SI member Christopher Phipps.*]

Facet: *Teaching information literacy online*, ed. by T. P. Mackey and T. E. Jacobson (2011, xxiii + 200 pp, £44.95). Rev. by Maurice Wakeham, *CILIP Update*, June 2012.

The varied contributions, aided by an index and taken together, have ideas to offer across a range of issues which can be applied to individual circumstances.

Michael Joseph: *Celebrate*, by Pippa Middleton (2012, 416 pp, £25). Rev. by Christian Zschke, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 27/28 October 2012.

The comprehensive index at the end of the book is further evidence of the care the publishers have invested in the young woman's first work. [*Translation by Michael Robertson, who submitted this item.*]

Miegunyah Press: *Gough Whitlam: his time*, by Jenny Hocking (2012, 596pp, \$A49.99). Rev. by Ross Fitzgerald, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29–30 September 2012.

The book also boasts an extremely useful index and bibliography.

Vintage: *Through the window: seventeen essays (plus one short story)*, by Julian Barnes (2012, 244 pp, £10.99). Rev. by Stuart Kelly, *The Scotsman*, 3 November 2012.

Although the book's subtitle promises 17 essays and a short story, there is a final additional work of creative non-fiction: the index. It may seem peculiar to say so, but the Index here is a work of beauty. Beginning 'Ackroyd, Peter: fails to impress, 7' – actually Penelope Fitzgerald's opinion but reframed sneakily here – and going on to 'adultery: rarely a good idea, 20; boringness of promiscuity, 68; routine subject for French novels, 96; Nabokov on, 202; loses its thrall, 204–5', one could almost take the index as a [Félix] Féneon-style surreptitious story. There is a wonderful wit at work throughout this: take, for example, the entry 'Dreyfus case; inspires FM Ford to lie, 52; inspires French soldiers to weep, 92'. It ends with what might even be the elusive Julian Barnes manifesto: 'young writers should be warned by Penelope Fitzgerald's example, 5–6; should be warned by Clough's example, 24; should be warned by Ford's example, 43; should be warned by Chamfort's example, 104; should follow John Updike's example, 199'.

Rev. by Kate Webb, *Times Literary Supplement*, 16 November 2012.

The index to Julian Barnes's new collection of essays strikes a playful note, a whimsy meant to undercut any danger of pomposity in his writing, by drawing attention to it. For instance, his repeated instructions about the many matters that 'should serve as a warning to aspirant novelists', becomes, in the index, a knowing wink to his own pedantry (all five entries under 'young writers' begin 'should'). Similarly, there are judgements indexed in the manner of a teacher's withering report: 'Peter Ackroyd: fails to impress', 'Truman Capote: always promising' His recurrent themes... are summed up in that didactic index: 'cowardice: more interesting than courage', 'failure: more interesting than success', 'kindness: its paradoxicality'.

Rev. by Richard Davenport-Hines, *The Spectator*, 17 November 2012.

Not the least joy of *Through the Window* is a witty index which serves as a gleeful final chapter to the book and provides an elegant commentary on the main text. It will cause hilarity if read aloud after Christmas lunch.

Indexes censured

Pickering & Chatto: *The journals of Thomas Babington Macaulay*, ed. by William Thomas (2008, 5 vols, 2000 pp, £450). Rev. by Ian Jackson, *The Book Collector*, autumn 2010.

Macaulay's journals will obviously prove invaluable to any academic historian of the book who wishes to invigorate his barren sociology with telling quotation. Alas, Thomas's index will disappoint. It was clearly impossible (although there are ten blank pages at the end of the set) to list every casual mention of a book or author, but interesting characterizations or substantial commentaries on particular titles – the bookseller in Macaulay – are all too often omitted. The index pages devoted to Macaulay himself are remarkably extensive and illuminating, but include no entries whatsoever for booksellers,

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reading or book-buying, merely a few bald entries for his 'Library' that focus on the tiresome administrative chores of shelving and cataloguing.

Scribe: *J. M. Coetzee: a life in writing*, by J. C. Kannemeyer (2012, 710 pp, \$A59.95). Rev. by Peter F. Alexander, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1–2 December 2012.

This important biography, though marred by occasional clunky writing and an inadequate index, sheds more light on a great writer than anything that has previously appeared.

Springer: *The manual of dermatology*, by Jennifer A. Cafardi (2012, 573 pp, £35.99). Rev. by Rhonda Mays, *British Journal of Hospital Medicine*, 23(10).

The minuses include the occasional incomplete table or point from text, use of informal language (occasionally have to infer meaning), the index is not comprehensive and the 'Americanization' of medications.

University of Michigan Press: *The American Stravinsky: the style and aesthetics of Copland's new American music, the early works, 1921–1938*, by Gayle Murchison (289 pp, \$80/£71.50). Rev. by Stephen Brown, *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 November 2012.

Other things to wonder about: how the index can miss half the book's references to Charles Ives ...

Indexes omitted

Ashgate: *The music trade in Georgian England*, ed. by Michael Kassler (2011, 560 pp, £60). Rev. by Karen McAulay, *Fontes Artis Musicae* 59(1).

[W]hilst a 'Summary of Legal Cases' is appended to the volume, and an extensive 35p Index of Persons concludes the book, there is no general index or bibliography. For example, one of the opening chapters alluded to the popularity of the flute in the early nineteenth century, but a general index would have indicated whether other chapters also had any information on this subject.

Cambridge University Press: *The Cambridge edition of the works of Ben Jonson*, ed. by David Bevington, Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson (7 vols, 2012, 5,224 pp, £650). Rev. by Blair Worden, *London Review of Books*, 11 October 2012.

There is to be an electronic version of the new edition, to which readers of the printed one are recurrently referred and which is to appear 'in staged instalments'; we are not told when (or what their price may be). It will carry an enormous range of material, textual, biographical and bibliographical, which looks likely to dwarf the printed version, whose purchasers should know what they will not be getting for their £650. There are moments, among them the cruel discovery that there is no index, to prompt the ungrateful thought that this is the tourists' package. [*Maureen MacGlashan, who submitted this item, reports that according to the CUP website the electronic edition will include a 'Historical Index: This will provide a set of links into contextual materials necessary to an understanding of Jonson's works'. Apart from this, we learn that 'All of [the] texts will be fully tagged in XML, making it possible for users to run ... textual, concordance, and historical searches and linkages'.*]

Collins: *The fix*, by Damian Thompson (2012, 352 pp, £18). Rev. by Max Pemberton, *Daily Telegraph*, 16 June 2012.

My one quibble with the book is that, for some inexplicable

reason, there is no index. But this is a minor fault in an otherwise enthralling, terrifying work.

Hamish Hamilton: *Diamond Street: the hidden world of Hatton Garden*, by Rachel Lichtenstein (2012, 344 pp, £20). Rev. by Jerry White, *Times Literary Supplement*, 14 September 2012.

Rachel Lichtenstein has not been well-served by her publishers. There is no index, and the book needs one. The many photographs in the text are without captions and the reader has to consult an uninformative list at the beginning to identify them. There has been little if any copy-editing, so among many slips we get 'Ludenwic' for Lundenwic, 'statuary' for statutory and 'gentile' for genteel, while Hiram Maxim, who perfected his machine gun at 57d Hatton Garden, is called both 'Hiriam' and, of all things, 'Sir Miriam'. The author and the people of Hatton Garden she so lovingly describes deserved better.

Heritage Shell Guides: *West Yorkshire*, by William Glossop (2012, 320 pp, £20). Rev. by John Martin Robinson, *Country Life*, 21 November 2012.

This is a splendid book. My only recommendation would be that it might be useful to have a place index as well as a name index in future editions.

Macmillan: *A history of England, Vol II: Tudors*, by Peter Ackroyd (2012, 352 pp, £20). Rev. by Susan Doran, *BBC History Magazine*, 13(12), December 2012.

The author tells a good story, with pace and lively detail. I wish, though, he had included endnotes and an index.

Macmillan: *Shakespeare's local*, by Pete Brown (2012, 384 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Alexander Larman, *The Observer*, 25 November 2012.

The only things that let this amiable book down slightly are the absence of an index, and the somewhat misleading title.

Reaktion: *John Cage*, by Rob Haskins (2012, 184 pp, £10.95).

Wesleyan University Press: *Silence: lectures and writings*, by John Cage (50th anniversary edition, 310 pp, \$30).

Both rev. by Paul Griffiths, *Times Literary Supplement*, 7 September 2012.

Extending the usefulness of his book, Haskins includes a select bibliography and a relatively short list of recommended recordings, but there is no index nor, most unfortunately, has Wesleyan added one to *Silence*.

Seuil: *Claude Simon: une vie à écrire*, by Mireille Calle-Gruber (2011, 450 pp, €25). Rev. by John Fletcher, *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 October 2012.

[The author] was greatly helped in her research by Simon himself and by his widow Rea, whom she has known for many years. The downside of this is that she has been inhibited from saying too much about Simon's first two marriages and numerous extra-marital affairs. More seriously, the absence of an index of names diminishes the usefulness of a book about a writer who moved freely in overlapping literary and artistic circles and who numbered among his friends such very different people as Picasso, Charles Trenet and Jacques Prévert. Never a conformist, Simon managed the feat of keeping his distance from the Communist Party, the Existentialists and the Surrealists without falling out with any of

them. Given the range of his acquaintance, a proper index would have made this biography easier to use as a work of reference.

Obiter dicta

Faber & Faber: *New selected journals: 1939–95*, by Stephen Spender, ed. by Lara Feigel and John Sutherland (2012, 816 pp, £45). Rev. by Simon Armitage, *The Guardian*, 24 November 2012.

The index ... reads like a cross between *Who's Who* and a London restaurant guide ...

Chatto & Windus: *Bertie: a life of Edward VII*, by Jane Ridley (2012, 624 pp, £30, Kindle edn £19.20). Rev. by Magherablade (alias Maureen MacGlashan), www.amazon.co.uk, 20 November 2012.

Being a biography addict and having read several enthusiastic reviews of Jane Ridley's *Life of Edward VII*, I bought the Kindle version from Amazon.co.uk and am finding it every bit as good as most reviewers say: quite unput-downable. But why has the Kindle version castrated the index? The author and publisher have gone to the trouble of producing a good, detailed index for the print version. This is reproduced on Kindle with the note: 'The page references in this index correspond to the printed edition from which this ebook was created. To find a specific word or phrase from the index, please use the search feature of your ebook reader.'

This is a nonsense and shows a complete failure to understand what an index does. It does not list terms which can be found by searching the text, but rather the concepts which underlie those terms.

To take an example from 'Bertie', searching on 'upbringing' brings up 6 occurrences, two of them from the text and four from the index. The four mentions include a total of 55 page references, some of them admittedly double-postings (which means that they are repeated in a different context). Let's say there are 40 plus separate points in the text which the indexer thinks worth drawing the reader's attention to as 'upbringing' compared with just the two a text search produces.

And, with modern publishing techniques there really is no excuse for this cop-out. It really is no big deal to produce a linked index for a Kindle book.

Don't read the book, read the index

Murdoch Press: *Dancing with empty pockets: Australia's Bohemians from 1860*, by Tony Moore (2012, 384 pp, \$29.95). Rev. by Germaine Greer, *The Age*, 3 November 2012.

There's no way I could avoid being sent a complimentary copy of Tony Moore's *Dancing with Empty Pockets: Australia's Bohemians*. I have no intention whatever of reading it, if only because my name is a bulky entry in the index. I know from experience that most of what is written about me in a book like Moore's will be arrant nonsense.

The string of clichés on the cover did nothing to pique my curiosity; Richard Lowenstein may be excited by the thought of 'drunken debauchery, anarchist bookstores, sirens in skin-tight clothing and rituals with human skulls', but the rest of us could beg to be excused from revisiting tropes so tired. As Harry Hooton used to say, 'You can tell a book by its cover.' What the cover of Moore's book tells you is that Moore is a master of the bathetic phrase and doesn't know a maenad when he sees one. Cover girl Dulcie Deamer isn't just wearing a leopard skin, she is also barefoot, rhapsodic and crowned with a garland of fruiting ivy.

I won't read a book like Moore's, but I will read its index, which is how I know that Moore has missed out some of the most important events in the story he is trying to tell.

There is no mention of Eugene Goossens, for example. The offer of the posts of conductor of the Sydney Symphony and director of the conservatorium to Goossens in 1947 marked the coming of age of Australian music. Goossens came from 25 years of conducting some of the most distinguished orchestras in the US and collaborating with the most famous names in 20th-century music. He transformed both the conservatorium and the orchestra, but he also came under the spell of Rosaleen Norton (also unmentioned by Moore) and her pseudo-mystical sex magic. In 1956, while Goossens was out of the country, Norton's flat was broken into by *Sun* reporter Joe Morris, who handed over compromising materials to the police. When he returned to Australia, Goossens, now Sir Eugene, was stopped at Sydney Airport, his baggage searched, and various articles confiscated. After an interview with the police, who showed him the evidence they held on his involvement in Norton's suspect activities, Goossens had no option but to plead guilty to a charge of importing pornographic material. He was sacked and returned to Europe in disgrace, his health and his reputation destroyed.

Norton was an excruciatingly bad artist, but she was not a charlatan. She believed in her own version of Wicca, which was interpreted by overexcited tabloid hacks as Satanism. How her 50-year career of inept painting, irregular living, impecunity, witchcraft and unremitting persecution by the guardians of public morality can have escaped Moore's attention is unfathomable, especially when he spends so many pages on her mates, the Lindsays. Her lover, the surrealist poet Gavin Greenlees, doesn't make the cut, either. To get a truer picture of the Bohemianism that has been a feature of Australian life since the arrival of the First Fleet, Moore had only to search the word bohemian in the online *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

There he would have found the entry for 'Bea[trice] Miles, Bohemian rebel'. (He might also have been inspired to spell Bohemian with a capital.) Bea was a year younger than I am now when she died in 1973. For nearly 50 years she was a familiar sight in downtown Sydney, in her green eyeshade and flapping overcoat, richly intoning Shakespeare on street corners. She was harassed by police, beaten up by taxi drivers because she had no money to pay them, banned from the Public Library, arrested too many times to count. Bea was perhaps the most Bohemian Australian ever. Tony Moore PhD, official historian of Australian bohemianism with a small B, has never heard of her. He has no room for Bessie Guthrie, either.

Most surprising of his hundreds of omissions, in view of the attention he gives to the Melbourne Drift and Barry Humphries, is his failure to mention Peter O'Shaughnessy. When this comes to O'Shaughnessy's attention, he will bombard Moore with letters packed with his own entirely unreliable reminiscences. To hear O'Shaughnessy tell it, without him none of us would have amounted to anything.

It is entirely possible, given the inconsistency of Australian editing, that the index to *Dancing with Empty Pockets* is defective and misleading. Moore's version of this strand of Australian history might not be the bunk I take it to be, but it's a slim chance.

[The author responded in a letter, quoted here in part, to *The Age* (7 November 2012): 'While Dr Greer is entitled to pass judgment on a book which on her own admission she has not read (a common enough practice), I am not sure that a newspaper of record such as *The Age* should publish what amounts to a review when the columnist declares "I won't read a book like Moore's."']

Any one associated with the book industry knows that the cover and frequently the index (as was the case with this book) falls

within the remit of the publisher, and that an author's take on a subject must be assessed on the basis of reading the book's text and references. Commenting on a cover and an index is much easier, less time-consuming, and perhaps *The Age* is setting a new precedent for stream-lined book reviewing in these straightened [*sic*] times.

To declare a work based on a peer-reviewed PhD as "nonsense" without reading it is Dr Greer's privilege, but it is a reckless act and possibly an ethical breach on the part of your newspaper, notwithstanding the merit or otherwise of any of your columnist's opinions.']

Don't browse the index, read the book

Ebooks are not an improvement, they are an addition. They can't be used as an excuse to take books away from the everyday world and into the virtual world. We all know that browsing an index is nothing like being in a bookshop or library ...

Jeanette Winterson, 'There is no excuse ...',
The Guardian, 24 November 2012

Oxford University Press: *God's instruments: political conduct in the England of Oliver Cromwell*, by Blair Worden (2012, 421 pp, £35). Rev. by Keith Thomas, *New York Review of Books*, 8 November 2012.

Trevor-Roper is barely mentioned in the book, but his influence is often discernible Even an entry in the index that reads 'Larkin, Philip, exiguous poet 357' reminds us of the satirical character assassinations in which Trevor-Roper's indexes abounded.

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

Book reviews

Edited by Christopher Phipps and Michael E. Jackson

Indexing: from thesauri to the Semantic Web. Pierre de Keyser. Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2012. 249pp. ISBN 978-1-84334-292-2 (pbk) £52.50 / US\$90.00 / €65.00

This attractively presented book must be one of the most disappointing ever to be selected for review in *The Indexer*, not for any intrinsic faults but because its title is misleading to an extent seldom seen in the United Kingdom since the passage of the Trades Descriptions Act in 1968. It is not about indexing at all; it is about library cataloguing. Furthermore, it is written as though indexing, in the sense in which readers of *The Indexer* and the larger public understand it, hardly existed. Not until page 57 do we find the first reference to that obscure backwater 'book indexing', and among the 133 cited references, just one is to *The Indexer*: Bella Hass Weinberg bobbing up in a sea of librarianship and information science and technology.

If indexing were merely the art of summarizing the key themes of a resource to enable it to be confidently selected or rejected, this book would be a useful guide; but of course it isn't, and the huge field of human analytical indexing as well as the lively controversies around its automation seem altogether to have escaped the author's and editors' notice. I honestly wondered, a few pages in, whether I was the victim of a systematic mistranslation from Flemish because certainly a search for terms with the stem 'index ...' and their replacement by 'catalogu ...'(extending to the title as well) would hugely assist Anglophone readers. De Keyser even seems unperturbed that his cited sources so often refer to cataloguing, and his approach conjures images of the wall of incomprehension that must face some of our colleagues in mainland Europe.

After that health warning, it is fair to ask two questions. First, does the book contain anything useful for indexers, and second – as

we always should ask in this journal – is its own index acceptable? The answers are a cautious 'yes' and a firm 'no' respectively. Let me indicate some areas of wider interest, although they are none of them treated extensively enough to justify any indexer buying the book.

In the first three chapters, de Keyser laments the shortcomings of the pre-coordinate Library of Congress Subject Headings against the reproducibility of post-coordinate, thesaurus-based approaches, and reveals a preference for automatic 'indexing' because it overcomes inconsistency of interpretation. The first rehearses arguments (against needless inversion and classification) with which document indexers should long have been familiar, while the second is far less important in our field, where an internal consistency should suffice. Coverage of standard techniques of automation leads to an endorsement of the online Open Calais system, so enthusiastic that it led me to submit a few pages of my standard tutorial text. The result was a list of proper names and the kind of top-level subject assessment that might suffice for a library catalogue but was worthless as a source of useful index terms. Try it yourself at <http://viewer.opencalais.com>.

The next three chapters provide overviews of automatic indexing of static and moving images and music. Though there is interesting research in the former area, the unsurprising obstacle is the sheer impossibility of pinning down the meaning of an image. In the eight pages on music, I was briefly intrigued by non-representational techniques like 'query by humming', where the scope and speed of computers offers fascinating possibilities for identifying tunes using rhythms and the direction of successive pitch changes.

Chapter 7 introduces taxonomies and ontologies, the latter described as more advanced thesauri. Strangely, the web ontology language, OWL, introduced here as significant for Semantic Web