

A final good : indexing as a critical method and as text
by Michelle Lee Wiseman

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Abstract:
Indexing has been overlooked as a method of critical reading and critique. Therefore, it has not received the attention that other critical methods of reading have. Important questions that begin to examine indexing as a critical method include: How does indexing differ from traditional modes of literary critique? What are the implications of indexing for the reader, the author, and the text? Can the index itself be considered a text? Approximately 15 experienced and established indexers were interviewed by phone and e-mail in an attempt o answer these questions. The responses provided to a series of questions, and comments appearing on the Index-L electronic bulletin board resulted in a realization that indexing has been vastly understudied, and that much scholarship remains to be done in this area.

Indexing is a critical method of reading, a method that is far more rigorous and inclusive than traditional modes of critique which result in formats such as journal articles and papers. Indeed, the index itself can even be considered a text, one which merits the scrutiny other critical methods have received thus far. The world of the indexer is often hidden and dismissed, despite the fact that in the Information Age, the crucial skills an indexer must possess are becoming more important than ever.

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APPROVAL

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Michelle Lee Wiseman

This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

Dr. Linda Karell — (Signature) — Date: 4/17/03

Approved for the Department of English

Dr. Michael Beehler — (Signature) — Date: 4-16-03

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

Dr. Bruce McLeod — (Signature) — Date: 4-21-03

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ABSTRACT

Indexing has been overlooked as a method of critical reading and critique. Therefore, it has not received the attention that other critical methods of reading have. Important questions that begin to examine indexing as a critical method include: How does indexing differ from traditional modes of literary critique? What are the implications of indexing for the reader, the author, and the text? Can the index itself be considered a text?

Approximately 15 experienced and established indexers were interviewed by phone and e-mail in an attempt o answer these questions. The responses provided to a series of questions, and comments appearing on the Index-L electronic bulletin board resulted in a realization that indexing has been vastly understudied, and that much scholarship remains to be done in this area.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"We see the word index in many contexts," says prominent indexer Nancy Mulvaney, "index of leading economic indicators, consumer price index, indexed database files, the Roman Catholic church's Index Librorum Prohibitorum, index of refraction, index finger".[1] Indeed, even Shakespeare makes note of indexes in Troilus and Cressida, saying, "And in such indexes (although small pricks/To their subsequent volumes) there is seen/The baby figure of the giant mass/Of things to come at large".[2]

Indexes and indexing have been around for quite some time. Mulvaney quotes well-known author of Indexing A to Z Hans Wellisch:

> Indexing of books did not begin, as is commonly thought, after the invention of printing. It starting with the rise of the universities in the 13th century. Although no two manuscripts of the same work were exactly alike and folio or page numbers were seldom used, indexes to theological treatises, lives of the saints, medical and legal compendia and, most of all to collections of sermons were compiled, using chapter and section numbers instead of pagination.[3]

Although indexes, and therefore indexers, have been around for several hundred years, much of the literature on indexing and indexers takes the form of instructional manuals, such as Mulvaney's Indexing Books and Wellisch's Indexing A to Z. The practice and its product has not been submitted to the scrutiny the academy has afforded other genres of literatures and literary critique, and in fact, there is little or no scholarship on the topic. Indexing (and its practitioners) have fallen by the wayside, dismissed by the academy and discussed only in limited circles. Library science professionals are aware of the

importance of indexing, as are lawyers who must locate critical information in the vast numbers of law and case books available. Medical professionals no doubt recognize the importance of an index when making a diagnosis or seeking specific treatment information regarding an ailment. And members of the academy? Indexing is just as crucial, serving to help locate quotes or statistics, among other things.

However, for all of its importance, most readers never think twice about the index. Interestingly, this sentiment is precisely the goal of an indexer. A good index should allow the reader to locate the information he or she needs with no trouble: "Readers turn to an index with a very specific purpose, to locate information about a topic. When that topic is easily located, the readers' needs are satisfied; they can leave the index and return quickly to the text".[4] By design, the index is the last thing on the reader's mind. In contrast, "when readers are unable to locate their topic, they must stop and more closely examine the structure of the index. At this point the index has failed to provide quick and easy access to information".[5] As a saying in the indexing world goes, "you only notice the index when it is a bad one." A poor index serves only to confuse the reader and does not allow entry into the text.

Why has indexing been marginalized? Nonfiction, generally speaking, does not enjoy the same attention as does its counterpart. Fictional novels and poetry are the stuff of academia, and indeed, upon which many academic careers are based. However, readers of the following pages will discover that an index is more than a detailed table of contents. In fact, indexing is a type of literary critique, a specific way of reading which results in a particular interpretation of a text—one which takes the form of an index. The power in the relationship between the index, text, author and readers belongs almost solely to the

reader—any reader, a threatening prospect for many. Academic writing, in fact, seems to alienate the reader through the use of exclusive language and also serves to alienate the author of traditional critical pieces through the use of this language. The index, in contrast, is constructed entirely for the reader. It is the job of the indexer to provide a road map of all the entry points into a given text. That is to say that the indexer, by virtue of the particular type of reading called indexing, provides the reader with the power to contextualize the textual experience.

In the following pages, I argue that indexing is, in fact, a critical approach to the text and that the index bears further examination as a text rather than simply a supplement. Readers will note the frequent use of terms which post-structuralist theory has questioned. For purposes of positioning my argument (and because of the limitation of language), those terms are defined below:

text: In some places throughout this piece, I am referring to the physical object. In others, I am referring to the location at which a reader locates something of meaning. The "text," therefore, is a theoretical term rather than a concrete descriptor.

meaning: Meaning is left entirely up to the reader, and again, is not easy to pinpoint. Meaning exists as a product of the reader's ability or desire to contextualize, and differs from reader to reader.

unity, stability, coherence: Part of the argument of my thesis is that there is a stability, unity and coherence to the index and the text upon which it is based. It is, however, important to note that I am arguing for a sort of decentered stability, unity or coherence. That is to say that a reader would not necessarily be able to label a text as "stable," but rather the reader can locate stability in many places (or none) depending on

individual textual experiences with the original manuscript and the index. This decentered unity, stability or coherence originates with the reader, but does not reside in one quote from the text, or one term from the index. Readers will find more on this in the pages of my thesis.

Jonathon Swift notes that:

> The most accomplished way of using books at present is twofold: either, first, to serve them as men do lords,—learn their titles exactly and then brag of their acquaintance; or, secondly, which is, indeed, the choicer, the profounder, and politer method, to get a thorough insight into the index, by which the whole book is governed and turned, like fishes by the tail.[6]

Swift believes that the power in the textual relationship should belong to the reader—that the reader should not be subservient to the text. Indeed, Swift goes to far as noting that the index "governs and turns" the entire book, precisely the argument readers will find in the following pages. I, like Jonathan Swift, believe that the reader is the most important part of the textual experience, and that because the index is devoted entirely to the reader, by extension it too gains importance.

The following project began as a discussion on the Index-L online bulletin board. Many of the issues discussed in this thesis were raised by indexers on this bulletin board, and these comments and observations led to the development of a questionnaire which I sent to about 15 experienced indexers. What began as a simple questionnaire with two or three questions evolved into a discussion with various indexers about authorship, ownership, readership, and the making of meaning. Readers will find quotes from these discussions throughout this thesis. The indexers surveyed responded with enthusiasm and a remarkable ability to articulate current issues in indexing, largely a result of the indexing

population's high level of education. It is evident that these indexers, their voices long silenced, are excited to be heard and considered in the academic world.

The research and interviews conducted are, in some senses, revolutionary, for no such interviews have been conducted with members of the indexing community. The work that remains to be done in this field is a daunting prospect, and I am honored to play a small part in bringing the voices and contributions of indexers to the forefront. I believe, as do many of the indexers who participated in this project, that a proper examination of indexing and indexes can ultimately change the ways in which we read, analyze, interpret and recognize texts.

CHAPTER 1

INDEXING AS A CRITICAL METHOD

> I like to think that, when reading for indexing, one is looking for a pattern that I would liken to a jigsaw puzzle design. The puzzle's picture represents the overall meaning of the text. The pieces of information constitute the individual jigsaw pieces. The difference between this conception and an actual jigsaw puzzle is that indexers paint the picture, design and cut out the shapes of the jigsaw puzzle pieces, and solve the puzzle by putting the pieces into their correct places. Once we 'find the grooves' that make up an appropriate pattern, the pieces click easily into place and we can fit all the information into the puzzle pattern. Some might suggest that it is the author who draws the picture, but the picture that is the index is not identical to the picture of the text. The index is a picture of a picture. The index is a surrogate for the document, a surrogate that contains the essence and not the inessentials.[7]

This indexer is describing an interpretive process unique to indexing. When we perform a traditional critical reading of a piece, are we, in effect, creating a "picture of a picture"? One could certainly make the argument that an interpretation that takes the form of a journal article is a representation of the text, but the difference between this type of interpretation and an index is that the index contains all essential elements from the original text. The reader who utilizes one of the traditional models of literary critique chooses only the portions of the text that are relevant to his or her interpretive bias, but the indexer must treat all of the meaningful pieces of information as important—all of these "pieces" must be used to create an interpretation of the original text.

Whereas a Marxist reading, for example, is a "picture of a picture" (or a representation of the text), what it really does is capture the reflected image of the

interpreter—the Marxist interpreter is essentially creating a picture of the picture that is the text, but the image of the Marxist interpreter himself is indelibly included as well. This type of interpretation, is, after all, not so much about what the original text has to say, or has left out, but about what the interpreter chooses to include in the interpretation. The indexer, on the other hand, is asking critical questions of the text in order to locate not just the information relevant to one reader (the indexer) but to all readers. The indexer does not simply pluck a number of quotes and apply a theoretical model to them, all pieces fitting nicely into an interpretation. For the indexer, it is the essential content of the text that dictates what appears in the interpretation, all of the essential content, in fact. The substance of this essential content will be addressed in detail later in this paper.

One could also argue that indexing is a far more rigorous method of critical inquiry than most because it forces the reader to not only read closely, but to read for every piece of meaning and information, and to represent these meanings and information in the interpretation. While a reader who chooses to utilize one particular school of literary criticism is concerned with the entry points he or she located into the text, the indexer is concerned with all entry points into the text.

On the surface these two critical methods seem similar—the traditional approach recognizes one set of entry points and the indexer's approach another. However, it is important to note that traditional modes of critique, which appear in traditional formats such as journal articles and papers, begin and end with the text. That is to say the interpretive act takes place after a reader makes contact with the text, and the resultant interpretation exists solely in the context of this text. Readers who subsequently come into contact with the same text may or may not have use for previously generated

interpretive materials. Those who come into contact with the interpretation are, in a sense, limited by the interpretation to the one text upon which the interpretation itself is based—the textual experience in this case cannot extend beyond this relationship. Thus, traditional modes of interpretation become exclusive, denying access to a broad base of readers by maintaining relevance only to those who are familiar with the text.

These traditional modes of interpretation are also exclusive in that the text and the interpretation are inextricably bound. That is to say that the two pieces do not and cannot exist independently, in effect excluding the reader from locating more entry points into the text (See Figure 1.1). In Figure 1.1, the text, represented by the circle, and the traditional interpretation, represented by the rectangle, illustrate this exclusive relationship. The entry points located within the rectangle are accessible only through the text (or the circle) or the interpretation (the rectangle). In this way, entry points into the text that may appear on the outside of this figure (the star) are inaccessible, and therefore excluded.

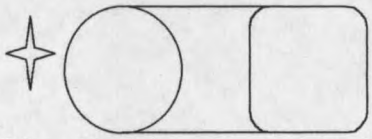


Figure 1.1 Exclusivity of Traditional Modes of Interpretation

This exclusivity extends to the intervention of other texts as well. For example, consider the text To Kill A Mockingbird. Numerous examples of traditional modes of interpretation exist in the form of journal articles. Each of these critiques exists in a partnership with the text, each critique excluding the others from sharing the same entry points, or, put another way, from following the same interpretive path. Each interpretive

piece exists independently of other interpretive pieces (one journal article exists separately from another journal article, even if bound together in a volume). That is to say that it is impossible for any reader to view the sum of the entry points to a given text simultaneously because each journal article must be read independently of one another. This is exclusive because each journal article contains entry points which are contextualized by the content of the journal article. In addition, these entry points are bound by the journal article in such a way that there is little overlap between journal articles (See Figure 1.2). After all, we do not see the same critical piece published over and over.

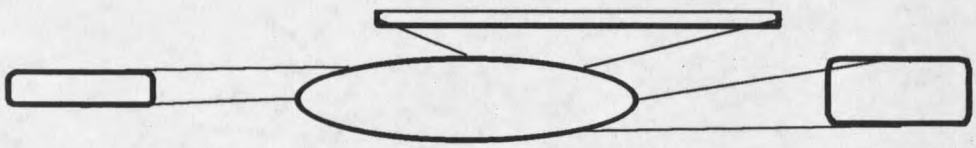


Figure 1.2 Relationship Between Critiques and Critiques and Text

Figure 1.2 illustrates the relationships between critiques (rectangles and squares) of a particular text (the circle) and the relationships of these critiques to the text itself.. Note that the individual critical pieces do not overlap, and indeed, do not even take the same shape. The rectangular shapes, which represent interpretations which take traditional forms such as journal articles, contain entry points to the text. These entry points do not overlap because they are entirely bound by the context of the interpretive piece in which they appear, and, again, are accessible only through either the text itself, or the interpretive piece itself. These critical pieces exclude each other through their relationship to the text. In practice, interpretive literature often makes reference to other pieces of interpretive literature. Rather than cementing a bond between the two critical pieces, rather this serves

to put the critical literature itself in the position the text occupies in the figure above. It is, in essence, a substitution of one text for another.

In contrast to traditional modes of literary critique which begin and end with the original text, the index begins with the text and ends with the reader. In order to produce an index, the indexer must engage in an interpretive and analytical process (discussed in detail later in the paper) involving the text. The product, however, unlike a journal article or paper which is bound to the text itself and so ends with the text, is an index which ends with the reader. Because terms that appear in the index appear alone, with no surrounding sentences or paragraphs, the reader is forced to provide a context for these terms. Unlike the entry points which are discussed in a journal article, for instance, the entry points that the index makes note of are free of context (with the exception of the structural element of the index, discussed more fully in chapter two). The reader is free to interpret or author an interpretation of what the terms or entry points mean, and therefore free to author an interpretation of what the information located through the entries might mean. Observe Figure 1.3:

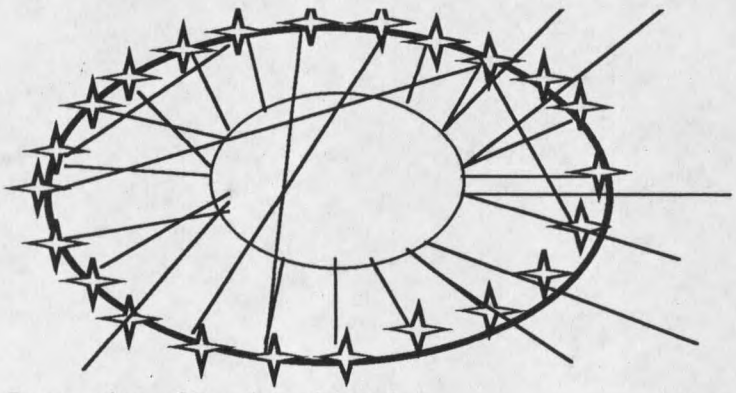


Figure 1.3 Interaction of Reader with Index

In Figure 1.3, several things are apparent. First, the figure illustrates the act of indexing. The indexer's interaction with the text (the inner circle) results in the connections between the text and the entry points (the stars). These connections are

illustrated by the lines drawn from the text to the entry points. Second, the figure illustrates the reader's experience with the index. Since, as discussed above, the reader must contextualize the terms or entry points in the index, the lines drawn outside the circle illustrate the reader's point of view. The reader locates an entry point into the text, and follows it into the text itself, or uses the initial entry point to locate another, different entry point in the index (indicated by the lines that go directly from one entry point to another). Once the reader locates the information in the text, he or she is then free to create his or her own interpretation of the information. This act is illustrated by the lines that go from the entry point to the text and back outside the circle again. Thus, the interpretive act of the index begins with the text (and the indexer) and ends with the reader (and the interpretations the reader may form as a result of utilizing the index).

The index is obviously far more inclusive than traditional modes of literary critique. Entry points into the text that appear and are discussed in a journal article are bound by the context of the article itself. Entry points which appear in the index are bound only by the reader's ability or willingness to contextualize. The entry points that appear in the index appear simultaneously, rather than independently as Figure 1.2 illustrates. In addition, part of the point of the existence of the index is precisely for readers who have not yet engaged with the text. In fact, many readers who are searching for a resource will peruse the index to gauge the probable usefulness of the text, in contrast with traditional modes of critique which necessitate a familiarity with language of the academy or the text itself.

As a final point in discriminating between the more traditional modes of critical analysis such as journal articles and papers and the index, stability must be addressed. In

the post-structuralist era, the notion of the text as a stable entity has been questioned. And, in fact, as seen in light of current critical methods, stability is non-existent. Refer back to Figures 1.1 and 1.2. The text is constantly being re-interpreted, and consequently exclusive relationships are maintained with every critical piece published. This creates a tension between the interpretive piece and the text, between the text and the reader and the reader and the interpretive piece, a tension which does not allow the text to exist as a stable entity. Indexing and indexes, however, allow the text to exist in a type of decentered stability. The text is not located so much within a particular circle, but within the scope of the interpretive process (See Figure 1.3), including the reader, the text and the index.

An additional consideration is that the indexer is concerned with locating each entry point into the text. The reader is concerned with utilizing these entry points to arrive at his or her own interpretive conclusions. Figure 1.3 illustrates that the function of the index, in fact, helps shore the stability of the text. Note that in some places the lines which represent the path of the reader continue through the text, and, in other places stretch from one entry point to another. In most cases, the reader will be led through the text to a personal interpretation, and in other cases the index will utilize cross-references to lead the reader another entry point that exists in the index. These pathways which progress through the text act as support beams. Compare the diagram (Figure 1.4) below which depicts the effect on stability of traditional modes of critique and the index.



Figure 1.4 Comparison of Traditional Modes of Literary Critique and Indexing

In the first figure, the traditional modes of literary critique exist in an infinite plane (the straight line), each separate critique occupying a spot on the line. The planes that surround the text cannot intersect, since at that point the critiques would be duplicates of each other, and would be the point where entry points into the text are, literally, the same point. Each critique maintains an exclusive relationship with the text, as discussed above. Thus, with the traditional modes of literary critique, the text is pulled back and forth and, in fact, cannot be stable. There are areas where the text can, in fact, "escape," defying the reader operating in the traditional critical mode the ability to locate any entry points.

The second figure, however, illustrates a different relationship between literary interpretation and the text. In this figure, the interpretation surrounds the text, and the entry points into the text exist simultaneously along the same plane. The tension that exists in the first figure and which destroys stability does not exist in the second figure because this interpretation is inclusive. Thus, the effect of the index and indexing on stability is to strengthen it, despite the fact that this stability is decentered. It is a circular, and therefore infinite, critical approach. The index, in effect, gives the reader and the text more power within the textual relationship since it is the reader who creates context, but it is the text which dictates entry points, and it is the reader who must subsequently

contextualize the information found within the text.

In addition to being a more rigorous approach to textual critique, indexing is also applicable to more than literary media. While one would be hard pressed to perform a structuralist reading on an article in a science magazine or newspaper about brucellosis, the methods of reading involved in indexing can be applied to almost anything. Indexers can index books (both fiction and non-fiction), newspaper articles, magazine articles, journal articles, pamphlets, instructional manuals, minutes of meetings for organizations—the list is almost limitless. Indexers can also index visual images for museums, web pages, and advertisements, essentially expanding traditional notions of what is identified as "text" (and because of this bringing new ways to interpret these things).

Consider also the idea of intertextuality. Graham Allen says, "The act of reading, theorists claim, plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings, is to trace those relations. Reading thus becomes a process of moving between texts. Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations. The text becomes the intertext."[8] The indexer is, in effect, creating textual relations (between the text and the index and between the index, the text and the reader) while also allowing the reader to do the same because the reader must contextualize terms in the index. Indexing can be said to discover meanings in a text, and trace the relations of which Allen speaks. For the reader, the index embodies the notion that meaning is "something which exists between a text and all other texts." However, in contrast with Allen's notion of intertextuality moving the reader out from the text, the index moves readers into the text from the broader "network of textual relations,"

and back out again (See Figure 1.5). The reader begins with an idea of what the text may be about, or what may be contained in the text. This idea is informed by many other texts, from other books the reader may have read to television shows or movies. The reader scans the index for a particular term or idea, contextualizes it and follows the direction provided in the index *into* the text, tracing textual relations. The reader is then exposed to the type of intertextuality of which Allen speaks--a piece of information in the text has meaning to the reader in relation to other texts the reader has been exposed to. No other type of critical reading hinges so much on this unique type of intertextuality. The academic essay or scholarly journal article exists on the outskirts of the intertextual circle—it does not lead readers directly into the text itself by virtue of its existence and function, nor does it trace textual relations in such a literal way. Indexing is the only critical method which moves the reader through the text.

Indexing is, in fact, a genre of literary criticism. Indexers ask critical questions of the text while reading, in much the same manner as other readers performing a critical reading—the product simply takes a different form than that of the journal essay or scholarly article. The implications for academia of accepting indexing as a critical approach might change the way we teach our students to read, and to think—it may give them the tools to evaluate and analyze many more things on a higher level because of the broad applications of indexing. An index is not simply a tool for a reader to locate information in a text—it is a critical approach worth the consideration other schools of literary criticism have been given.

Indexable Material

If indexing is to be considered a critical approach, one obvious question is what are indexers doing differently from regular readers who are preparing an interpretation of a given piece?

Indexers must locate within the text the indexable material. A recent topic on the Index-L online bulletin board. "I'm indexing a book that I can't find much indexable material in," the indexer stated. "It's mostly just some bizarre stream of consciousness thing about management, that has no hooks, no particular info, no direction that I can see, and a lot of flowery writing".[9] For this indexer, the problem seemed to be that book has no controlling idea or topic except for the very general idea of 'management.' In addition, she noted that "there is very little factual stuff, just a lot of examples of the author's experiences, without any particular conclusions drawn." Thus, the idea of 'aboutness' can be problematic when the text doesn't seem to be saying much of anything. Simply asking what the text is about or what it is saying, in these cases, will not yield much in the way of indexable material.

This example is particularly important and revealing for several reasons. Generally, when indexing a book that has a defined topic and accomplishes defined objectives (for example, the text informs readers about restaurant options in Austin, Texas), the indexable material relates to the topic and these objectives, and must actually contain information or meaning of substance. A sentence such as "The restaurants in and around the Austin area have sprung up as a result of many cultural influences" is not indexable. The information contained in the sentence is general and could be considered common knowledge. On the other hand, a sentence such as "Most of the Mexican

restaurants in Austin are family-owned and operated, the result of which are friendly eateries with authentic Mexican cuisine" is indexable. The material is specific and not common knowledge. The indexer must question whether the information is something that readers might infer or intuit, or is too general to be considered of help to readers searching for information or meaning, or if the information is specific and can be considered informative. The indexer must also try to imagine the reader who might look for information regarding the cultural influences on restaurants in Austin. This reader would not be assisted in any way by finding that the restaurants in Austin, have, in fact, been influenced by many cultures. In the second example, however, the indexer can imagine a reader who is looking for information regarding Mexican restaurants. The reader that finds the entry for restaurants with a subheading of Mexican, or the heading for Mexican restaurants will find information of substance.

In the example mentioned above, the indexer felt that all of the statements made in the text were too general. The indexer was unable to construct a reader who might attempt to locate the information contained in the text, or, in effect, she could not construe what might called reader-intent. In addition, the indexer was unable to construct herself in the reader/indexer role. While she could read the text, she had a very difficult time reading it as an indexer. Just as one text may not lend itself to a feminist critique, for example, this particular book did not lend itself to the approach an indexer uses, which is locating entry points into the text.

An additional complication to locating indexable material within the text is the notion of authorial intent. The indexer cannot consider what the author might have intended to say because the index is based on and is a guide to what is present in the text.

The indexer must use the context of surrounding paragraphs and pages to determine the meaning of a sentence or fact, and place a representative term for it in the index. If an indexer chose to index what he or she feels the author intended to say, the index would be worthless as a tool for readers who are using it to locate something within the text. The indexer would, in fact, be usurping the authority of the writer by creating an interpretive path into the text and locating the author in particular words, sentences, paragraphs or pages. Since "...there is no...author's authority" and "whatever [the author] may have wanted to say, he has written what he has written,"[10] the indexer is not free to conjecture about what the author meant. This is different from considering what a certain paragraph or sentence or fact means in context with the rest of the text, a practice which seems to fall more in line with more traditional critical approaches. It is important to note as well that author intent is subjective. That is to say that in traditional modes of critical inquiry author intent is dictated to the reader—the index, on the other hand, gives the reader authorial intent.

The Construction of a Reader and Reader-intent

In addition to locating indexable material within the text, the indexer must consider reader-intent. In other words, the indexer must construct a reader which is representative of all possible readers. Indexers must ask themselves who will be searching for a particular piece of indexable material and why. As stated in the example above, if the indexer is unable to construct a reader who might look for a particular piece of information, and a reason why, then the material is generally not indexable. This is a different approach, obviously, from traditional modes of critical reading which do not

consider reader intent, and indeed sometimes seem to alienate the reader (and her intent) altogether through the use of exclusive language.

However, when I say all readers, it is not precisely accurate. A reader who is looking for information on restaurants in Austin, Texas will not be looking for that information in a text about property rights and the environment. Therefore, the intentions of the reader can be assumed by the indexer. If a reader is looking at a book entitled "Restaurants of Austin," one might be reasonably assured that the reader is looking for information on restaurants of Austin. One indexer believes that "Readers are a tricky thing...when it comes to indexing. When I wrote my thesis and dissertation, for example, I knew that my audience was my committee, and the academic community. When I am writing an index I must imagine the intentions of a constructed or fictional reader and ask what this reader might be looking for in terms of information, and also attempt to imagine why. If I can't come up with a mental picture of a reader who is looking for what is contained in this particular sentence, then I don't include it in the index".[11] Most authors of academic or critical essays are not concerned with a picture of the reader regarding inclusion of certain entry points into the text, at least not to the extent that indexers are.

In most schools of literary criticism, the ideas of author intent, audience, and readership is discussed in relation to fiction. Indeed, much of the critical literature utilized in the academic setting makes reference to fiction, rather than non-fiction. But, if indexing is to be considered a critical approach, and a more rigorous approach than traditional methods, shouldn't it apply to both fiction and non-fiction (since traditional critical methods can be applied to both)?

Fiction is only indexed in certain cases. For example, a work of fiction might be

published in several volumes, or with different forewords and introductions in each edition. In these cases, an index might be needed to keep track of the information or ideas contained in each introduction, or in each volume. In some instances an author might publish a series of books featuring one character, and an index might be an essential tool for keeping track of character development chronologically or plot lines. In all of these examples the indexer can assume to know reader-intent as well, however, it is not the same reader-intent that is considered when indexing works of non-fiction.

What is the user of an index created for a work of fiction looking for? The reader of a series of mystery novels, for example, would likely be searching for information regarding a particular character or a particular plot line, or even a certain quote. The indexer, then, can construct an idea of what is indexable, and include these items in the index. This is slightly different from indexing a non-fiction book where the reader-intent is to locate information or meaning. It should be noted, also, that while the indexer is performing a particular type of critical reading which results in an index, the index itself does not include items such as "absent presences" or "authorial intent." That is to say that the index does not delve into schools of literary criticism, or particular ways to read the text, but rather points to the information so that readers may form their own interpretation of what is present (or not) in the text. Oddly, and contrary to what might logically be expected, the indexing process is less interpretive when applied to fiction than when applied to works of non-fiction. In both cases, however, the product that results from the indexer's application of critical methods is much different than the result of traditional literary critiques.

Index Users

Creating an index is not as simple a task as it might seem. The indexer does, of course, read the text carefully for items of importance. However, these items of importance may be in the form of a statistic or fact (information) or indexable material might take the form of a concept which is not specifically named (meaning). Information and meaning are equally important in the construction of a comprehensive index. In order for information and meaning to be easily accessible to readers, one of the first critical questions an indexer must ask is "who is the audience for this index?"

The question of audience for indexers is complex because it involves consideration of other items. While an author writing an essay for a science textbook for high school freshman will have a very definite idea of her audience, an indexer has only a general notion of who will be utilizing their work. For example, while a highly complex book on property rights and the environment will no doubt enjoy circulation in the academic community, it may also serve as a reference for undergraduates doing research on water rights or even as a reference for environmental groups. The indexer must create an index which will be equally accessible for not one group of readers, but all groups of readers. One indexer notes that, "...audience is one of the most important things that I consider when creating an index. If I choose the wrong terms or if I assume the audience to be just one group of people, other people who use the index will not be able to find what they need,"[12] pushing this mode of interpretation nearer the exclusivity of the more traditional critical modes.

The author writing the essay for the high school science book may feel comfortable in choosing terms which high school freshman might use. The indexer, however, must

attempt to choose terms for the index which not only are descriptive of the information or concept contained in the text, but that are easily understood by potential users of the index and that maintain the vocabulary or terms used in the text itself. Considering the idea that each word has a connotation or denotation, choosing the wrong term for inclusion in the index can mislead readers, not only about what they will find when they turn to a certain page, but in some cases about the meaning or scope of the text itself. "...I believe that term selection is important because if I screw up here, the index is worthless to readers," one indexer says. "If I choose the wrong word...I can mislead readers and distort the meaning of what the author wrote."[13] Consider that if an indexer chose to, he or she could choose only terms which relate to the politics of power in a book about property rights. A reading such as this performed by an indexer would lead to the creation of an index which exposes, perhaps, ideas about who is allowed to own property and what is at stake for property owners, but would not properly represent the content of the book. The reader who scans the index to find a particular term or piece of information cannot escape the indexer's interpretation. That is to say that the reader would either choose to disregard the text because it seems to be about something other than what the reader understood the content to be, or would be forced to follow along the same interpretive path as the indexer, which may or may not make sense as an interpretation to the reader.

The indexer must also consider the integrity of the text itself. Choosing to index a book on property rights by including only terms or concepts which are relevant to the politics of power destroys, in some measure, the integrity of the text. James Thorpe says "[the text] may be aesthetically imperfect or unfinished, and it is altogether possible that an indefinite number of people may be capable of improving it. But in the authorial sense it is

already finished, it is already complete, it already has that final integrity which should be the object of the critic's chief attention. This is the final integrity which it is the business of the literary critic to...understand as an order of words in the context of all literature."[14] The implication of Thorpe's statements is that the indexer, in particular, because of the direct link between the index, the reader, and the text, is not free to violate the integrity of the text by choosing to interpret the text in any way. The job of the indexer is to provide entry points into the text for all readers, and to all relevant and meaningful concepts and pieces of information. Providing links only to information about politics of power creates an exclusive relationship with the text, much more in line with the traditional modes of critique (See Figures 1.1 and 1.2), effectively denying entry into the text for readers. The index which includes only terms regarding politics of power is fragmenting the text by allowing the reader avenues to only one aspect of the text, and is, in effect, creating a different text—one about politics of power.

How, then, does an indexer choose terms that are both relevant to the text and all groups of readers, and maintains the integrity of the text? The answer is, as in any type of writing or interpretation, the terms the indexer chooses are subjective. A phrase that means one thing to one reader may not mean the same to another, just as the sentence that means one thing to one author may mean something entirely different to another. The twist with indexing, however, is that in most cases the indexer must choose just one word to summarize an entire concept or piece of information, demanding that the reader fill in the context and allowing the reader to create meaning.

Term Selection and Indexer Interpretations

All readers, at times, come across texts that are distasteful, that do not jibe with personal beliefs or, in certain cases, are even offensive. The reader who is reading this type of text for pleasure may choose to discontinue reading, and the reader who is performing a critical reading on the text may use the questions he or she asks of the text to maintain a distance from it, in effect treating the text as an object which can be examined. For the indexer, though, a critical question in indexing anything is "what is this really about?" The indexer must actually name the concept or information (implying some measure of power which may partially explain the absence of critical literature on indexing). This naming, is, of course, subjective, and the nature of creating an index necessitates certainty on the part of the indexer regarding meanings. The indexer must be able to pinpoint a meaning, and suspend post-structuralist questions regarding stability of meaning long enough to find an appropriate name for the information. However, the indexer cannot choose to name a concept arbitrarily. The name the indexer chooses must be related to what the reader might look for, the vocabulary the reader might use, the meaning of the concept and the language used in the text. Choosing such a name is difficult in itself, but when the text is offensive or abrasive, the indexer faces more challenges such as personal bias.

In some cases, what the text is really about, or what the phrase or concept is really about can be problematic. For example, a colleague was indexing a short book that was "racist and cruel" and attempted to "justify violence as a means to control minorities."[15] In order for the indexer to be able to produce an inclusive index, or an index which includes all possible readers of this text and that includes all indexable material, she was

forced to pinpoint what the text was really saying about the use of violence to control minorities, and subsequently examine her own beliefs regarding the message of the text in order to avoid censorship of any type.

Because she found the text to be extremely offensive, identifying her interpretive bias was important in order to avoid creating an index that was exclusive, or, in other words, an index which effectively blocks entry into the text from the index for certain readers because of term selections that are too subjective to make sense of or which might leave out pieces of information, offensive though they may be. Indexer Susan Klement notes

> Removing emotionally charged terms from an index, or refusing to put them in in the first place is a form of censorship. Hans Wellisch states (on page 322 of the second edition of his Indexing from A to Z): 'Bias in indexing, whether narrative or straightforward factual, favorable or unfavorable, must be avoided as being unprofessional and unethical.' If they ardently disagree with the theses of books, indexers can choose not to index them...[16]

Indexers must represent the entire content of the book without allowing personal interpretive bias to distract or distort the material represented in the text. It is, of course, difficult to discuss content without asking who or what determines content (whereas traditional modes of critical inquiry are based on interpretive bias). For purposes of this paper, it is the indexer (in his or her capacity as a reader) that determines what content is. It should be noted here that this is much different from traditional modes of critique. Whereas the indexer is concerned with content, and interprets what he or she reads for this content, subscribers of the more traditional methods are concerned with interpretation,

and the content is interpreted in order to produce a final, interpretive or critical piece.

For many indexers, the prospect of stowing personal beliefs while evaluating content is easier said than done. For example, Bobbi Swanson was faced with a book

> that I literally had to grit my teeth to get through.[The book] was written by a Mormon lady-I have no problem at all with working with any religion, but it was the content-the women's role in the home, church, and society. Talk about the dark ages, her viewpoint was that women were totally subserviant, were their husband's property, and so on and so on. Very hard to swallow.[17]

Jacqui Brownstein, another established indexer admits, "I'll index any subject," but adds that "sometimes I have to lock up my personal opinions and beliefs and be a professional."[18] Term selection is generally a matter of representing material in the text accurately and objectively, making the identification of any personal interpretive bias on the part of the indexer crucial to the creation of an inclusive index. In fact, indexers must often put aside personal beliefs in order to create an index which is not censored—this is almost the opposite of the more traditional modes of inquiry which are based on interpretive bias.

Indexing as a Critical Approach

Just as readers who are approaching a text ask certain questions of it in order to arrive at an interpretation, so too do indexers. Important questions for indexers include, but are not limited to, issues regarding audience, term selection, personal interpretive bias, and reader-intent. How do these issues form a critical approach to reading and interpretation?

While some schools of literary criticism do consider audience, for the indexer

audience is paramount. For instance, a historical approach to a text might ask who the readers of the text were and how this affected the reception of the piece. For an indexer, the audience dictates some of what the indexer creates. While the critic who is considering audience in the accepted schools of literary criticism (Formalist, Structuralist, Deconstructionist, New Historicism to name a few) consider audience in an abstract form, the indexer must go so far as imagining the reader and what he or she might want from the index and the text. The reader, or audience, is directly linked to the text of the index, and through the text of the index to the text of the book. This is a direct, traceable link. Readers relying upon other critical conventions considering audience are not so concerned with the audience for their critique--in fact, it seems to be one of the last considerations. While traditional critics might be concerned with the notion of audience in the text to which the critical application is being applied, this audience does not dictate or affect the tone or vocabulary of the critics written interpretation. Therefore, the link between the reader and the text of the interpretation may (if the critical piece includes entry points which the reader finds meaningful) or may not (if the critical piece excludes entry points which the reader finds meaningful) lead directly to the original piece. Indexing is the one critical method which is concerned with locating entry points into the text which lead the reader not only directly back to the text, but directly to a personal interpretation which can go beyond the text. "When I index," says one indexer, "I am trying to create an objective interpretation that gets the reader back into the text itself as quickly as possible."[19] Another indexer notes, "I suppose that someone could read the index as an interpretation of a book--it does contain the essential parts of the book in the format that I choose--but I like to think that what the index really does is to open doorways to the book...I created

the path for the reader to the information s/he needs."[20]

In addition, there is a great deal of space in the index for the reader to author interpretations. Terms in the index appear, in most cases, as solitary words. There are no surrounding sentences or paragraphs to help the reader make meaning. Thus, the reader is forced to contextualize the terms in the index. If the indexer has done a good job with term selection, and has evaluated interpretive bias well enough, the reader will be able to contextualize index terms with little difficulty. For example, if I created an index entry for the restaurants in Austin book that used terms "property rights" or "water rights," the reader would be unable to contextualize these terms with regard to the original text. However, entries such as "Mexican" and "pizza" will have meaning and the reader can imagine or create a connection between the simple words and the text itself It is the reader, then, who is constructing the context for the words in the index.

Contextualization is unique to indexing too in that readers often peruse the index when deciding whether or not to purchase a particular text. Indexer Julia Marshall says, "I've had the experience of writing an index for a controversial book that the author wanted to edit out some more 'objectionable' entries because the information was taken out of context".[21] It is evident that in this case the author of the text was aware of the contextualization process which occurs in the reader. Since the index can be a selling point for many non-fiction books, the author did not want the content of the book misrepresented by offensive or loaded terms appearing in the index without some kind of mediation. This example is particularly interesting not only as it relates to issues of reader contextualization, but also because the author seems disinclined to allow the indexer to actually index the material present in the text itself. The author in this case is imposing his

or her intent upon the index, and therefore upon the reader who must follow the interpretive map of the index into and through the text.

This complex type of contextualization does not occur when reading an academic journal article that interprets a piece in a particular way. The reader may treat the interpretation as a text separately from the text itself. Indexing is the only critical method which is inextricably tied to the text itself and allows the reader a direct role in interpretation of the original text.

Term selection is another area in which indexing seems to stand out as a critical method of reading. When I perform a traditional critical reading of a text and write my interpretation in essay or article form, I am bound by the language and vocabulary of my audience and of the particular school of criticism I have chosen to utilize. When I perform a reading of a text and produce an interpretation in index form I am concerned with the language of the audience of the text, with the language of the text and with the language that is most descriptive and accurately depicts what the text says. Again, indexing is the only type of critical reading that asks readers/indexers to consciously choose language that is accessible for any reader. The link between the reader, the index and the text is direct. The academic essay or journal is exclusive in its language use, and therefore excludes as many, if not more, readers than it includes.

Personal interpretive bias is not generally considered in traditional modes of literary criticism. The professor who is writing a Marxist critique of Uncle Tom's Cabin may be aware of his or her bias toward a particular interpretation, but that bias is the very substance of the interpretation itself. When authoring an index, the indexer must be careful to *not* allow interpretive bias to override the need for the index to be as objective

as possible. The academic essay or journal article can be presented as objective, but there is a sense on the part of the reader that the author is attempting to convince the reader of his or her point of view. The reader, in other words, cannot locate herself within the text of the critique. On the other hand, the index allows the reader to author an interpretation by presenting the information in the book in the most objective manner possible (through thinking about connotation and denotation when selecting terms, through making an attempt to utilize terms which accurately represent the text, and through recognizing and naming interpretive bias). Examination of interpretive bias when indexing favors the reader—examination of bias when applying traditional critical methods favors the author of the criticism.

The idea of reader-intent is also unique to indexing. As previously discussed, the indexer must imagine a typical reader, and the intentions of this reader. The indexer is, in effect, authoring an audience for the book by envisioning a reader who represents all readers. Authors of scholarly essays or papers which are produced through a traditional critical reading do not, generally, sit down and think about a typical reader for their interpretive piece. The goal of the scholarly essay or term paper is not to envision a reader that represents all readers in order to ensure exhaustive access not only to the text of the interpretation, but to the text upon which the interpretation was performed as well. Again, traditional modes of criticism written in the form of the academic essay or journal article provide no link between the reader, the interpretation and the original text, and, in fact, serve to exclude as many readers as are included.

If we are to consider indexing as a critical mode of reading, we must also consider how the index might function as text itself, since pieces of criticism, whether a journal

article or abstract, in many ways function as texts.

CHAPTER 2

INDEX AS TEXT

P.W. Wetherill states that "what is worthy of speculation...is the extent to which textual criticism is an end in itself".[22] If indexing is considered to be a type of textual or literary criticism, examining whether or not the index itself can be considered "an end" is crucial to appreciation of theoretical issues surrounding the act of indexing and the functions of an index.

The question of whether an index (as the product of a type of textual criticism) can be considered "an end" is in some ways a simple one. The most obvious response is, of course, that the index is an end because of the physical location it occupies within a text. The index appears in the same location as an epilogue or summary—that is to say, the index appears at the end of a text. It is clear, however, that the words "an end" ask readers to consider much more than the final section of a piece. "An end" in this case has more to do with the ability of the index or any other piece of textual criticism to stand on its own as a separate text than it has to do with completing an essay or book. Stated another way, one might ask "How far may one assume that [a] text is in some way an independent entity which can be described without reference to any external context: society, literary traditions, historical events, moral values?"[23] In order to answer such a question, pinpointing what a piece actually achieves (considering meaning and impact) and the application of textual criticism to the piece (or, performing an evaluation of textual achievement) is extremely important.[24]

Sound

Sound is one of the ways we use to understand communication, either written or verbal. For example, stressing one syllable or using a particular intonation can change a statement to a question. Reading a particular poem aloud can change the entire meaning of the poem for readers. So, too, does sound occupy an important place within the realm of textual criticism. To effectively evaluate what a piece achieves (and therefore provide a key as to whether the piece is "an end in itself"), locating or creating meaning through examination of sound is crucial.

Consider the poetry of Wallace Stevens. Stevens' poetry is commonly acknowledged to have a musical, lyrical quality. For example, readers cannot help but note the melodic quality in the following selection from Notes Toward A Supreme Fiction:

> A thing final in itself and, therefore, good:
> One of the vast repetitions final in
> Themselves and, therefore, good, the going round
>
> And round and round, the merely going round,
> Until merely going round is a final good
> The way wine comes at a table in a wood.[25]

Several interesting things are happening here. One, Stevens is forcing the reader to go "round and round" while reading the poem. The reader is achieving that "final good" that Stevens speaks of merely through the act of reading the repetitions of some of the words in the poem. Second, the repetition is achieved through repeating sounds. Third, and most interesting, Stevens' poem seems to comment directly on the act of textual criticism. The "going round and round" that he speaks of is directly linked to reading and the reader, and Stevens seems to be suggesting that this activity is "a final good," or, in Wetherill's

words "an end in itself."

Do the sounds in the poem (or in the reader's mind) change the meaning of the poem Notes Toward A Supreme Fiction? Not for this reader. Does sound contribute to an understanding of the poem? Absolutely, and in fact it is an integral part of what makes this poem inhabitable, linking the reader to the text of the piece in a way that is inescapable. Thus, the impact of sound in this particular selection is almost immeasurable so inextricably connected are the text and the reader and the sounds.

While one may certainly make an argument that Stevens is commenting upon textual criticism, what might happen if one applied a particular type of textual criticism? In the previous chapter, I attempted to persuade readers that indexing is, indeed, a type of literary or textual criticism. Can Notes Toward A Supreme Fiction be indexed? If so, how might the sound and lyricalness of the poem translate to the index? Does sound in the index help morph the index into an independent text?

I created an index for Notes Toward A Supreme Fiction in an attempt to answer these questions. First, the act of indexing a Stevens poem is complex and difficult. Much of the language Stevens uses, while poetic and melodic, is obtuse and obscure, making it difficult for a reader to pinpoint a specific meaning. Since the indexer is supposed to find the best way to embody a concept or idea in the index with one or two words, capturing the essence of Stevens poem is a daunting prospect. In fact, I resorted in several cases to placing lines from the poem under an entry for "obscurity." The index, then, represents my interpretation of Stevens' work, and includes all the elements from the poem that I deemed important. As always while indexing I attempted to make the poem accessible to all readers by preserving the language of the poem (in this case utilizing terms such as

fiction and experience) while also attempting to avoid using terms that are so narrow and unique as to make the index and poem exclusive. The short answer, then, to the question of whether the poem can be indexed is yes, but not without great difficulty.

What about the lyrical quality in the poem? Does it translate to the index? Consider the following, put together from entries in the index:

constancy
of change
creation
caused by feeling
dark
scholar's
death
and fiction
Descartes
desire
distortion
held dear

While I am certainly not arguing that the selection above is representative of outstanding poetry, the selection does contain certain "poetic" and "lyrical" aspects, both because these index entries are representative of a poem that definitely embodies these qualities, and because of qualities such as alliteration and the ways in which sound affects the meaning of the selection (readers can refer to the attached index to locate the lines represented by the entries). Different readers will read these lines in many distinct ways, placing emphasis on some words, and changing the meter to coincide with each reading. Some of the same lyricalness and melodic movements of Stevens poem do translate to the index, but do the sounds that appear in the index serve to make it an independent piece?

One could argue that because the words (and therefore sounds) that appear in the index would not be there but for the presence of the poem itself, the index is too

connected to Stevens work to be independent. However, it is important to note that the sounds that appear in the index, the arrangement of words and the particular type of lyricalness and melody or meter is unique to the index. The sounds from the selection discussed above combine to create a unique meaning, separate from that of the poem. Here, again, I am struck by how inhabitable Stevens' work is. The index entries are, in fact, a "creation caused by feeling," or, in other words, can be seen as a unique product (creation) of (caused by) a critical act (or interpretation, or feeling). The index, based on the above-discussed issues regarding sound, can and should be considered "an end in itself."

Meaning

In addition to consideration of the relation of sound to textual criticism as an independent text, meaning is also important. Much work in the academy has been devoted to the limitations of language as well as the elusiveness of meaning itself, however, for purposes of this paper I am more concerned with vocabulary. In order for a work of textual criticism, which is presumably based on a text with which the reader wishes to engage, to exist at all it must preserve some of the vocabulary which appears in the original piece as a bridge between the two works. That is to say that since "words are symbols, not replacements"[26] in order to pinpoint ideas in the original text and discuss those ideas in the work of textual critcism, some of the same symbols must be repeated in the criticism itself. How, then, can a work of textual criticism be conceived of as independent?

The answer is simply that "a word changes its meaning each time it changes

context".[27] In the case of Notes Toward A Supreme Fiction, words which appear in the poem itself also appear in the index. However, in the poem the context is provided for the reader, while in the index, the reader must provide the context. If readers refer to the index of Notes, the fact that words do not appear in sentences or paragraphs is immediately apparent. Indeed, in the index the words appear simply as words, with no accompanying context save for line numbers. The reader must "fill in the blanks" by imagining the use of the words that appear in the index. To even locate a word in the index the reader must initially construct a context, and thereafter imagine how that context might be described in the index. Of course, once the reader has located the term in the index, the line numbers point the reader to an additional context. But this context may or may not be the same as what the reader initially constructed. Thus, the vocabulary of the index is what makes the index an independent "end in itself." The vocabulary used in the index allows the reader to author a context—this context is original and independent of the text upon which the index is based. Not only can the index stand alone as a unique work, it prompts the reader to author a unique (albeit imaginary) work as well. In fact, the indexer who is creating the index as an act of textual criticism must evaluate not only the context of the material in the original text, but must also, in effect, author a context. The act of indexing requires that each concept, idea, or item of importance be evaluated separately, and independently of dissimilar contextual elements. That is to say that information and ideas are linked in the index only when the indexer can link them together. Of course, the indexer uses the context of the text to assist in making this determination, but often the indexer must rely on his or her interpretive abilities to ferret out *meaning*. The indexer must author an interpretation, and therefore context for the vocabulary that

appears in the index.

It is important to note, too, that the vocabulary that appears in the index is not equivalent to the vocabulary that appears in a text. Words in a text, as mentioned above, appear surrounded by sentences, paragraphs and other contextual clues. The words in the index appear by themselves. In the index, one word, or very brief phrase is intended to symbolize what in reality may appear in the text as 50 pages. The terms in the index could be said to be even more "meaningful" than the vocabulary that appears in the text.

Consider again the index to the Wallace Stevens poem Notes Toward A Supreme Fiction. Readers will note a section entitled "Commentary." It is in this section that I attempted to display the contextualization process, and in the process of doing so, readers may get a sense of how the indexer, and the index, is making meaning. It may be a useful experiment for readers to locate an entry in the index and imagine what the context for the particular entry might be. By turning to the "Commentary" section, readers will be able to view the way I interpreted and contextualized the entry and can compare. Meaning can be represented in an index in more profound ways than in the original text. For example, much of this particular Stevens poem is devoted to thoughtful examination of reality and imagination, of what is fictional and what is real. In order for Stevens to describe or even introduce the topic of reality, he must either heavily contextualize the concept or use the word itself. However, in the index I created, readers looking for an entry for reality will be disappointed. It does not exist, despite the fact that a cross-reference directs readers from the entry for fiction. In fact, the cross-reference to reality, or the idea that reality exists (within the context of the index) is itself a fiction.

Readers will also note that the entry for language is particularly difficult to read,

and indeed contains many symbols. The reader literally cannot read or comprehend language, thus providing a commentary (and experience) regarding the limitations of language.

The index can embody the meaning of the text in a much more profound way than can the original text, creating a unique reading experience and cementing the idea that the index is, in fact, an independent text.

Structure

In addition to sound and meaning, structure is an important element to consider with regard to determining if the index should be considered an independent text. However, what does the term "structure" entail? Wetherill suggests that structure is "the notion...that a literary work of art is an organization of experience".[28] In addition, readers should consider unity and coherence when evaluating structure.

How is the index an "organization of experience"? In a previous chapter, I explain that the index provides interpretive paths for the reader to follow. In some regards, the reader who is utilizing the index will follow the same interpretive path as the indexer. The index, then, is a concise organization of the indexer's experience. However, the index is also a unique starting point from which the reader can organize his or her own experience with a text. This experience for the reader is quite complex. It begins with authoring a context for the words in the index, as they appear with no surrounding clues as to meaning. The reader must then choose from the entries which to follow into the text. If the reader were to write down the index entries which were utilized to enter the text, these entries would become a sort of organization of experience as well. Another reader might

approach the first reader's list of entries as a jumping off point as well, and end up creating a brand new catalog of textual experience. The index, then, stands apart from the text upon which it is based not only because it represents the indexer's experience with the text, but also because it contains avenues which the reader can follow (much the same as the original text). The index serves as a starting point for a reader to create his or her own unique "organization of experience" with the index and the text.

For example, refer to the index of the Wallace Stevens poem Notes Toward A Supreme Fiction. The reader who looks up the term *ideas* has several avenues to pursue. Each of the subentries which appear under the main heading of *ideas* represents an interpretive path for the indexer. The indexer interpreted lines in the poem to have meaning with regard to clarity, Stevens' "first idea," and ideas regarding man and the world. The reader follows the interpretive path of the indexer as he or she finds the corresponding line numbers to the indexer's term selections, or interpretations. Again, I invite readers to examine the "Commentary Section" to view my interpretation of Steven's poem.

The reader also finds that the index is a starting point for his or her own textual experience. The reader who approaches the index must contextualize somehow the terms that appear in the index. The reader who looks up the term *imitation* must have some concept of what the term imitation means, and may mean in the context of the poem itself. The reader chooses to follow the entry for *imitation and nature* into the text, and therefore is beginning his or her own textual experience. If the reader finds that the *imitation and nature* entry is not what he or she is looking for, referring back to the index provides another opportunity to further develop this textual experience. Thus, the

reader's textual experience is not just with the text upon which the index is based, but also the index itself. As suggested above, if the reader were to write down the entries used to gain entry to the text, it may look like this:

ideas
  clarity of, 18
inconstancy, 228-237
language
  as evasive, 392-412

and so on. The entries that the reader uses becomes, in fact, an 'organization' of the reader's experience with the text and the index. Each reader's index of textual experience will be different. Thus, the index can be seen as an independent text.

Unity is another important aspect for structural evaluation. Since each "work has its own particular form",[29] unity is indicated within the text itself. Put another way, "the work...being finite, creates its own norms, and in many senses it is more important to study the way these norms are manipulated than to consider the text to which they are deviations from 'common practice'".[30] Stated more simply, the textual critic searches for patterns.

The index can certainly be considered finite. It does, after all, appear as a separate section in a text. However, the index, through the use of an easily discernible structure reaches far beyond its own physical boundaries. Perhaps the most important aspect of the structure of the index is its consistency. Page references appear in the same format, as do titles and proper nouns. In the index for the Wallace Stevens poem, page references are preceded by a comma and one space. No abbreviation format is used—page numbers (or in this case line numbers) appear in their entirety. Subentries also appear in the same

format throughout the index, as do cross-references and main headings. Subentries appear in indented format under main headings that are capitalized only in the case of proper nouns. Cross references are appended to the main entry, preceded by a period and appearing in italicized type. This consistency lends itself to a unity in the index, apart from the unity of the text upon which the index is based. The 'norms' Wetherill speaks of are easily observable to readers. In addition, these norms generally conform to the readers expectations of what an index should look like, which is to say that the text of the index does not appear in paragraph or sentences structures. If a reader simply glanced at a page in the index, the pattern and norms are obvious and immediately apparent, and quite different from the text that appears in the original piece. Thus, the index maintains a unity within itself because of the patterns and norms established within it.

Unity is also present in the index in that it represents an "organization of experience." That is to say that the index represents the indexer's textual experience with the text. Thus, the index maintains a unity as a coherent representation of one reader's interpretation. In addition, the index maintains unity with regard to textual experience by consistently dictating that the reader refer back to the original piece. The bounds of the index, which at first seem finite, are constantly expanding in order to accommodate the reader. Thus, for each reader, the index maintains a separate shape, defined solely by the choices each reader makes in choosing which interpretive path to follow into the text. The reader, of course, must also author an interpretation of the information the index leads to, but it is important to note that this information, and one might argue that the reader's interpretation as well, are already contained within the index itself.

The index also maintains a unique coherence. Indexes often make use of cross-

references. These tools appear in the index as *See also* or *See under*. For example, refer to the entry for *imagination.* Readers will note the cross-reference *See also* first idea. *See also* suggests that the reader will find even more information by looking under the heading of *first idea* (here readers may choose to refer to the Commentary Section to view my interpretations of each entry and why the cross-reference appears). Readers will also note that under the entry for *invented world* a *See* entry appears. This entry implies that information regarding the invented world can be located under the entry for *reality*.

The index contains references back to itself, preserving a type of coherence and unity. These cross-references allow the index to stand as an independent text in that readers may follow cross-references throughout the index, bouncing from one entry to another, forming a unique interpretation of the index separate from the original piece. The cross-references are essentially bridges between entry points into the original text. Just as a piece of textual criticism which appears in more traditional form, such as a journal article contains elements that create unity and coherence (sentences, paragraphs, etc.) so too does the index in the form of cross-references.

There is also a unique coherence in an index by virtue of the page references (or, again, in this case line references). For example, under the entry for *love*, a long string of line numbers appears. All of the information regarding love from the entire text is included in these line numbers. Not only does the entry itself represent a type of unity and coherence within itself by presenting all aspects of the text that are relevant to the term, but the entire index itself maintains it's structure, organization and stability by consistently presenting unified information to the reader.

According to Schauber and Spolsky, structure and function are not easily

context of interpretation. The function of the index is to assist readers in locating information within the original text. In the context of interpretation, the function of the index remains helping readers locate information in the text. Rather than applying commonly used methods of literary interpretation to the index, readers automatically evaluate the index based on its function. For example, if a reader is unable to locate the information he or she requires, the reader will interpret the index as a poor representation of the original text. While readers are forced to contextualize index terms as they appear without surrounding context, this is not the same as interpreting the index. Readers have an automatic method for interpreting the index, related directly to the structure and function of the index.

If an index defies structural categorization, does it also defy functional categorization given that the two seemed inextricably linked? "A functional genre...is always inferred," say Schauber and Spolsky.[33] These inferences, made by the reader, concern author intention and "conventional generic conditions".[34] Most readers, for instance, can recognize a romance novel or a mystery novel based on "generic conditions." And while many readers may not have a literature or literary theory background, most would be able to list some very general characteristics that romance or mystery novels seem to share, and thus are able to infer the functional genre of a given piece. Does functional categorization of an index involve inference?

Schauber and Spolsky admit that determination of structural genre in some ways dictates determination of functional genre.[35] Once a reader determines that the piece at which he or she is looking is a novel, determination that the piece is a romance or mystery novel follows closely behind. Once a reader determines that he or she is looking at an

index (structural genre), determination of the functional genre is simultaneous. The reader is not required to make any inferences with regard to the functional genre of the index because the index exists solely in the context of its function. However, what if the index appeared as a different structural genre? If, for example, the index of the Wallace Stevens poem appeared in the form of a short story, would the reader be able to easily determine the functional genre?

The answer is that the index simply cannot appear in any other form, or it would not be an index. Refer to the Commentary Section. The Commentary Section is designed so that it follows the format of the index. It includes all terms in the index, but it appears in a different format. Page references also appear in the Commentary Section. While the Commentary Section does include most or all of the information from the index, it cannot be called an index. One of the most important tenants of indexing is to move the reader as swiftly as possible from the index to the original text. The appearance of an index in a different format, such as the Commentary Section, violates this principle. In addition, the index must privilege certain terms or information by making them main entries, and must devalue certain information by relegating it to the position of sub-entry. Were the index to truly appear in the form of a short story (that is to say with sentence-type structures, paragraphs and the like), it would appear as gibberish, and so lose *any* function whatsoever.

The index is, put simply, an index. Recognition of the index, both in terms of its structural and functional genre, involves no inference on the part of the reader. While the reader does have certain generic conditions that the index must meet, identifying the index as such is not contingent upon these generic conditions. In fact, the generic conditions

that are applied to an index are more about the ability of the index to function, or to meet reader expectations than they are about what type of index it is. After all, one does not tell fellow readers about a marvelous romance index that was just published. In fact, a rule of thumb in the indexing world is that a good index will inspire no thought or rumination on the part of a reader. This is because a good index will be easy to use, and readers will not only be able to decipher the information contained in the index easily, but will also be directed back to the original text quickly and efficiently. Thus, indexes are often described as articulate and elegant based on their ability to perform as such. A poor index, on the other hand, will cause frustration in the reader, and will allow no access to the text whatsoever. While a romance or mystery novel may also be described as articulate and elegant, the terms are utilized in a much different fashion.

Since an index appears to complicate the question of structural and functional genre, should it be considered a text at all? While the index does seem to defy structural and functional categorization, this does not imply that the index should not be considered a text. Rather, it suggests that a refiguring of genre need occur in order to account for marginalized texts such as indexes.

Can the index be considered "an end in itself"? An evaluation textual elements such as sound, meaning and structure, do appear to support the notion that an index does comprise what is traditionally called a text. In addition, if we consider a "text" to be anything in which or anywhere that a reader locates meaning, the index is certainly representative of a text as it both enables the reader to author meaning and represents the meanings present in the text itself.

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Commentary

Absolute, fiction of: In previous lines, Stevens says that "It must be that in time the real will from its crude compoundings come"(See entries on metaphor and limitations of language). Finding the real, "being stripped of every fiction except one" is equivalent to finding Truth. However, it is important to note that the "absolute," or Truth, is a fiction as well. We hang onto the fiction , though, and this fervent belief that the fiction is real, or is an absolute, becomes a substitute for religion (See entry for angels) **Adam:** The figure of Adam appears to illustrate the "first idea." Adam was and is the father of Descartes (a mathematician for whom reality was present and figurable in numbers). Since Adam was created and created Descartes, an expert on reality, one must ask the question "From where does our notion of reality come?" **Angels:** Our belief in an absolute (fictive though it may be) becomes our religion. In a sense, the *quotidian* becomes frought with meaning when our beliefs veer toward maintaining an absolute in our lives. In lines 578-

580, Stevens tells the Angel (a symbol of institutionalized religion) to pay attention, to "hear the luminous melody of proper sound." Stevens relegates the Angel to "heaven," (the "luminous cloud"), and places the Angel in the role of observer, not saviour, for Angels can have no place in a religion centered around life itself. In subsequent lines (581-590), Stevens goes a step further, asking if the Angel cannot merely exist as a corelary to experience. In lines 602-605, Stevens says, "I can do all that angels can." *We* are angels, actors in our own religion of the quotidian. **Art:** Stevens was a great fan of art. In these lines, the "weather [is] by Franz Hals." We are taught to perceive weather as an isolated phenomena. However, after viewing a painting of the weather, our perception of it will change. The weather in the painting will affect our subsequent experiences of the weather. **Astronomy:** Again a representation of a primitive attempt to map and locate reality, in this case in the stars **Authority:** We are the authors of our existence. We are creators, making "of what we see...a place dependent on ourselves." **Awakenings:** Stevens describes "moments of awakening...in which we more than awaken." These are moments, perhaps, in which we glimpse reality, when it is especially *real* to us. **Balance:** This is a sort of serendipitous balance, when all the forces in the universe combine perfectly, allowing a space in which *awakenings* occur (lines 146-151). Lines 500-502 discuss a marriage, which can be seen as a harmonious union, or balance. Stevens also notes a balance is lines 555-559, stating, "it was not a choice between, but of." In these lines, binary opposition disappears, and we are able to choose to "include the things that in each other are included." Reality and fiction, perhaps, are not opposites, but part of each other (See entries for inclusion and opposites). **Banjo:** Stevens writes that an "unaffected man in a negative light could not have borne his labor nor have died sighing that he should leave the banjo's twang." One who is "unaffected," or unaware and unappreciative of the quotidian, could not die with sorrow over leaving something as simple as the twang of a banjo behind. **Bawda:** A marriage takes place between a "great captain" and Bawda. The marriage is more about *place* than about the marriage itself. Bawda represents Catawba as a citizen of it, while the captain represents constant movement and displacement (See entry for balance) **Bear:** The bear appears as a representative of nature, of a *natural* reality **Beginnings:** Stevens talks about an

"immaculate beginning", a creation of reality exemplified in the candid nature of a poem, a window on reality. This entry also refers to creation as in Adam and Eve, both of whom created reality. In lines 361-363, the idea of "earthy birth" appears. Our beginnings (and ends) exist "here and now and where we live and everywhere we live." Again, the importance of the *quotidian* is underscored. Our earth-bound existence is our beginning and end. If there is no heaven, the *quotidian* takes on much more significance. **Being:** "The sun must bear no name," Stevens says,"...but be in the difficulty of what it is to be." The sun exists beyond the name we have given it, and beyond what it symbolizes. It simply *is*, and must *be* in the (difficult) reality of its existence. In lines 328-330, 331-336, and 346-348, the lines between beings dissolves. The phrase "bethou me" is repeated, signifying to readers that one reality is interchangeable for another, since reality is a fiction we have created. Lines 427-433 discuss our existence in a world that "is our own, it is ourselves, the freshness of ourselves." We exist in our own worlds of our own creation, and again, our existences are interchangeable. Lines 590-598 ask "Is it her or is it I that experience this?" We exist in a fiction that we have created, so cannot our experiences be taken for fiction as well? **Bliss:** There are two kinds of bliss. Accessible: "The lover sighs as for accessible bliss, which he can take within him on his breath." This type of bliss exists "everywhere we live" (lines 361-363), can be ingested even through breathing, but cannot be pinned down. Stevens also comments on the scholar's attempt to write down this type of bliss (lines 365-370) (See also entries for scholar, certainty and limitations of language). Expressible bliss is another fiction: "Is it I then that keep saying there is an hour filled with expressible bliss...?" Expressible bliss also denies pinpointing in much the same way that we cannot locate reality. **Boundaries:** Since reality is a fiction, boundaries cannot exist between various realities. **Candor:** Candor exists as a function of the poem, a window to reality in which we can see what really is, if only for a brief moment **Canon Aspirin:** The Canon Aspirin appears as a figure who eventually recognizes that reality is a fiction and appreciates the *quotidian*. **Catawba:** Catawba appears as a representation of place, and therefore a reality that exists only in connection with a certain place. **Certainty:** Even truth is not certain. Stevens describes the "uncertain light of single, certain truth." The "uncertain light" bathes certain truth in

uncertainty. Therefore, even truth is not certain. "Perhaps truth depends on a walk around a lake," Stevens says. Reveling in the quotidian, or aspects of our everyday lives, can yield 'truths,' and a definition of reality, perhaps, which grows in certainty, and inspires a patience, "a wait," or reassurance in this truth. Lines 365-370 discuss the scholar's certainty, a perfect example of a supreme fiction. For scholars, certainty is something that can be obtained, if backed up by three main points and proper documentation. "Degrees of perception" occur only in the "scholar's dark." That is to say, for certain scholars (and certain scholars), paradigm shifts do not take place in the light of day. Intellectual transformation occurs only in the dark, hidden away, unexamined and unavailable for scrutiny. The "scholar's dark" may also represent the language used in academia, enabling scholars to be absolutely certain. If readers cannot apprehend meaning, how can meaning be questioned? (See entry for Sorbonne). **Change:** Change is constant in Stevens world, thus our own world exists in a permanent state of inconstancy. Change is located in the tension of "the imagined on the real." Later lines (299-304) explain how boundaries between realities cannot exist because change is constant. We are always moving from one reality to another, always changed by whatever we come into contact with. **Church, Henry:** Stevens dedicates the first eight lines of his poem to Church. The lines express Stevens' esteem for Church. **Cinderella:** This fairytale figure exists in the poem as a fiction attempting to construct something real. In the poem, Cinderella is "fulfilling herself beneath the roof." Stevens places a fairytale figure in a concrete setting, and she is attempting a feat most of us do-trying to be fulfilled. The reality of a fairytale figure is no less real than our own. **Circumlocution:** The act of going round and round is, in itself, a "final good." There is value in the act itself. **Color, use of:** Stevens utilizes vibrant color in much of his poem. Lines 305-330, 476-489, and 521-527 are excellent examples of this usage. **Constancy, of change:** Here again Stevens comments that change is constant, rendering nature and us inconstant objects, objects which cannot be pinned down or, perhaps, labeled as "real." **Creation:** Stevens describes an Eden, created by a planter. The planter, in effect, was attempting to engineer his own creation, or to engineer his own beginning and surroundings (his reality). In these lines, however, the reality outlasts the "inconstant object," or the planter himself.

In lines 497-499, Stevens describes our need to create our own world or reality, a "place dependent on ourselves" (See entry for authority). Lines 560-566 describe this creation as well. Creation (of reality and fiction) also results from feeling in lines 636-637. **Dark:** See entry for certainty above **Death:** In lines 325-327, the "unaffected man in a negative light" (See entry for banjo) could not die appreciating the quotidian. In the last lines of the poem (662-664) fiction and reality are interchangeable. Our "fictive hero becomes the real" but will gladly die with proper words. That is to say that we can, even with our words, create whole other worlds and realities. The fiction becomes the real, and vice versa, and actors in one reality do not necessarily survive to the next. **Descartes:** A French mathematician. Stevens uses Descartes in conjunction with the figure of Adam (See entry for Adam above). **Desire:** An often important subject for Stevens. In these lines, Stevens notes the origin of desire, which is "not to have." Desire is the vehicle for creation of a fictive reality. The character that appears in lines 455-463 does not desire to create a new reality, but rather chooses to remember past (fictive) realities. **Distortion:** Our realities are distortions, and we hold them dear even if we recognize them as fictions of our own creation, as "the more than rational distortion." **Du Puy, General:** The figure of the general appears in the form of a statue. Stevens seems to comment that we have tried to immobilize a reality in the statue, that this statute has come to symbolize many things, but the man himself never did exist. The reality in and around the statute never changed, thus, for Stevens, "nothing had happened" and "...the General was rubbish in the end." **Earth:** Used in reference to Adam and Eve. The two created an alternate reality, "a second earth," where they could believe in their own fictions. Stevens reminds us that the *first idea* "was not to shape the clouds in imitation." On the first earth then, the clouds existed independent of our interpretations and analysis. On the "second earth," the earth that Adam and Eve found, our interpretations become reality. Stevens makes note of the "sweeping meanings" we add to nature. Stevens mention of earth in lines 343-345 again brings up the quotidian. On this earth "the first leaf is the tale of leaves." A world, indeed a reality, exists in one leaf. In lines 623-637 Stevens speaks of an earth that is indifferent. "Fat girl," he says, "...how is it I find you in difference...? You are familiar yet an aberration." The earth is our home, yet we remain apart from it, imposing our

fictional realities on nature and upon our existence. In lines 641-643, the narrator names the Earth (see entry for limitations of language) and it "will have stopped revolving except in crystal." Reality, once identified, ceases to be reality and becomes instead another fiction filtered through our minds. **Ecstasy:** Stevens speaks of the "sensible ecstasy" with which Canon Aspirin's sister inhabits her house. Again, this is the quotidian. The sister takes pleasure (and not just pleasure, ecstasy, but of a sensible sort) in her life, where she lives (See entries for bliss and beginnings, lines 361-363). There is ecstasy (a term which can have religious connotations) in the quotidian. **Elephant:** The figure of the elephant appears as a representative of a natural reality, in contrast to the constructed reality that appear in consequent lines (105-115). The elephant appears in lines 565-566 as a representative of natural order. **Endings:** Stevens discusses the blurring of boundaries of reality (See entry for boundaries). In these lines, all sounds are the same (and all realities the same) because they will end. **Ennui:** We grow weary and bored of the "first idea," which has become couched in metaphors and unobtainable because of the limitations of our language Stevens asks, "What else...should there be?" Since "not to have is the beginning of desire" and the "first idea" is unobtainable, this boredom is a gateway for change, or for *something to happen* (See entry for change above). What happens may well involve a fictive creation of reality or an *awakening* (See entry for awakening above). **Eve:** Eve appears with Adam, creating for themselves a fictive reality and world (See entry for Earth above). **Existence:** In lines 463-475 a natural reality exists without intrusion, except for the eye that looks upon it. Again, we impose our fictive realities on nature and intrude upon the natural truth. Nature exists without us. Additionally, it is possible to exist between things, as in lines 392-403. General Du Puy appears in lines 263-283 to illustrate that though we may try to erect monuments to our realities, they did not and do not exist. **Experience:** Experience, in lines 56-61, is "thought beating in the heart." Experience can be felt, but cannot be seen or touched. In lines 581-590, however, experience is subjective. "Is it he or I that experience this?," Stevens asks. Our fictive realities dictate our own existence as well as our experience of others existences (See entry for being). **Fact:** In lines 635-643 fact is distorted and becomes "The fiction that results from feeling." There are, in fact, no facts. (See entry for distortion). The figure of

the Canon Aspirin appears again (lines 539-559), and as he falls asleep, his mind begins to perceive things which cannot be named (See language, limitations of entry). The Canon perceives "a point, beyond which fact could not progress as fact." A reality exists beyond our language's ability to name it. **Fiction:** (See also entry for reality) In lines 15-17, Stevens admonishes "Never suppose an inventing mind as source of this idea..." We are all authors of fictive realities, and all authors have equal authority (See entry for authority). In line 130 Stevens notes the presence of the fictive reality. His house "has changed a little in the sun" (line 128), meaning that the light has changed reality. He calls this "false flick, false form, but falseness close to kin." Reality itself is false, but a falseness that is related or is kin to a more real reality (See entry for weather; place). In lines 414-418, the things we believe to be real are labeled "artificial." The notion of fiction also has much to do with academia and scholar's certainty. The academic, or scholarly essay, has long been perceived to be the best critical tool. This is a grand and sweeping fiction which ignores the importance of marginalia (the index, for example) and creativity. (See entry for certainty). The fictive becomes the real in the closing lines of the poem (662-664), proving that reality and fiction are parts of a whole (See entry for death). Lines 92-94 and 497-499 illustrate our capabilities and desires to create fictions (See entries for creation and earth). In line 599, Stevens speaks of "external regions" and asks what we fill them with. The answer, of course, is fictive realities of our own creation. "They will get it straight one day at the Sorbonne," Stevens says (lines 638-643). What will we do then, when our fictive realities are finally sorted out, at the point when "the irrational is rational"? We can only turn to the quotidian. Lines 560-580 examine the idea that "to impose is not to discover." Imposing a fictive reality is not the same as discovery of fiction or reality. Discovery is one way to enjoy, live in and appreciate the quotidian, and one way to keep our fictive realities in tact. The simple act of discovery, not imposition, allows for an "indifference" (See entry for earth), a distance from which to view reality and fiction. Stevens speaks of this indifference in lines 9-11, stating, "Begin, ephebe, by perceiving the idea of this invention, this invented world." Imposition allows no room for perception, instead centering around conception. If we *perceive* the invented world, that is, the world and the fiction of the world, we can begin to discover where

reality and fiction converge and diverge. If we *conceive* the invented world, we have merely added another layer of fiction to infinite layers of fiction. Astronomy is mentioned in lines 64-68 as a way of mapping reality (See entry for astronomy). Canon Aspirin's sister appears in lines 521-527 and appears to be painting a reality (that is to say, she is using reality as a canvas rather than painting a representation of reality). These lines represent our tendencies to color and invent realities. Canon Aspirin himself appears again in lines 553-559. Here he is making "not a choice between, but of.". He has reached a point, in his slumber, where fiction and reality become part of one another (See entry for beginnings). In lines 389-391, fiction is something we are covered with. We project our fictions onto others and ourselves, adding layer after layer (much like the creation of a pearl), creating a "glistening" covering. The blue woman who appears in lines 455-475 does not attempt to project reality on the present, and instead concentrates on the fictive realities of the past (See entry for desire). The figure of the scholar appears in lines 365-370. Certainty is a fiction, and particularly in academia (See entry for certainty). In lines 573-580, Stevens says it must be possible "that in time the real will from its crude compoundings come." It must be possible, then, to observe or apprehend a reality that has risen through the layers of fiction (See entry for absolute, fiction of). Fiction becomes sustenance for us in lines 662-664. Lines 633-637 highlight "the fiction that results from feeling" (See entry for fact). Our feelings force us to create fictive realities which we cherish, despite the fact that we may realize they are fictions. The "war" or opposition between fiction and reality is illustrated in lines 644-655. Notable here is the fact that fiction and reality are finally melded together, "they are plural, a right and left, a pair." Fiction and reality are parts of a whole, and one cannot and does not exist without the other. **Final good:** The *quotidian* is a good unto itself. The activity, or occupation of simply "going round" is enough in and of itself. **First idea:** Stevens speaks often of the first idea, present throughout the poem. The first idea is something we are unable to name (See entry for language, limitations of), and it "becomes the hermit in a poet's metaphors." The first idea is an idea we cannot get to, shrouded as it is in metaphor and language (lines 31-38). Poetry allows us to "share, for a moment, the first idea," but are still unable to grasp it fully (lines 53-61). In lines 73-89, we find out the "first idea was not our own"

(See entry for Adam). In these lines, the first idea may be the creation of fictive realities. The first idea was not simply a perception of reality, but a conception of an idea based on what reality might be (See entry for fiction). "The first idea was not to shape the clouds in imitation," Stevens says (lines 81-82)., meaning that the first idea was not to impose our fictive realities on a natural reality. However, we still grasp fictions as reality in lines 105-115, becoming "the heroic children whom time breeds against the first idea." A "thinker of the first idea" is able to appreciate that "truth depends on a walk around the lake" (lines 137-144). Someone who thinks the first idea (this is not to say *names* or *identifies* the first idea) is able to revel in the *quotidian*. For someone whom the first idea is present, the quotidian represents an undeniable truth waiting to be *discovered* (See entry for fiction). By line 161, however, the "first idea is an imagined thing," and defies our language. The figure of MacCullough cannot name it, but can read it in the sound of the waves. The first idea, again, is represented in the quotidian, in a natural order (See entry for language, limitations of). **God:** In much of Stevens poetry, religion revolves around the *quotidian*. There is no heaven, and no hell. There is simply reality and fiction. "The death of one god is the death of all," Stephens says. What happens when there are no gods? We must turn to the *quotidian*. **Hals, Franz:** The figure of the painter appears in several lines concerned with weather (See entry for art). **Heaven:** For Stevens, heaven does not really exist in the traditional, institutionalized religious sense. In lines 19-20, the sun is more clean (and true) when seen *outside* of "a heaven that has expelled us and our images..." We do not belong in this heaven, and are able to see truth more clearly outside of it. In lines 76-78, Adam and Even create a heaven, but it is a heaven comprised of earthy, quotidian things (See entry for earth). After appreciating the "lustre of the moon" in lines 349-351, we have no need of any "paradise" (read heaven), nor do we have need of "any seducing hymn" (trappings of organized religion). We can and should take pleasure in the simplicity of the luster of the moon. Lines 447-454 describe natural elements such as the rising of the sun, the clearing of the sea and the moonlight on the wall. Stevens calls this heaven-haven, and says "these are not things transformed. Yet we are shaken by them as if they were." These events are *natural*, everyday, *quotidian* occurrences, yet they are powerful as well. When we appreciate these events as parts of heaven (or, in quotidian

words, haven), we begin to "reason about them with a later reason." The reasoning, the "going round," remember, is a final good unto itself (See entry for final good). Lines 515-517 describe a marriage that is about *place*. This place is "neither heaven nor hell," but merely a place, or an opportunity for appreciation of the quotidian. It is also a place where balance occurs (See entry for balance). In lines 331-336, the voices of robins and jays and the narrator combine in a single voice which Stevens calls "a heavenly gong." Our voices, the voices of elements of the quotidian are associated with heaven, signifying a heaven on earth or that heaven can be located in our own world. **Hell:** (See entries for heaven and obscurity). **Here and now:** The "here and now" is very important to Stevens' poetry. The quotidian, reality and fictive realities all exist in the present. **Ideas:** (See entry for first idea). When we can see an idea, we can see Truth, as in line 18. In lines 200-220, the idea of man is described as a "major abstraction." Who we are, then, is fiction as well. We believe ourselves to be actors in and of reality, when we are no more than "abstractions." In lines 9-10, Stevens again refers to our world as "invented" (See entries for creation and fiction). **Imagination:** In lines 125-127, the "gay forsythia" exists "without a name...if only imagined but imagined well." Our imaginations have the power to *create* (See entry for creation) even things which cannot be named (See entry for language, limitations of). In lines 409-412, the imagination seems to have its own language, a language which exists beyond our own, and which is not always comprehendible. Additionally, the imagination exists as a dependent upon the real (lines 284-287). In lines 542-559, the imagination exists as the terrain beyond fact, beyond our disabled language. Imagination exists as "a point beyond which thought could not progress as thought." (See entries for first idea and opposites). **Imitation:** In this poem, Stevens states that "we are the mimics" (lines 81-82, 89). Nature, in reality, does not exist as a reflection of our fictive realities, but in fact, the opposite is true. **Inclusion:** Lines 555-559 discusses a choice which is "not a choice between excluding things...not a choice of between, but of." In these lines, fiction and reality begin to mesh. Binary oppositions disappear, and new options open up in the space of balance (See entries for balance and opposites). **Inconstancy:** In Stevens' poem, *change* is constant, thus rendering us inconstant beings. Our existence shifts and is ever-changing. Consequently, our reality

itself is inconstant. (See entry for change). **Invented world:** (See entry for reality). **Irrational:** Near the end of the poem, fiction and reality begin to intertwine. The "irrational is the rational," illustrating a blending of reality and fiction (See entry for Sorbonne). **Jay:** The figure of the jay appears throughout the poem and symbolizes the natural world or natural reality. **Joy:** Joy is a shared experience in these lines, a facile exercise experienced at "accustomed times." In subsequent lines, real joy, though harder to see, is found in the quotidian. **Lake:** In lines 138-144, "perhaps truth depends upon a walk around the lake." Truth can be found in nature, and in the quotidian. In lines 414-418, the lake itself is real enough, but the "water of the lake was full of artificial things." While we can find truth in nature and the quotidian, we tend to focus on the artifice as representative of reality. **Language:** Much of Stevens' poem comments on the limited nature of language and its inability to express reality. Lines 392-412 represent ideas as evasive in the context of a poem. "Is the poem both peculiar and general?," Stevens asks. "There's a meditation there," he says, "in which there seems to be an evasion, a thing not apprehended or not apprehended well." Language is unable to aptly describe what the meditation might contain. In lines 528-529, language is something behind which we can hide. Names, in particular, are good hiding spots for truth or reality. Lines 539-559 also discuss limitations of language, describing a place where "fact could not progress as fact," and a "point beyond which thought could not progress as thought" (See entry on imagination). Words do not exist in our language to describe what lies beyond fact and thought as described here. Lines 651-664 describe language as a place where opposites are reconciled (See entry for balance). Two sides meet "in a book in a barrack, a letter from Malay." It is in language where fiction and reality meet. Stevens' goes on to say that "the soldier is poor without the poet's lines." Without the candor (See entry for candor) of the poem, the war between reality and fiction must still be waged. The absence of the "poet's lines" makes the soldier poor, for he is without any reference point to reality. Indeed, Stevens' solider even "lives on the bread of faithful speech." Naming is an issue is this particular poem. Since our language is inept, properly naming things becomes a problem. Lines 627-629 and 638-642 are examples of the power of calling a true name. Speech and language also have power in Steven's poem. Lines 383-384

exemplify this power, as do lines 530-532 wherein the Canon Aspirin's sister hears the actual voices of her children, enabling her to see "them as they were." In this case, speech that is true, representative of reality, and really heard is a window to reality. *Note: The language entry itself is followed by an entry that is hard to read. This is intentional. It is representative of Stevens' philosophy that language is limited. When readers encounter the entry, it is difficult to decipher. However, it is followed by an entry which , by comparison, is read very easily. These two entries embody lines 169-178. At first, in these lines, MacCullough is unable to decipher speech, and is moved suddenly by a "greater aptitude and apprehension, as if the waves at last were never broken, as if the language suddenly, with ease, said things it had laboriously spoken." The index entry is hard to read, however the reader suddenly encounters a clear and easily decipherable entry thereafter. The reader experiences the "greater aptitude and apprehension" while reading the index. The index itself "suddenly with ease" says "things it had laboriously spoken."* **Lecture:** A generally scholarly, or academic, pursuit. Stevens' says "We shall return at twilight from the lecture pleased that the irrational is rational..." (lines 638-640). Often in academia, reality is fictive, the irrational made rational by three main points and a list of works cited. (See entries for certainty, dark and fiction). **Life:** Lines 228-237 discuss change. Life is merely repetitious, change repeating over and over (See entries for change and inconstancy). Lines 106-112 present the trappings of life, the "attic window", and the "rented piano." Stevens' seems to see these trappings as ridiculous, and symbols of "heroic children whom time breeds against the first idea" (See entry for first idea) (See entry for reality). **Light:** Light plays an important part in this poem with regard to place and reality. Lines 128-130 exemplify the way in which light can change reality (See entry for change). Lines 325-327 are an example of how light can be characterized, in this case as "negative." **Lion:** The lion appears as a representative of a natural reality. **Love:** Love is an important theme for Stevens. The dedication (lines 1-8) are an example of one way love appears in the poem. In many spots, love seems to represent a union of opposing forces, or a unique balance (lines 148-152 for example). In other places (like lines 260-262) love is a movement, a force or a passion that is very much a part of the discussion between reality and fiction, and the limitations of language. **MacCullough:**

The figure of MacCullough appears as an artifact and as an interpreter of language. **Magnolias:** Many flowers and fauna are represented throughout this work. Magnolias appear to be part of the natural reality, the same reality to which the animals belong. **Major man:** Stevens' sets up the concept of the "major man." The implication is that man is a major development or creation. Either way, man is a construct (See entries for change and inconstancy). Lines 200-220 seem to indicate that there are no boundaries between realities, that we exist as one despite our subjectivities (See entry for boundaries). **Marriage:** Lines 500-517 discuss a marriage between Bawda and a "great captain." This marriage seems to be about place and the reconciliation of two forces (See entry for balance). **Metaphors:** Metaphors exemplify the opaqueness of language (as in line 35). In lines 425-427, we casually note a metaphor, but for Stevens' "casual is not enough." Since language is limited, to find the Truth or appreciate whatever fictive reality we are currently living, we must notice wholeheartedly. "The eye of a vagabond in metaphor that catches our own," is something that has very much to do with glimpses or fragments of reality, and something not to be dismissed out of hand. **Metaphysical t:** In these lines the President has servants buzzing around him. They adjust the curtains just so, to the "metaphysical t," the fictive point of perfection. **Minstrelsy:** Stevens' uses the word minstrelsy to describe the music played by the rain. He says "There was such idiot minstrelsy in rain." The rain is playing an idiotic, chaotic song which joins together with other voices to form a "heavenly gong" (lines 334-336). Appreciation of the quotidian is apparent here in a frank appraisal of the music of the rain. Lines 340-344 describe an earth where there is no change, where there are minstrels who do not play music, who bumble along, a "mind without any dream." **Moon:** In lines 349-351 and 451-452, the moon represents an element of the *quotidian.* The moon is something we encounter every day, can have a profound effect on us if we can appreciate it. In lines 645-649, the moon appears as an opposite of the sun (See entry for balance). **Music:** In lines 437-446, music and singing appear as a result of *joy.* In lines 415-441, music appears as an artifice. "The lake was full of artificial things," Stevens says, "like a page of music." Music (at least the written form of it) is an attempt to map or pinpoint reality. Since much of reality is, in fact, a fiction we have constructed, the music itself can only be seen as a representative of

that fiction. (See entry for astronomy). In lines 290-291, music is "a passion that we feel, not understand." Music is one of those things that touch something in us that our language does not have the capability to describe (See entry for language, limitations of). Because our language is so limited, in later lines (533-535) conjugation is done by choirs. Since we lack the capability to describe what happens to us when we hear music, we also lack the ability to describe this phenomena even further, or to conjugate the words we would use to describe it. **Myth:** Lines 84-85 discuss a "myth before the myth began." Again, this is something we lack the capability to label or describe because of the limitations of our language. (See entries for beginnings, creation, and first idea). **Nanzia Nunzio:** This figure appears as the spouse of Ozymandias. She exemplifies the ways in which our fictive realities are projected onto others. "...the bride is never naked," Stevens says. "A fictive covering weaves always glistening from heart and mind." The bride is covered by fiction (See entry for fiction). **Nature:** Nature is an important part of Stevens' poetry, and often is representative of the *quotidian*, or everyday events. Lines 81-94 discuss our tendency to add meanings to elements of nature (See entry for fiction). Nature is an inconstant figure in lines 221-238 (See entries for change and inconstancy). A natural reality is represented in lines 95-104, in contrast to the reality that we manufacture. **Obscurity:** The meanings in lines 16-17, 39-50, and 476-496 remain so obscure that they cannot be classified or labeled (See entry for language, limitations of). **Occupation:** For Stevens, even going round and round is an occupation, and therefore a "final good." (See entry for final good). **Ocean:** In lines 70-71 and 169-178 the ocean communicates with us, but not on a level that utilizes our language. (See entry for language, limitations of). **Opposites:** Many times in this particular piece, opposites are represented as dependents (lines 284-287, 292-304, and 392-403). We see a marriage of opposites in lines 500-517. Lines 555-559 tell us that rather than making a choice between one or the other, we can make a choice of both. (See entry for balance). In the last section of the poem, lines 644-664, opposing sides are said to be at war (for example, a war between reality and the imagination). By the end of the poem, however, the two cross over. The boundary between the real and the fictive no longer exists (See entry for boundaries). **Painting:** The Canon Aspirin's sister paints her children a reality. In a

sense she is creating a fiction (See entry for fiction). (See entry for art). **Paradise:** (See entry for heaven). **Passion:** In lines 352-355 and 361-370, Stevens describes an "easy passion." This "easy passion" is an element of our everyday lives, and exists "everywhere we live" (See entries for beginnings and bliss). **Peace:** In the introductory lines, peace is a "vivid transparence." **Phoebus:** God of prophecy and healing and one of the most important figures in Greek mythology. In lines 22-26, Phoebus is dead, and Stevens explains that "Phoebus was a name for something that never could be named." The idea of Phoebus is more important than the name itself, and it is the name that we worship. **Place:** Place is a key concept in Stevens' poetry. Lines 361-363 show how place is here and now as much as it is location. In lines 515-517, a marriage occurs, but it is a marriage that is about place more than it is about a union of lovers. "They married well because the marriage-place was what they loved." Marriage is a place in these lines, rather than a state (See entry for balance). (See also under entry for weather). **Poet:** The figure of the poet and poetry appears throughout the poem. In lines 392-412, readers see that even a poet, who has excellent command of our language, has trouble finding words to express what he or she truly intends (See entry for language, limitations of). **Poetry:** In lines 52-63, the poem "refreshes life so that we share, for a moment, the first idea." Poetry is uniquely candid, and may sometimes offer us a window to reality. Lines 392-412, again, exhibit the struggle of the poet to apprehend and articulate reality. In the last lines of the poem (657-664), where reality and fiction begin to mesh, poetry is necessary for life. "The soldier is poor without the poet's lines," Stevens says. Indeed, the last line of the poem indicates that poetry can sustain life since the soldier might life "on the bread of faithful speech." Lines 83-88 again underscore the difficulty a poet has with expression. The poem comes from the "first idea" (See entry for first idea), and a time which precedes time. However, despite the limitations of our language, the poem and the poet are most able to capture these obscure ideas (See entry for obscurity). **Possible:** Stevens believes that it must be possible, at some point, for the real to escape from "its crude compoundings." **President:** The President appears as a figure of authority with servants who arrange his surroundings just so (See entries for authority, metaphysical t, and place). **Quotidian:** The quotidian appears throughout this poem and in all of Stevens work. The premise seems to be that

institutionalized or traditional religion can be replaced with an appreciation of the quotidian. Lines 605-620 inform the reader that an occupation (for what could be more everyday than that?) is a final good in and of itself (See entry for final good). In lines 540-542, the Canon Aspirin falls asleep, "and normal things had yawned themselves away." In this passage, the quotidian, or "normal things," seem simply to fall away, allowing the Canon to progress to a higher consciousness. The normal things, then, can be seen as a gateway to this type of heightened awareness. **Rational:** (See entry for irrational). **Reality:** *The reader will note that there is no entry for reality. Again, this is intentional. While there are cross references to reality from other entries, the reader will search for the reality entry and realize, literally (and figuratively) that* ***there is no reality****. There are page numbers listed where the entry for reality should be, however, the reader wouldn't necessarily know what he or she is looking at in the index, much the same as our inability to tell the difference between fiction or reality. In addition, in order for the reader of the index to decipher what the page numbers mean, he or she would have to actively search for the lines and their meanings (again, much the same way we search for reality or Truth). Place also appears where the entry for reality should be. For Stevens, place is very much related to reality.* **Reason:** Reason is very much connected with the rational and irrational (lines 449-454) (See entry for irrational). The concept of "later reason" appears throughout the poem as well. This concept seems to indicate a higher order of thought, or indicates that humans have reached the point where we try to reason through everything (lines 454, 497-499). This "later reason" allows us to create elaborate fictive realities, in fact "we make of what we see...a place dependent on ourselves" (See entry for authority). Lines 567-572 discuss discovery vs. reasoning (See entry for first idea). The reader gets a sense from these lines that reasoning can ruin discovery, and destroy any chance at appreciating the quotidian. (See entry for Sorbonne). **Repetition:** Stevens sees a repetitive process as a final good (See entries for circumlocution and final good) in lines 605-616. In lines 617-622, repetition seems to have some hold over man: "...he that of repetition is most master." Repetition, as a final good, makes man a master of the quotidian (since repetition is part of the definition of quotidian). **Robin:** The robin appears as a representative of the quotidian and a natural reality. **Scholar:** (See entry for

certainty) **Self:** In lines 301-304, the self appears as a character separate from the narrator. The self represents another fictive reality, another actor in the "real." In these lines, the boundaries between different "selves" dissolves (See entries for balance, boundaries and opposites): "The captain and his men are one and the sailor and the sea are one." The narrator says, "Follow after, O my companion, my fellow, my self." The self, then, remains somehow apart, alienated or misplaced from the soul. Perhaps, however, we all have different selves that participate in different "realities" (See entry for fiction). **Singing:** Because of the limitations of language, music embodies certain feelings or ideas that cannot be articulated. Thus, the act of singing becomes an act of conjugation, of continuing the thought process to "a point beyond which thought could not progress as thought (lines 553-554) (See entries for language, limitations of and music). **Solitude:** Stevens says, "In solitude the trumpets of solitude are not of another solitude resounding." It seems there are various forms of solitude that correspond to our various selves. In one place of solitude, the music or rhythms of that solitude do not resonate with another place of solitude. Thus, while we consider solitude or isolation to be real since it involves only ourselves, solitude in fact is as inconstant as other aspects of life. **Sorbonne:** The Sorbonne appears as an institution of rationality (indeed it is an institution of higher learning). Institutions of higher learning are held up as fortresses for reason and rationality, investigating truth and discussing it well. This, of course, is another supreme fiction (See entry for certainty). For Stevens to say, "They will get it straight one day at the Sorbonne," implies that those involved with the Sorbonne do not, in fact, have it straight. Academia does not have reality mapped out. "We shall return at twilight from the lecture," Stevens says, "pleased that the irrational is rational..." What academia holds up as rational is really *irrational.* Scholars who believe they are among the most rational of us are, of course, operating in another fictive reality. Stevens' representation of scholars operate in the dark, literally not able to see any reality at all (lines 367-370). **Sparrow:** The sparrow, like the figure of the robin, appears as a representation of the quotidian and of a natural reality vs. one we have manufactured. **Speech:** Speech is retarded by the limitations of our language (See entries for poet, poetry, and language, limitations of). **Statue:** The statue of General Du Puy is meant to

be a representative of the life of the general. However, "there never had been, never could be, such a man." We have manufactured and placed meaning on the statue (See entry for Du Puy, General). **Sun:** (See entries for first idea and ideas). The sun appears in lines 9-29 as something that cannot be named. To see the sun clearly we must "become an ignorant man again." The sun is a symbol, and we must get beyond the symbol to what it symbolizes (See entry for language, limitations of). In later lines (646-650) the sun appears as an opposite of the moon (See entry for balance and opposites). **Symbols:** Stevens wants us to get beyond the symbol to what is symbolized (See entries for statue and sun). **Transformation:** Transformation is an important element throughout the poem (See entry for change). In lines 427-433, the "freshness of transformation is the freshness of a world." Change is an essential element (and quotidian element) in our lives. Lines 447-454 describe quotidian events, and Stevens explains, "These are not things transformed." These events occur almost daily, but when we do take notice of events such as when "the sun comes rising," we are shaken, and utilize a "later reason" (See entry for reason) to create a reality that incorporates these events. **Truth:** Truth appears to be a fiction throughout the poem. In the introductory lines (4-5), certain truth is cast in an "uncertain light." In lines 32-36, the first idea is "fatal to the truth itself" (See entry for first idea). Truth can be found in the quotidian, as illustrated in lines 138-139. (See entry for certainty). **Weather:** Weather is an essential element in many of Stevens poems. The weather is an aspect of the quotidian which affects our lives deeply. (See entry for art and Hals, Franz). We can discover, without reasoning, weather in lines 566-572. This is important because the weather shapes our perceptions of reality. Weather also shapes our perceptions of place (See entries for fiction and place) in lines 128-136. **Wood-dove:** The wood-dove appears as an element of the quotidian and a representative of a natural reality. **World:** We create our own worlds, "a place dependent on ourselves." We create fictions *and* realities and then live in these worlds (lines 497-499). We author our own existences (See entry for authority). In addition, we are always changing. Transformation is a quotidian element of life. This "freshness of transformation is the freshness of a world. It is our own, it is ourselves, the freshness of ourselves..." Because boundaries between fiction and reality are so problematic, the freshness of change in

ourselves becomes the freshness of change in the world. We are, in a sense, the world.

Line numbers and poem

NOTES TOWARD A SUPREME FICTION[36]

To Henry Church

And for what, except for you, do I feel love?
Do I press the extremest book of the wisest man
Close to me, hidden in me day and night?
In the uncertain light of single, certain truth,
Equal in living changingness to the light
In which I meet you, in which we sit at rest,
For a moment in the central of our being,
The vivid transparence that you bring is peace.

It Must Be Abstract

I

Begin, ephebe, by perceiving the idea
Of this invention, this invented world,
The inconceivable idea of the sun.

You must become an ignorant man again
And see the sun again with an ignorant eye
And see it clearly in the idea of it.

Never suppose an inventing mind as source
Of this idea nor for that mind compose
A voluminous master folded in his fire.

How clean the sun when seen in its idea,
Washed in the remotest cleanliness of a heaven
That has expelled us and our images...

The death of one god is the death of all.
Let purple Phoebus lie in umber harvest,
Let Phoebus slumber and die in autumn umber,

Phoebus is dead, ephebe. But Phoebus was
A name for something that never could be named.
There was a project for the sun and is.

There is a project for the sun. The sun
Must bear no name, gold flourisher, but be
In the difficulty of what is to be.

II

It is the celestial ennui of apartments
That sends us back to the first idea, the quick
Of this invention; and yet so poisonous

Are the ravishments of truth, so fatal to
The truth itself, the first idea becomes
The hermit in a poet's metaphors,

Who comes and goes and comes and goes all day.
May there be an ennui of the first idea?
What else, prodigious scholar, should there be?

The monastic man is an artist. The philosopher
Appoints man's place in music, say, today.
But the priest desires. The philosopher desires.

And not to have is the beginning of desire.
To have what is not is its ancient cycle.
It is desire at the end of winter, when

It observes the effortless weather turning blue
And sees the myosotis on its bush.
Being virile, it hears the calendar hymn.

It knows that what is has is what is not
And throws it away like a thing of another time,
As morning throws off stale moonlight and shabby
sleep.

III

The poem refreshes life so that we share,
For a moment, the first idea...It satisfies
Belief in an immaculate beginning

And sends us, winged by an unconscious will,
To an immaculate end. We move between these points:
From that every-clearly candor to its late plural

And the candor of them is the strong exhilaration
Of what we feel from what we think, of thought

Beating in the heart, as if blood newly came,

An elixir, an excitation, a pure power.
The poem, through candor, brings back a power again
That gives a candid kind to everything.

We say: At night an Arabian in my room,
With his damned hoobla-hoobla-hoobla-how,
Inscribes a primitive astronomy

Across the unscrawled fores the future casts
And throws his stars around the floor. By day
The wood-dove used to chant his hoobla-hoo

And still the grossest iridescence of ocean
Howls hoo and rises and howls hoo and falls.
Life's nonsense pierces us with strange relation.

IV

The first idea was not our own. Adam
In Eden was the father of Descartes
And Eve made air the mirror of herself,

Of her sons and of her daughters. They found
themselves
In heaven as in a glass; a second earth;
And in the earth itself they found a green —

The inhabitants of a very varnished green.
But the first idea was not to shape the clouds
In imitation. The clouds preceded us.

There was a muddy centre before we breathed.
There was a myth before the myth began,
Venerable and articulate and complete.

From this the poem springs: that we live in a place
That is not our own and, much more, not ourselves
And hard it is in spite of blazoned days.

We are the mimics. Clouds are pedagogues.
The air is not a mirror but bare board,
Coulisse bright-dark, tragic chiaroscuro

VIII

Can we compose a castle-fortress-home,
Even with the help of Viollet-le-Duc,
And set the MacCullough there as major man?
The first idea is an imagined thing.
The pensive giant prone in violet space
May be the MacCullough, an expedient,

Logos and logic, crystal hypothesis,
Incipit and a form to speak the word
And every latent double in the word,

Beau linguist. But the MacCullough is MacCullough.
It does not follow that major man is man.
If MacCullough himself lay lounging by the sea,

Drowned in its washes, reading in the sound,
About the thinker of the first idea,
He might take habit, whether from wave or phrase,

Or power of the wave, or deepened speech,
Or a leaner being, moving in on him,
Of greater aptitude and apprehension,

As if the waves at last were never broken,
As if the language suddenly, with ease,
Said things it had laboriously spoken.

IX

The romantic intoning, the declaimed clairvoyance
Are parts of apotheosis, appropriate
And of its nature, the idiom thereof.

They differ from reason's click-clack, its applied
Enflashings. But apotheosis is not
The origin of the major man. He comes,

Compact in invincible foils, from reason,
Lighted at midnight by the studious eye,
Swaddled in revery, the object of

The hum of thoughts evaded in the mind,
Hidden from other thoughts, he that reposes
On a breast forever precious for that touch

For whom the good of April falls tenderly,
Falls down, the cock-birds calling at the time.
My dame, sing for this person accurate songs.

He is and may be but oh! he is, he is,
This foundling of the infected past, so bright,
So moving in the manner of his hand.

Yet look not at his colored eyes. Give him
No names. Dismiss him from your images.
The hot of him is purest in the heart.

X

The major abstraction is the idea of man
And major man is its exponent, abler
In the abstract than in his singular,

More fecund as principle than particle,
Happy fecundity, flor-abundant force,
In being more than an exception, part,

Though an heroic part, of the commonal.
The major abstraction is the commonal,
The inanimate, difficult visage. Who is it?

What rabbi, grown furious with human wish,
What chieftain, walking by himself, crying
Most miserable, most victorious,

Does not see these separate figures one by one,
And yet see only one, in his old coat,
His slouching pantaloons, beyond the town,

Looking for what was, where it used to be?
Cloudless the morning. It is he. The man
In that old coat, those sagging pantaloons,

It is of him, ephebe, to make, to confect
The final elegance, not to console
Nor sanctify, but plainly to propound.

It Must Change

I

The old seraph, parcel-gilded, among violets
Inhaled the appointed odor, while the doves

Rose up like phantoms from chronologies.

The Italian girls wore jonquils in their hair
And these the seraph saw, had seen long sing,
In the bandeaux of the mothers, would see again.

The bees came booming as if they had never gone,
As if hyacinths had never gone. We say
This changes and that changes. Thus the constant

Violets, doves, girls, bees and hyacinths
Are inconstant objects of inconstant cause
In a universe of inconstancy. This means

Night-blue is an inconstant thing. The seraph
Is satyr in Saturn, according to his thoughts.
It means the distaste we feel for this withered scene

Is that it has not changed enough. It remains,
It is a repetition. The bees come booming
As if—The pigeons clatter in the air.

An erotic perfume, half of the body, half
Of an obvious acid is sure what it intends
And the booming is blunt, not broken in subtleties.

II

The President ordains the bee to be
Immortal. The President ordains. But does
The body lift its heavy wing, take up,

Again, an inexhaustible being, rise
Over the loftiest antagonist
To drone the green phrases of its juvenal?

Why should the bee recapture a lost blague,
Find a deep echo in a horn and buzz
The bottomless trophy, new hornsman after old?

The President has apples on the table
And barefoot servants round him, who adjust
The curtains to a metaphysical t

And the banners of the nation flutter, burst
On the flag-poles in a red-blue dazzle, whack
At the halyards. Why, then, when in golden fury

Spring vanishes the scrapes of winter, why
Should there be a question of returning or
Of death in memory's dream? Is spring a sleep?

This warmth is for lovers at last accomplishing
Their love, this beginning, not resuming, this
Booming and booming of the new-come bee.

III

The great statue of the General Du Puy
Rested immobile, though neighboring catafalques
Bore off the residents of its noble Place.

The right, uplifted foreleg of the horse
Suggested that, at the final funeral,
The music halted and the horse stood still.

On Sundays, lawyers in their promenades
Approached this strongly-heightened effigy
To study the past, and doctors, having bathed

Themselves with care, sought out the nerveless frame
Of a suspension, a permanence, so rigid
That it made the General a bit absurd,

Changed his true flesh to an inhuman bronze.
There never had been, never could be, such
A man. The lawyers disbelieved, the doctors

Said that as keen, illustrious ornament,
As a setting for geraniums, the General,
The very Place Du Puy, in fact, belonged

Among our more vestigial states of mind.
Nothing had happened because nothing had changed.
Yet the General was rubbish in the end.

IV

Two things of opposite natures seem to depend
On one another, as a man depends
On a woman, day on night, the imagined

On the real. This is the origin of change.
Winter and spring, cold copulars, embrace
And forth the particulars of rapture come.
Music falls on the silence like a sense,
A passion that we feel, not understand.
Morning and afternoon are clasped together

And North and South are an intrinsic couple
And sun and rain a plural, like two lovers
That walk away as one in the greenest body.

In solitude the trumpets of solitude
Are not of another solitude resounding;
A little string speaks for a crowd of voices.

The partaker partakes of that which changes him.
The child that touches takes character from the thing,
The body, it touches. The captain and his men

Are one and the sailor and the sea are one.
Follow after, O my companion, my fellow, my self,
Sister and solace, brother and delight.

V

On a blue island in a sky-wide water
The wild orange trees continued to bloom and to bear,
Long after the planter's death. A few limes remained,

Where his house had fallen, three scraggy trees
weighted
With garbled green. These were the planter's
turquoise
And his orange blotches, these were his zero green,

A green baked greener in the greenest sun.
These were his beaches, his sea-myrtles in
White sand, his patter of the long sea-slushes.

There was an island beyond him on which rested,
An island to the South, on which rested like
A mountain, a pineapple pungent as Cuban summer.

An là-bas, là-bas, the cool bananas grew,
hung heavily on the great banana tree,

Which pierces clouds and bends on half the world.

He thought often of the land from which he came,
How that whole country was a melon, pink
If seen rightly and yet a possible red.

An unaffected man in a negative light
Could not have borne his labor nor have died
Sighing that he should leave the banjo's twang.

VI

Bethou me, said sparrow, to the crackled blade,
And you, and you, bethou me as you blow,
When in my coppice you behold me be.

Ah, ké! the bloody wren, the felon jay,
Ké-ké, the jug-throated robin pouring out,
Bethou, bethou, bethou me in my glade.

There was such idiot minstrelsy in rain,
So many clappers going without bells,
That these bethous compose a heavenly gong.

One voice repeating, one tireless chorister,
The phrases of a single phrase, ké-ké,
A single text, granite monotony,

One sole face, like a photograph of fate,
Glass-blower's destiny, bloodless episcopus,
Eye without lid, mind without any dream—

These are of minstrels lacking minstrelsy,
Of an earth in which the first leaf is the tale
Of leaves, in which the sparrow is a bird

Of stone, that never changes. Bethou him, you
And you, bethou him and bethou. It is
A sound like any other. It will end.

VII

After a lustre of the moon, we say
We have not the need of any paradise,
We have not the need of any seducing hymn.

It is true. Tonight the lilacs magnify
The easy passion, the ever-ready love
Of the lover that lies within us and we breathe
An odor evoking nothing, absolute.
We encounter in the dead middle of the night
The purple odor, the abundant bloom.

The lover sighs as for accessible bliss,
Which he can take within him on his breath,
Possess in his heart, conceal and nothing known.

For easy passion and ever-ready love
Are of our earthy birth and here and now
And where we live and everywhere we live,

As in the top-cloud of a May night-evening,
As in the courage of the ignorant man,
Who chants by book, in the heat of the scholar, who
writes

The book, hot for another accessible bliss:
The fluctuations of certainty, the change
Of degrees of perception in the scholar's dark.

VIII

On her trip around the world, Nanzia Nunzio
Confronted Ozymandias. She went
Alone and like a vestal long-prepared.

I am the spouse. She took her necklace off
And laid it in the sand. As I am, I am
The spouse. She opened her stone-studded belt.

I am the spouse, divested of bright gold,
The spouse beyond emerald or amethyst,
Beyond the burning body that I bear.

I am the woman stripped more nakedly
Than nakedness, standing before an inflexible
Order, saying I am the contemplated spouse.

Speak to me that, which spoken, will array me
In its own precious ornament.
Set on me the spirit's diamond coronal.

Clothe me entire in the final filament,
So that I tremble with such love so known
And myself am precious for your perfecting.
Then Ozymandias said the spouse, the bride
Is never naked. A fictive covering
Weaves always glistening from the heart and mind.

IX

The poem goes from the poet's gibberish to
The gibberish of the vulgate and back again.
Does it move to and fro or is it of both

At once? Is it a luminous flittering
Or the concentration of a cloudy day?
Is there a poem that never reaches words

And one that chaffers the time away?
Is the poem both peculiar and general?
There's a meditation there, in which there seems

To be an evasion, a thing not apprehended or
Not apprehended well. Does the poet
Evade us, as in a senseless element?

Evade, this hot, dependent orator,
The spokesman at our bluntest barriers,
Exponent by a form of speech, the speaker

Of a speech only a little of the tongue?
It is the gibberish of the vulgate that he seeks.
He tries by a peculiar speech to speak

The peculiar potency of the general,
To compound the imagination's Latin with
The lingua franca et jocundissima.

X

A bench was his catalepsy, Theatre
Of Trope. He sat in the park. The water of
The lake was full of artificial things,

Like a page of music, like an upper air,
Like a momentary color, in which swans
Were seraphs, were saints, were changing essences.

The west wind was the music, the motion, the force
To which the swans curveted, a will to changed,
A will to make iris frettings on the blank.
There was a will to change, a necessitous
And present way, a presentation, a kind
Of volatile world, too constant to be denied.

The eye of a vagabond in metaphor
That catches our own. The casual is not
Enough. The freshness of transformation is

The freshness of a world. It is our own,
It is ourselves, the freshness of ourselves,
And that necessity and that presentation

Are rubbings of a glass in which we peer
Of these beginnings, gay and green, propose
The suitable amours. Time will write them down.

It Must Give Pleasure

I

To sing jubilas at exact, accustomed times,
To be crested and wear the mane of a multitude
And so, as part, to exult with its great throat

To speak of joy and to sing of it, borne on
The shoulders of joyous men, to feel the heart
That is the common, the bravest fundament,

This is a facile exercise. Jerome
Begat the tubas and the fire-wind strings,
The golden fingers picking dark-blue air.

For companies of voices moving there,
To find of sound the bleakest ancestor,
To find of light a music issuing

Whereon it falls in more than sensual mode.
But the difficultest rigor is forthwith,
On the image of what we see, to catch from that

Irrational moment its unreasoning,
As when the sun comes rising, when the sea
Clears deeply, when the moon hangs on the wall

Of heaven-haven. These are not things transformed.
Yet we are shaken by them as if they were.
We reason about them with a later reason.

II

The blue woman, linked and lacquered, at her window
Did not desire that feathery argentines
Should be cold silver, neither that frothy clouds

Should foam, be foamy waves, should move like them,
Nor that the sexual blossoms should repose
Without their fierce addictions, nor that the heat

Of summer, growing fragrant in the night,
Should strengthen her abortive dreams and take
In sleep its natural form. It was enough

For her that she remembered: the argentines
Of spring come to their places in the grape leaves
To cool their ruddy pulses; the frothy clouds

Are nothing but frothy clouds; the frothy blooms
Waste without puberty; and afterward,
When the harmonious heat of August pines

Enters the room, it drowses and is the night.
It was enough for her that she remembered.
The blue woman looked and from her window named

The corals of the dogwood, cold and clear,
Cold, coldly delineating, being real,
Clear and, except for the eye, without intrusion.

III

A lasting visage in a lasting bush,
A face of stone in an unending red,
Red-emerald, red-slitted-blue, a face of slate,

An ancient forehead hung with heavy hair,
The channel slots of rain, the red-rose-red
And weathered and the ruby-water-worn,

The vines around the throat, the shapeless lips,
The frown like serpents basking on the brow,
The spent feeling leaving nothing of itself,
Red-in-red repetitions never going
Away, a little rusty, a little rouged,
A little roughened and ruder, a crown

The eye could not escape, a red renown
Blowing itself upon the tedious ear.
An effulgence faded, dull cornelian

Too venerably used. That might have been.
It might and might have been. But as it was,
A dead shepherd brought tremendous chords from hell

And bade the sheep carouse. Or so they said.
Children in love with them brought early flowers
And scattered them about, no two alike.

IV

We reason of these things with later reason
And we make of what we see, what we see clearly
And have seen, a place dependent on ourselves.

There was a mystic marriage in Catawba,
At noon it was on the mid-day of the year
Between a great captain and the maiden Bawda.

This was their ceremonial hymn: Anon
We loved but would no marriage make. Anon
The one refused the other one to take,

Foreswore the sipping of the marriage wine.
Each must the other take not for his high,
His puissant front nor for her subtle sound,

The shoo-shoo-shoo of secret cymbals round.
Each must the other take as sign, short sign
To stop the whirlwind, balk the elements.

The great captain loved the ever-hill Catawba
And therefore married Bawda, whom he found there,
And Bawda loved the captain as she loved the sun.

They married well because the marriage-place
Was what they loved. It was neither heaven nor hell.
They were love's characters come face to face.

V

We drank Meursault, ate lobster Bombay with mango
Chutney. Then the Canon Aspirin declaimed
Of his sister, in what a sensible ecstasy

She lived in her house. She had two daughters, one
Of four, and one of seven, whom she dressed
The way a painter of pauvred color paints.

But still she painted them, appropriate to
Their poverty, a gray-blue yellowed out
With ribbon, a rigid statement of them, white,

With Sunday pearls, her widow's gayety.
She hid them under simple names. She held
Them closelier to her by rejecting dreams.

The words they spoke were voices that she heard.
She looked at them and saw them as they were
And what she felt fought off the barest phrase.

The Canon Aspirin, having said these things,
Reflected, humming an outline of a fugue
Of praise, a conjugation done by choirs.

Yet when her children slept, his sister herself
Demanded of sleep, in the excitements of silence
Only the unmuddled self of sleep, for them.

VI

When at long midnight the Canon came to sleep
And normal things had yawned themselves away,
The nothingness was a nakedness, a point,

Beyond which fact could not progress as fact.
Thereon the learning of the man conceived
Once more night's pale illuminations, gold

Beneath, far underneath, the surface of
His eye and audible in the mountain of
His ear, the very material of his mind.

So that he was the ascending wings he saw
And moved on them in orbits' outer stars
Descending to the children's bed, on which
They lay. Forth then with huge pathetic force
Straight to the utmost crown of night he flew.
The nothingness was a nakedness, a point

Beyond which thought could not progress as thought.
He had to choose. But it was not a choice
Between excluding things. It was not a choice

Between, but of. He chose to include the things
That in each other are included, the whole,
The complicate, the amassing harmony.

VII

He imposes orders as he thinks of them,
As the fox and snake do. It is a brave affair.
Next he builds capitols and in their corridors,

Whiter than wax, sonorous, fame as it is,
He establishes statues of reasonable men,
Who surpassed the most literate owl, the most erudite

Of elephants. But to impose is not
To discover. To discover an order as of
A season, to discover summer and know it,

To discover winter and know it well, to find,
Not to impose, not to have reasoned at all,
Out of nothing to have come on major weather,

It is possible, possible, possible. It must
Be possible. It must be that in time
The real will from its crude compoundings come,

Seeming, at first, a beast disgorged, unlike,
Warmed by a desperate milk. To find the real,
To be stripped of every fiction except one,

The fiction of an absolute—Angel,
Be silent in your luminous cloud and hear
The luminous melody of proper sound.

VIII

What am I to believe? If the angel in his cloud,
Serenely gazing at the violent abyss,
Plucks on his strings to pluck abysmal glory,
Leaps downward through evening's revelations, and
On his spredden wings, needs nothing but deep space,
Forgets the gold centre, the golden destiny,

Grows warm in the motionless motion of his flight,
Am I that imagine this angel less satisfied?
Are the wings his, the lapis-haunted air?

Is it he or is it I that experience this?
Is it I then that keep saying there is an hour
Filled with expressible bliss, in which I have

No need, am happy, forget need's golden hand,
Am satisfied without solacing majesty,
And if there is an hour there is a day,

There is a month, a year, there is a time
In which majesty is a mirror of the self:
I have not but I am and as I am, I am.

These external regions, what do we fill them with
Except reflections, the escapades of death,
Cinderella fulfilling herself beneath the roof?

IX

Whistle aloud, too weedy wren. I can
Do all that angels can. I enjoy like them,
Like men besides, like men in light secluded,

Enjoying angels. Whistle, forced bugler,
That bugles for the mate, nearby the nest,
Cock bugler, whistle and bugle and stop just short,

Red robin, stop in your preludes, practicing
Mere repetitions. These things at least comprise
An occupation, an exercise, a work,

A thing final in itself, and, therefore, good:
One of the vast repetitions final in
Themselves and, therefore, good, the going round

And round and round, there merely going round,
Until merely going round is a final good,
The way wine comes at a table in a wood.

And we enjoy like men, the way a leaf
Above the table spins its constant spin,
So that we look at it with pleasure, look

At it spinning its eccentric measure. Perhaps,
The man-hero is not the exceptional monster,
But he that of repetition is most master.

X

Fat girl, terrestrial, my summer, my night,
How is it I find you in difference, see you there
In a moving contour, a change not quite completed?

You are familiar yet an aberration.
Civil, madam, I am, but underneath
A tree, this unprovoked sensation requires

That I should name your flatly, waste no words,
Check your evasions, hold you to yourself.
Even so when I think of you as strong or tired,

Bent over work, anxious, content, alone,
You remain the more than natural figure. You
Become the soft-footed phantom, the irrational

Distortion, however fragrant, however dear.
That's it: the more than rational distortion,
The fiction that results from feeling. Yes, that.

They will get it straight one day at the Sorbonne.
We shall return at twilight from the lecture
Pleased that the irrational is rational,

Until flicked by feeling, in a gildered street,
I call you by name, my green, my fluent mundo.
You will have stopped revolving except in crystal.

Soldier, there is a war between the mind
And sky, between thought and day and night. It is

For that the poet is always in the sun,

Patches the moon together in his room
To his Virgilian cadences, up down,
Up down. It is a war that never ends.

Yet it depends on yours. The two are one.
They are a plural, a right and left, a pair,
Two parallels that meet if only in

The meeting of their shadows or that meet
In a book in a barrack, a letter from Malay.
But your war ends. And after it you return

With six meats and twelve wines or else without
To walk another room...Monsieur and comrade,
The solider is poor without the poet's lines,

His petty syllabi, the sounds that stick,
Inevitably modulating, in the blood.
And war for war, each had its gallant kind.

How simply the fictive hero becomes the real;
How gladly with proper words the soldier dies,
If he must, or lives on the bread of faithful speech.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

> I cannot believe that I am the only person in the world who finds it necessary to be perpetually leaping up from the meal-table to exact some apposite reference from his library. Fellow-leapers will know only too well that half an index is often worse than no index at all, and that inadequacy in this department results in one's return, empty-handed, to an anapolaustic table of wrath.[37]

Rodney Dale, in his work The Tumour in the Whale: A Collection of Modern Myths, is here commenting upon the importance of the index. In the Information Age, indexes are even more critical than ever—without them, massive amounts of information and meaning would surely be lost.

However, the index is not only important in terms of its function. It is also important as a method of critical inquiry, and as a text. Examination of the practice of indexing, and its product (the index) can open new avenues of reading. The world of academia, as well as the world of publishing would do well to re-examine common practices regarding indexes and indexers. Many academics rely heavily on the index, but think nothing more of it than as a way to locate what is needed in the text. In the context of English Departments, for example, this is particularly ironic given the fact that many marginalized literatures are currently being examined. As stated in the introduction, I have yet to locate one academic journal article or scholarly piece on indexing.

In addition, the word of publishing pays no mind to the index or indexer. The index is the last section of the book to be compiled, and the indexer is often sought as an afterthought. The indexer is supposed to produce a quality index in three or four days,

and if the publishing schedule slips, or the project is cancelled, the indexer has no recourse but for to suffer the loss of income. In addition, many publishers think nothing of heavily editing the index once it is delivered, despite the fact that the indexer maintains copyright on the index until he or she receives payment. Indeed, publishers pay months late, while their authors are afforded every courtesy. It is a reaction to the power of the index. By keeping indexers and indexes in the margins, publishers avoid the need to pay on time and to pay what the index is worth, and can maintain some control over what is ultimately printed in the index. A sad state of affairs, and one which many indexers are trying to remedy.

Again, the index is important—critically so, and not just as a way to locate information. It is a critical method of reading, and represents an interpretation of a piece. Indeed, the index should be looked upon as a text itself. Theoretical work on indexing and indexes has yet to be accepted or undertaken in the academy. While I am excited about the opportunity to pursue a topic which has seemingly been overlooked, I can't help but wonder how the world of the indexer might be affected by a fuller appreciation of the art of indexing and its practitioners.

The future of indexing at this point is somewhat unclear. With the advent of electronic books which enable readers to perform full-text searches, and technology which claims to create indexes, the need for the skills of an experienced indexer seem to be declining. However, technology has not succeeded in obliterating the need for indexers just yet, and has, in some cases, developed new markets which require indexing skills. Many websites, for example, require the skills of the indexer in order to maintain a search function, as do many electronic databases. In addition, a massive number of non-fiction

books published each year need an index, a practice driven in part by librarian's refusal to purchase reference books which do not include an index. It seems, then, that the profession is changing with the times while hanging on to mainstay projects of the past. Indexers are adapting and finding new ways to utilize their skills while at the same time keeping a grasp on the older types of projects that have been the bread and butter of the indexing industry for some time.

Indexing has existed for hundreds of years. It is difficult to make the statement, however, that it will continue to be around for hundreds more. Technological advances appear to be a cause of concern for the indexing industry. It is important to note, however, that the very technological advances which lead to computer programs which claim to create indexes also aid in the proliferation of information. The age of technology has, in fact, become the Information Age. Who better to help navigate the massive amounts of information thrown at us daily than indexers?

It is my hope that rather than the indexing profession suffering extinction, that discussions such as the examples presented in this thesis will lead to a better understanding of indexers and indexes, and that this understanding will lead to an appreciation of the art of indexing and the ability of the index to articulate. Failing this, we lose not only an important literary tradition in indexing and indexers, but, in fact, we lose the ability to contextualize our own realities. The incredible amounts of information that pass us by daily will simply be lost forever, and so too will every reader. If one views life as a text of sorts, where does the reader fit in an infinite text growing larger by the second? The role of indexes and indexers in this environment is crucial, for it is only with the aid of the index and indexer that we can locate meaning in various texts. This is not, of course, to

say that readers cannot locate meaning in texts through interactions with the text. It is, however, to say that the index and the indexer, while certainly making meaning, also help to manage it by creating a hierarchical structure of information contained in a given manuscript. This type of management is essential in the Information Age, and without it, we risk losing ourselves and the things that are meaningful to us in the shuffle of the massive media output.

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