

Frances McConihe
LIS419, Subject Analysis
Final Project Report
May 11, 2006

A Million Grains of Sand: An Index to *The Sheltering Sky*
[<http://strikeseason.net/school/indexing/million-grains.html>]

Project Proposal and Objectives

The Sheltering Sky, Paul Bowles' first novel, published in 1949, has slowly become a classic of the 20th Century. Staged in Northern Africa just after World War II, the novel explores numerous themes that still resonate today. The two main characters, Kit and Port, are American expatriates traveling in what is, to them, an entirely alien culture, the desert countries of the Middle East. As with Iraq today, the characters are foreign intruders into a culture they do not understand, and which eventually destroys them in their ignorance.

In a historical context, the novel echoes the experience of Americans relating with the world and with itself in the mid-century. Disillusionment from the war, a rejection of traditional moral and cultural values, and the uneasy era of modernism are all elements that emerge through the novel. Existentialism and psychology feature prominently as well. Bowles is often compared to Poe and Camus, and his work inspired many Beat writers, for whom he was mentor.

Interest in the novel has increased since Bowles' death in 1999 and the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. Though the language is somewhat out-dated, the novel has much of value to say about the clash between East and West that is still relevant today. While no current system exists, some form of subject access would undoubtedly be of service to readers in search of understanding, and an index would certainly serve this purpose well.

The novel itself is complex and interweaving, with dream sequences, fevered hallucinations, flashbacks, and other convoluted structural elements, that can leave the reader lost. Bowles' evocative descriptions of the environment and the culture of the desert remain with the reader. Certainly, if it were available, the reader would make use of an index. She could refer to the index to help follow the development of the characters and the plot, when perhaps a scene from the beginning of the book is suddenly made clear, though she cannot quite recall the details of that earlier scene. With the index, she could quickly locate the scene, re-read it with a new perspective, and then return to the later chapter with a clearer understanding. Aside from this practical use, the index can serve the reader who wishes to revisit and enjoy especially evocative passages that left a strong impression or mental image, or culturally significant details within a scene. This index makes it possible for her to look up that vivid remembered passage, rather than searching through the whole text, trying to reconstruct where the passage might have appeared.

This project aimed to provide access to *The Sheltering Sky* through a back-of-the-book index. Though every reader undoubtedly has a particular area of interest, this index is aimed at a general readership wishing to become more familiar with the characters, plots, and themes of the novel.

Annotated Bibliography for the Sources Used in this Project

Indexing Fiction

Hazel Bell is the authoritative voice on indexing fiction. She has created several fiction indexes to novels, including those of A. S. Byatt, Alain de Botton, and Angela Thirkell, though the indexes were created for pleasure and are unpublished to-date. Her subsequent articles on the lessons learned while creating these indexes are cited in almost every other article written about indexing fiction. She was also the Editor of *Indexer*, the major professional journal for the indexing, for almost twenty years, as well as a professional indexer. Her clear and instructive writing style has been invaluable in learning and beginning a fiction index.

Bell, H. K. (1991). Indexing fiction: A story of complexity. *Indexer*, 17(4), 251-256.

Bell, H. K. (1998). Thirty-nine to one: Indexing the novels of Angela Thirkell. *Indexer*, 21(1), 6-10.

Bell, H. K. (1999). Kiss and tell and index. *The Indexer*, 21(4), 180-181.

In these three articles, Bell argues the case for indexes to novels. She notes three types of indexes that have been produced: a dense dictionary-like index to a body of work by a major author such as Proust, a self-reflective index that serves more as amusement or as part of the text than as an access to it, and an index to serious novels that are similar to biographies or histories. She recounts the challenges and benefits she found in indexing the novels of Byatt, Thirkell, and de Botton, which fall in this last category. Several important points relevant to this project emerged. Most importantly, the index should serve as a point of access to the novel, not a summation of its content. Though a single term or short phrase may seem inadequate to describe the scene at hand, it is only a pointer for the reader. And often the indexer must choose among several elements worthy of indexing even within one paragraph. But Bell points out that despite these difficulties, much is to be discovered in such an index, an author's preoccupation with a theme or a character's development and depth, so the effort is worthwhile. Difficulties in the physical creation of the index are also discussed and were used as reference in the production of the index.

Bell, H. K. (1992). Reading for fine indexing. *Scholarly Publishing*, 23(2), 115-121.

This article is the most succinct and eloquent description in this bibliography of how to go about indexing. Though Bell focuses on "fine" indexing, i.e. fiction indexing, her points can be applied to many types of material. Her method is particularly relevant to this project, though, and the process she describes—read through once to become familiar with the development of the text; then focus paragraph by paragraph, marking terms and making notes of sub-headings; arrange terms; and finally follow each character and theme individually through the book to verify consistency—was used in creating this index. Her discussion of the difficulties in selecting a method for arranging sub-headings is also useful, though it does not, in the end, endorse a particular format.

Bell, H. K. (1992). Should fiction be indexed? The indexability of text. *The Indexer*, 18, 83-86.

A cogent argument for indexing fiction, this article addresses one by one the the arguments against the practice, and concludes that the effort is worthwhile, useful to the reader, and not destructive of the author's work. These arguments can be said to defend the initiative to index *The Sheltering Sky*, which aims to aid users in following the complex plots and themes.

Bell, H. K. (1992). *Indexing biographies and other stories of human lives*. London: Society of Indexers.

This small book brings together material from several of the above articles along with a few others related specifically to the issues of indexing biographies and biography-like novels. Bell's advice on constructing sub-headings is section of particular worth. It is one of the few detailed treatments of the topic in all the references in this bibliography, including the full-length texts.

Bell, H. K. (2003). Strange purposes of indexes. *Indexer*, 23(3), 167-168.

Bell, H. K. (1997). Indexes as fiction and fiction as paper-chase. *Indexer*, 20(4), 209-211.

Batchelor, J. L. (1989). Para-index and anti-index. *The Indexer*, 16, 194.

These three articles, two by Bell and one by Batchelor, discuss indexes of the fanciful kind, those which are more a part of the text than a tool for accessing it, and are not useful for this project.

Bradley, P. (1973). A long fiction index. *Indexer*, 8(3), 153-159.

This early article on fiction indexing, recounting the author's experience in indexing the Sir Walter Scott's *Waverly* novels, brings up many of the same points and issues that are discussed in more recent articles. Issues in what to index, variations in page numbers between editions, problems with establishing proper character names, spelling errors in the text itself, and order of sub-entries are all covered. Bradley also makes an estimate at the cost of creating such an index commercially, which he figures to be large, but not exorbitant.

Bradley, P. (1989). Indexes to works of fiction: The views of producers on the need for them. *Indexer*, 16(4), 239-248.

In this article, Bradley solicits opinions about indexing fiction from several involved groups: readers, authors, publishers, literary societies, and indexers. Most authors, publishers are opposed to the idea, while readers seem to be ambivalent. Literary societies are most in favor, with indexers falling on both sides of the issue. The majority of the argument against is that of cost, though some authors are opposed on artistic grounds. He also looks at the novels that have been indexed, most of which are discussed elsewhere in this bibliography. The excerpt from Orwell's *1984* is worth noting, as it goes

well beyond the more common name index. Despite Bradley's discouragement, this project is founded on the principle that indexing fiction is worthwhile.

Raven, A. (1990). Indexes to works of fiction. *Indexer*, 17(April), 60-61.

This Letter to the Editor is a response to Bradley's article above. Raven concisely counters Bradley's points against fiction indexing. He suggests that a fiction index helps readers locate forgotten intricacies of plot and character while reading and allows readers easy access to sections they wish to re-read, an action which may not only *not* destroy the magic of the text as a whole, but enable the reader to re-experience it. Bradley's assertion that only hard facts in novels be indexed is made absurd by Raven's point that within the world of the novel, "all facts are equally factual" despite their status out side of it. All of these points are well made and convincing and support the objective of this project.

Chulick, M. A. G. (2000). The mysteries of fiction indexing. *Key Words*, 8(5), 166-170.

A casual recounting of the process of indexing the mystery novels of Les Roberts. Familiar issues, like choosing a method for the subheadings which made sense and deciding what to index, are discussed. One interesting point was raised, though. In indexing mysteries, there is perhaps a need for some misdirection or opacity in the index so as not to reveal important plot points. Chulick chose to use semi-ambiguous terms that would not convey meaning to a reader who hasn't reached a particular point yet, but would be able to direct the knowing reader. This method can be useful to carry over to other types of fiction, and was used in creating the *Sheltering Sky* index.

Karpuk, S. (2001). Indexing *Clarissa*. *Key Words*, 9(4), 116-118.

Karpuk recounts her experience indexing Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*. The overwhelming amount of references to characters prompted her to create three separate indexes to make it more manageable: one for main characters, one for minor characters, and a subject index. She defends the use of indexes over full-text searching with compelling examples, e.g. finding *Clarissa*'s various suitors, which would be virtually impossible with a full text search. The question of truth is also an interesting one, when each character has his or her own view of a situation. These problems came up in the creation of this project's index, but only minimally so, so no changes in indexing approach were made.

Mirabile, L. (1997). *Origins and objectives of An index to The English Patient* by Michael Ondaatje. Retrieved March 5, 2006 from http://www.birchile.com/index_report.html

Mirabile's report on *The English Patient* index project brings together much of the research on fiction indexing and provides a comprehensive list of fiction indexes. But aside from just bringing the information together, she frankly addresses an issue that remained implicit in much of the other literature. One of the more vociferous arguments against indexing fiction is that an index would allow a reader to skip reading the novel altogether. Mirabile argues that this sort of argument denigrates the reader, who can just as easily subvert the author's intentions by reading the pages out of order.

Murphy, Tom, O. Carm. (2003). Exploring fiction and poetry through indexing. *The Indexer*, 23(4), 216-217.

Murphy recounts his experience using indexing as a teaching tool for a greater understanding of literature. He tasked his class of high school sophomores with creating an index to a selection Emily Dickinson's poems, but had limited success with the project. Murphy did not question his choice of material, though much of the literature stands against indexing poetry. This article is more directed toward teachers than indexers and is not useful for this project, though some of the indexes he has created himself are fine examples of fiction indexes.

Rafferty, P., & Hilderley, R. (2004). *Indexing multimedia and creative works: The problems of meaning and interpretation*. Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Despite the "creative" element in the title, this book is of little use in indexing fiction books. It focuses primarily on multimedia and other non-book formats, which has little application for this project.

Ransley, A. (1987). Towards a fiction index: Part 1. *Australian Library Journal*, 36(1), 44-54.

Ransley, A. (1987). Towards a fiction index: Part 2. *Australian Library Journal*, 36(2), 103-113.

Ransley's detailed article on creating an index to Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* is an invaluable resource for understanding the problems and choices to be made in creating a fiction index. He indexed both characters and themes, no easy task, following the example set by P. A. Spalding's index to Proust, which is in fact more of a handbook in its scope. His description of indexing themes makes the process look easy, though it is a very difficult and dangerous territory to traverse; he does acknowledge that a fiction index is a "rudimentary form of literary criticism." Many of his choices reveal subjective interpretation, and while it is tempting to allow these assumptions, indexers must be careful and exercise restraint when indexing this sort of material. But a completely objective index can also be too careful, as readers often identify with a theme and would look to the index for help in locating it. In his conclusion, Ransley begins with two quotes, one stating that an index is only a guide while the other states that a good index is much more than that. It is an interesting puzzle with no simple answer, but Ransley goes a long way in advocating for the indexing of themes. His experience proved a useful guide during the creation of the index to *The Sheltering Sky*, though the depth of theme indexing for this project did not go as far as Ransley did with his indexes to *The Scarlet Letter*.

Indexing in General

Anderson, J. D. (1997). *Guidelines for indexes and related information retrieval devices* (Technical report No. TR02-1997). Bethesda, MD: NISO Press.

International Organization for Standardization. (1996). *Information and documentation : Guidelines for the content, organization and presentation of indexes* (2nd ed.). Genève, Switzerland: International Organization for Standardization.

The ISO and NISO standards for creation of indexes are essential for creating an index that complies with current industry standards. The ISO standard is more frequently referenced in the literature reviewed for this project, though the NISO standard is freely available while the ISO standard is beyond the resources of individual indexers. Both standards detail the practical aspects of creating an index, e.g. capitalization of entry terms, syntax, preferred parts of speech. As these are the standards used in professional indexing, they were used in this project except where the issues specific to indexing fiction (as discussed in the literature) took precedence.

Bell, H. K. (1991). The ah!-factor (principles for selecting index terms). *Indexer*, 17(April), 191-192.

This article discusses a method for selecting appropriate terms for a back-of-the-book index. While the concept is simple, select terms that make you say "ah!," the lesson is invaluable for novice indexers, such as the indexer for this project, who tend to index every detail.

Booth, P. F. (2001). *Indexing: The manual of good practice*. Munchen: K.G. Saur.

Mulvany, N. C. (2005). *Indexing books* (2nd ed.). Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press.

Indexing and *Indexing Books* are the two major texts for teaching back-of-the-book indexing. Each provides a step-by-step approach, with detailed consideration of the issues that are likely to arise when indexing various materials. Both are well written and accessible. Booth's illustrations of indexable references and elements, especially in terms of significance, were especially useful. The section on establishing word order is a valuable reference. While Booth covers several formats, Mulvany's book focuses more on textual materials, which is more relevant to this project. Most of Mulvany's methods were used in constructing this index, though the caveats within the articles on indexing fiction will be taken into account.

Booth, P. F. (1996). How we index: Six ways to work. *Indexer*, 20(2), 89-92.

Kells, K. (2004). How do I index thee? Indexers count the ways: Part I. *Key Words*, 12(2), 54-57.

Kells, K. (2004). How do I index thee? Indexers count the ways: Part II. *Key Words*, 12(4), 124-126.

The three articles above are comprised of short blurbs in which indexers discuss their methods of working. While these may be interesting to the experienced indexer, such abbreviated descriptions were not helpful for this project.

Coates, S. (2001). Term selection: Putting Humpty Dumpty together, at last. *Key Words*, 9(5), 145-147.

While several of the items in this bibliography mention the difficulty of term selection, most claim that it can't be taught. While this may be true, Coates article serves as an enlightening walk through the process of selecting terms and creating entries that provide meaning to the user within the index (without having to turn to the section of the book) as well as varied access to the same topic. This process most likely takes significant practice to become proficient, but the issues and methods are worth noting and were kept in mind during the term selection process.

Hall, H. (2002). Ten common mistakes in indexing. [Electronic version]. *A to Z*, 5(2), 7-9. Retrieved March 5, 2006 from <http://www.stcsig.org/idx/articles/mistakes.pdf>.

Hall enumerates some common mistakes indexers, especially novice indexers, make when creating a back-of-the-book index, and provides clear illustrations of both the right and the wrong way of doing each. This article was a useful resource for checking this project's index during production and at the final pass.

Pincoe, R. (2003). Apples, pears and oranges: Three important books on indexing. *Indexer*, 23(3), 124-128.

There are currently three texts which are most often cited and referred to when discussing the instruction and learning of back-of-the-book index creation. This article reviews and compares all three: Mulvany's *Indexing Books*, Wellisch's *Indexing from A to Z*, and Booth's *Indexing: A Manual of Good Practice*. While quite useful when first researching sources, this article does not directly contribute to the completion of this project.

Weinberg, Bella Hass (Ed.). (1998). *Can you recommend a good book on indexing? Collected reviews on the organization of information*. Medford, NJ: Published for the American Society of Indexers by Information Today.

A collection of critical book reviews, this text, and especially the chapter devoted to back-of-the-book indexing, was particularly helpful in selecting authoritative texts on indexing, but like the article above, provides only general access to relevant texts and does not directly contribute to the project's completion.

University of Chicago. (2003). *The Chicago manual of style* (15th ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Chapter 18 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, is devoted to indexing books. It also provides a step-by-step guide, but is directed more toward authors and occasional indexers than the professionals, and was not consulted for this project.

Wellisch, H. H. (1996). *Indexing from A to Z* (2nd , rev. and enl. ed.). New York: H.W. Wilson.

This text is more of a reference book, as it is comprised of short entries on a broad range of topics in indexing. Most useful as a source to turn to if faced with a particular problem, but was not needed for this project.

- Kasdorf, B. (2004). Indexers and XML: An overview of the opportunities. *Indexer*, 24(2), 75-78.
- Murray, C. (2004). Indexing in an XML context. *Indexer*, 24(2), 66-67.

XML can be a useful and flexible tool in many information environments, but these two articles on using XML for indexing quickly made clear that an electronic version of the text is necessary, and so this method of indexing will not be used.

Evaluating the Index

- Lathrop, L. (2000). Index usability test questions. [Electronic version]. *A to Z*, 3(2), 8-9. Retrieved March 18, 2006 from <http://www.stcsig.org/idx/articles/usability.pdf>

Lathrop provides a useful chart for users to mark when evaluating an index. Some of the elements were incorporated into the evaluation and usability testing for this project's finished index.

- Ryan, C. N., & Henselmeier, S. (2000). Usability testing at Macmillan USA. *Key Words*, 8(6), 198-202.

This article details the process for testing index usability used at the publisher Macmillan USA to evaluate the indexes to several of their books. While none of the texts used in the study are fiction, many of the principles can be applied to assess them as well. The step-by-step description of the study was a useful reference for designing an evaluation test for this project.

Examples of Fiction Indexes

Many of the indexes to fiction books discussed in the literature are unpublished, and most of those that are published are predominantly character name indexes. A few of the unpublished indexes are available on the web.

- Byatt, A. S. *Possession*.
Byatt, A. S. *A virgin in the garden*.
Byatt, A. S. *Still life*.
Byatt, A. S. *The game*.
Byatt, A. S. *Shadow of a sun*.

Unpublished indexes by Hazel K. Bell

- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The scarlet letter and selected tales*.

Unpublished index by Ambrose Ransley.

Calvino, I. (1985). *Mr. Palomar* (1st ed.). San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

This index is incredibly strange and serves more as an exposure of the novel's structure than as an index; an example of the "index as art." Not a useful example for this project.

Danielewski, M. Z. (2000). *Mark Z. Danielewski's house of leaves* (2nd ed.). New York: Pantheon Books.

The index to *A House of Leaves* is an example of what no index should look like. The index terms are almost all single words, there are no cross-references or subheadings, and the references are large blocks of numbers that often go on for half a page. It also appears to be more of a concordance than an index. It may be a creation of the author as a part of the work and not an access tool.

Mirabile, L. (1997). *An index to the Vintage 1993 edition of The English Patient by Michael Ondaatje*. Retrieved February 15, 2006 from <http://www.birchile.com/epframeset.html>

A fine example of what a fiction index should be. The entries include names, concepts, and things; are easy to read in the indented format; are inverted only when necessary; and do not have enormous numbers of page number references. Also, the length of the index is appropriate to the length of the novel. While I am not familiar enough with *The English Patient* to assess the usability of the index, it seems well organized and coherent.

Murphy, Tom, O. Carm. (2005). *An index to John Gardner's Grendel*. Retrieved February 18, 2006 from <http://brtom.org/gr/grendex.html>

Murphy, Tom, O. Carm. (2002). *An index to The great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald*. Retrieved February 18, 2006 from <http://brtom.org/gg/ggind1.html>

The two indexes created by Br. Tom Murphy, O. Carm., one to *The Great Gatsby* and the other to *Grendel*, are similar to *The English Patient* index in that they include names, concepts, and things. They also use indented subheadings, though there are often long lists of subheadings under a single term. In the *Grendel* index, Murphy hyperlinked cross-references, a nice feature, while in *The Great Gatsby* index, he hyperlinked not only to cross references, but also to a glossary with links to information about the entry on the web (e.g. Yale University is linked to the Yale website). Again, I am not familiar enough with the texts to evaluate their effectiveness. The use of hyperlinked cross-references was adopted for this project.

Orwell, G., & Crick, B. R. (1984). *Nineteen eighty-four*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press.

The excerpt from this novel's index in Philip Bradley's article "Indexes to works of fiction" looks to be very similar to what this project hopes to accomplish. Names are indexed, but important terms and concepts are as well. The vocabulary is concise but descriptive, the entry vocabulary and the cross-references are rich. While I prefer indented rather

than run-in display of sub-headings, the entries are not excessively long and remain accessible.

Tolkien, J. R. R. (1977). *The Silmarillion* (1st American ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Tolkien, J. R. R. (1965). *The lord of the rings* (2d ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

While the index to *The Silmarillion* is primarily a name index, there are three indexes found in final book of this edition of *Lord of the Rings*: a character name index, a place name index, and a thing index, the only example of this type of separated index examined.

Vonnegut, K. (1979). *Jailbird: A novel*. New York: Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence.

A brief index of names.

Ware, T. Gravity's Rainbow - *Thomas Pynchon*. Retrieved February 18, 2006 from <http://www.hyperarts.com/pynchon/gravity/index.html>

Ware, T. Mason & Dixon - *Thomas Pynchon* Retrieved February 23, 2006 from <http://www.hyperarts.com/pynchon/mason-dixon/index.html>

Ware, T. V. - *Thomas Pynchon* Retrieved February 23, 2006 from <http://www.hyperarts.com/pynchon/v/index.html>

These indexes are primarily composed of character names and unusual vocabulary terms found in the text. Many entries also include context derived from outside the novels, serving as more of a critical tool than one of access.

Criticism of The Sheltering Sky

Each of the following articles provided context and literary reference for creating index terms and identifying themes and concepts throughout the novel that would be of value to readers.

Edwards, B. T. (2005). Sheltering screens: Paul Bowles and foreign relations. *American Literary History*, 17(2), 307-334.

An exploration of Bowles' work in the context of foreign relations, at the time *The Sheltering Sky* was written and today.

Olson, S. E. (1986). Alien terrain: Paul Bowles's filial landscapes. *Twentieth Century Literature*, 32(3/4), 334.

A psychological examination of the nature of landscape in Bowles' work, comparing its austerity and brutality with Freudian concepts of parental neglect and inhumanity.

Pinsker, S. (1985). Post-war civilization and its existential discontents: Paul Bowles's *The Sheltering Sky*. *Critique*, 27(1), 3.

This article places the novel in its era, exploring themes that echo the sentiment and angst of the time.

Pounds, W. (1986). Paul Bowles and Edgar Allan Poe: The disintegration of the personality. *Twentieth Century Literature*, 32(3/4), 424.

Bowles' often referred to Poe as a significant influence; this article explores the similarities between characters who are nihilistic and cause the destruction of their own ego.

Williams, M. G. (1986). "Tea in the Sahara": The function of time in the work of Paul Bowles. *Twentieth Century Literature*, 32(3/4), 408.

Williams explores the distortion and subversion of time in Bowles' works.

Edition of The Sheltering Sky used to create this index

Bowles, P. (1949). *The sheltering sky*. New York: HarperCollins.

While a newer edition was printed in September 2005, this edition was selected because all editions previous to 2005 use the same page numbering, making this index applicable to over 50 years of printings.

Procedures and Problems

The process used in creating this index to Paul Bowles' *The Sheltering Sky* is similar to the one described in Bell's *Reading for Fine Indexing*¹. As the author had read the novel previously, though not recently, the first pass was used to become familiar with the story's trajectory and major plot points. At the same time, significant characters names were noted and underlined and terms or phrases that were immediately apparent as index terms were noted. A general sense of the index was mentally constructed at this point and the second pass, moving page by page, was used to fill in detail, reinforce or amend previously marked headings, and note potential subheadings and cross references. Notes were concurrently marked on the text and entered into a database of term records. An example of a term record from the database can be seen below (Fig. 1).

The screenshot shows a web-based interface for a term record. At the top, the term 'dancing and singing' is displayed in a green header bar. Below this, there are two buttons: 'show all' and 'list'. The main entry term is 'dancing and singing', and there is a 'pages' field. Below the main entry, there are checkboxes for 'character' and 'place'. The record is organized into two columns: 'subentry' and 'pages'. The 'subentry' column lists various phrases, and the 'pages' column lists corresponding page numbers. At the bottom, there are three fields: 'see also', 'used for', and 'notes'.

subentry	pages
mournful boy singer	136
blind girl somnambulistically	137
sudden impulse to sing (Kit)	247
monotonous, whining song and rhythmic	286-7
querulous refrain	296
like a child's weeping	80
in a complex rhythm	181-2
a rhythmical refrain with the feast drums	245-6
a little song that Belquassim often sang	288

Fig. 1 Term record example

Several subsequent passes were performed to check the consistency of terms, augment terms that were added during the second pass and were therefore not indexed consistently from the beginning, and balance the level of detail with the importance of the term within the book. Some subheadings were generalized and combined to reduce the length of the subheading lists and the total length of the index. The final pass followed each major character and theme through the novel individually to ensure equal, logical, and consistent treatment. Page numbers were checked for accuracy and less important entries and terms were pruned.

The practical construction of the index primarily follows Mulvany's *Indexing Books*², except where issues pertaining specifically to the indexing of fiction take precedence, or physical format issues were a problem. Subheadings are in indented format for readability—as the index is available electronically, size limitations were not an issue—and follow Ransley's³ suggestion for or-

¹ Bell, H. K. (1992). Reading for fine indexing. *Scholarly Publishing*, 23(2), 115-121.

² Mulvany, N. C. (2005). *Indexing books* (2nd ed.). Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press.

³ Ransley, A. (1987). Towards a fiction index: Part 1. *Australian Library Journal*, 36(1), 44-54.

dering subheadings when indexing fiction: sequential for entries relating to characters, and alphabetical for entries in which that order makes more sense. The terms themselves adhere as closely as was feasible to the actual terms in the text to retain Bowles' authorial tone, and subheading phrases were drawn directly from the text when possible. Significant character and place names were indexed, as well as thematically important things, events, and unusual terms.

The first pass at this project quickly revealed the difficulty of determining what to index, what terms to use, and where to draw the line at interpreting the text. Often, such interpretation is second nature and inadvertently passes into the index unnoticed. As the work proceeded, some patterns in the plot and characters emerged, making choices about what to index easier, though the earlier work had to be carefully reviewed and edited, and in some cases completely redone. Balancing the view of the novel as a whole, the broader cultural meaning of the story, and the minute details captured in phrases and individual words was challenging. At times, the indexing became too detailed and at others, too general. The final passes helped to even out the depth of the index, though the choice was subjective; a convincing case could be made to make it either more or less detailed.

Term selection was also a challenge. While the use of terms from the text made the more literal references easier, selecting terms that were consistent with the authorial tone, the setting, and the time of the novel for the more abstract concepts was incredibly demanding. Though the indexer has read several novels from the time period, she may have selected incongruous terms. The decision to index abstract terms and allusions was in itself problematic as it implied a certain amount of interpretation and literary criticism. The articles on Bowles' writing and on *The Sheltering Sky* in particular were useful in determining some of the more accepted interpretations, and the more controversial issues were left up to the reader to connect by referring to more literal passages that were indexed.

Constructing and ordering the subheadings was more difficult than anticipated. Identifying succinct yet accurate and meaningful phrases in the text to use as subheadings was not always successful; often, several references were combined to create a phrase that echoed several passages, but was drawn from no one in particular. The ordering was equally difficult. Subheadings under characters appeared in the same order as in the text. But all others were ordered alphabetically, which ordinarily would be most logical, but with the evocative and creative language of fiction texts, the location in the alphabet to look for a particular subheading is far from obvious. For a lack of another more suitable method, the imperfect decision to order alphabetically was decided based on convention.

The issue of geographical names was one that could have been left to the reader. In the novel, the geography of the region in which the characters are traveling has changed dramatically in the decades since. What was then French West Africa is now several independent nations and many of the cities have changed or altered the spelling of city and place names, though some have remained the same. For those readers who may have visited the region recently, the indexer has attempted to include the current place names in common use so they may match up their own experience of place with those mentioned in the novel.

Balancing all the above difficulties with term entries are two major benefits of working closely with the author's language: consistency of terms and evocative language. Headings and subheadings reflect the tone and temperament of the text and evoke the passage from which they were drawn. Additionally, a certain term is likely to be used for a particular meaning throughout the text making disambiguation less of a problem.

Practical problems also arose. The design of the database changed and grew as the index was being created, necessitating constant upkeep for records already entered. Also, exporting the records was not as straightforward as had been assumed. A significant amount of work and time was required to reformat the export into a workable form. Adding functionality and other extras required additional investment. Some formatting issues were never solved; where indexing conventions and proper XHTML coding conflicted, proper code took precedence. Thus, the page numbers and 'see' or 'see also' listings for entries with no subentries began on a new line instead of remaining on the same line, though this does not interfere with the functionality or usability of the index.

Evaluation

Once the index was completed, the usability and efficacy of the index was evaluated by a set of potential users. The objective was to evaluate the index for completeness and consensus with the reader. There were two parts to the evaluation and four users, ranging from 'marginally familiar with indexes' to 'received some formal training in indexing,' were asked to perform the evaluation individually, marking their results on a prepared evaluation sheet. None of the users had read the book or was familiar with the story.

In the first part, the users were asked to read two passages for which they were to locate two concepts in the index that referred to that passage. While using the index, they were asked to note each term they attempted to look up, up to three. If on the third try, they were still unsuccessful, they were asked to stop. The results of this section were used to evaluate consensus with the general reader. Most of the users located an acceptable term within one to two terms. (The first passage was selected to be more straightforward and therefore produced better results than the more challenging second passage.)

In the second part, the users were again asked to read two passages, but were asked to think of terms they would use to refer to that passage, up to three. (They were not asked to be exhaustive.) In this section, they did not refer to the index at all. This was used to check for completeness in the index. Again, because of the users' unfamiliarity with the story and the necessary brevity of the passages, it may have been difficult for them to locate important concepts. Despite this obstacle, all the users identified at least two concepts akin to those in the index for both passages. Two terms which were originally edited from the index were reintroduced after evaluation and three cross-references were added to facilitate entry to existing terms.

The positive results of the evaluation reflect well on the index considering that the users were completely unfamiliar with the context given by the story and characters. It is likely that a more familiar user would have an even easier time locating concepts. Additionally, two users expressed interest in reading the book after reading the short passages and using the index.