

Words and Dictionaries from the British Isles  
in Historical Perspective



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Edited by

John Considine and Giovanni Iamartino



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# INTRODUCTION: HISTORICAL LEXICOGRAPHY AND LEXICOLOGY

JOHN CONSIDINE

## 1. Historical lexicography and lexicology as a field of inquiry

Hans Aarsleff identified a “recent sharp rise of interest” in the history of linguistics as he surveyed the field in the early 1980s (Aarsleff 1982, 3), and Vivien Law noted that a decade later, “the history of linguistics was ... growing faster than any other subdiscipline of linguistics,” and that

Even in the late 1980s, over five hundred publications were appearing annually in the history of linguistics, more than twice as many as in syntax, semantics or phonetics, its nearest competitors. (Law 2003, xv)

This extraordinary development has not left the history of lexicography unaffected. A wide range of periodical and monographic publications, not least those of several contributors to this volume, have treated it in recent decades. Many of the most important articles on English lexicography from the Anglo-Saxon period to the end of the eighteenth century will be united in the four-volume *Early English lexicographers* collection forthcoming from Ashgate under the general editorship of Ian Lancashire. More fundamentally, the three magnificent volumes of Hausmann, Reichmann, Wiegand, and Zgusta’s *Wörterbücher / Dictionaries / Dictionnaires*, together with primary resources such as the printed dictionaries facsimiled in R. C. Alston’s series *English linguistics 1500–1800* and those made freely available online in the Bibliothèque Nationale’s *Gallica* project, offer rich opportunities for future research.

The history of lexicography is naturally an object of interest to many practicing lexicographers: probably more so than, for instance, the history of phonetics to practicing phoneticists. One reason for this is that dictionary projects are often so long-lived that a current worker on a project is in a real sense the colleague of historical figures: the *OED* lexicographers whose revision of entries in the range *philanthropal–pimento* was published on 16 March 2006 were working on material just a century old, for the original fascicle *Ph–piper*

had been published in June 1906 (McMorris 2000, 230). Even when a project is itself newly begun, it is almost certain to be shaped to some extent by the consultation of earlier dictionaries. Another reason is that diachronically oriented dictionary projects are themselves works of historical research: no wonder that the history of lexicography should be so well written when so many lexicographers are themselves historians. The histories they write are those of lexical items: in other words, they are engaged in one kind of historical lexicology.

*Lexicology* was defined, in what appears to have been its first use in English, as “a treatise of a word in particular, or separately” (Connelly and Higgins 1797–8, s.v. *legicológia*). If lexicology is to be defined in this spirit, as the study of individual words, then it follows that the boundary between lexicography and lexicology is real but permeable. A dictionary which merely lists words and equivalents is lexicographical but scarcely lexicological, and a discursive study of a single word is lexicological but scarcely lexicographical. Even these cases, however, are arguable: the choice of a wordlist is a matter of lexicological judgement (for instance, the maker of a seventeenth-century hard-word dictionary must have tried to assess which current words were likeliest to puzzle inexpert readers), and a single-word study published as a monograph or a journal article may respond to, and inform, treatments of that word in dictionaries. The boundary between the compilation of historical dictionaries and the study of historical dictionaries is likewise, as we have just seen, permeable: revising an *OED* entry is a matter both of doing lexicography and of thinking about the lexicography of the past. Therefore, the history of lexicography can usefully be united with historical lexicology and the practice of historical lexicography under the combined rubric of “historical lexicography and lexicology.” This is the *raison d’être* of this book.

The articles collected here are all based on papers given at the second International Conference for Historical Lexicography and Lexicology (ICHLL), which took place in 2004 at the Palazzo Feltrinelli in Gargnano del Garda under the auspices of the Università degli Studi di Milano. Articles based on some of the papers given at the first ICHLL, which took place two years earlier at the University of Leicester, were collected and published as the volume *Historical dictionaries and historical dictionary research* (Coleman and McDermott 2004). Like its predecessor, this is by no means a proceedings volume. The articles in it have been rewritten from the forms in which they were presented, and they also reflect a careful selection of the original papers, focussing exclusively on English-language lexicography and lexicology.

## 2. Overview of this volume

The first paper in this collection, Fredric Dolezal's "Writing the history of English lexicography," opens up some of the most important questions addressed in the collection as a whole. How, Dolezal asks, *do* we write the history of English lexicography? DeWitt Starnes and Gertrude Noyes's *The English dictionary from Cawdrey to Johnson* has been unsurpassed for sixty years, a tribute to its accuracy and clarity. But the long reign of a standard authority may have a deadening effect on a field of inquiry: when Gabriele Stein wrote a short introduction to a facsimile reprint published in 1991, she noted that

Research on the dictionaries studied by Professor Starnes and Professor Noyes has generally focussed on identifying further sources and interdependencies between individual works revealing the lexicographical methods used by the compilers. (Stein 1991, xi).

This sort of *Quellenforschung* is extremely useful as far as it goes, but it is inevitably limited in its intellectual ambitions and in its appeal to non-specialist readers. The chronological range of Starnes and Noyes's book is also limited, and although the period up to 1604 has been surveyed by Stein in *The English dictionary before Cawdrey* (1985), for Anglophone lexicography after 1755 the only monographic overview appears to be Jonathon Green's popular *Chasing the sun* (1996). Dolezal sketched some of the possibilities for a history of English lexicography after Starnes and Noyes in his review of the reprint edition (Dolezal 1996), and now opens up these possibilities much further. So, for instance, he reflects upon and challenges the application of concepts such as "influence" and "borrowing" to the history of lexicography (and indeed "plagiarism," with which cf. Landau 2001, 402–4); questions the relationship of the history of dictionaries to literary history; and discusses the relationship between typology and chronology as ordering principles. Dolezal's critical questioning encourages further questions inspired by his. Is "the English dictionary" itself a useful rubric: what might a *History of the dictionary in Britain* look like? Could a single author write it? Sooner or later, the time will come for *The English dictionary from Cawdrey to Johnson* to be superseded, and whoever undertakes the work will have to take careful heed of Dolezal's arguments.

Carter Hailey's paper discusses the picture of Chaucer's lexical inventiveness which is offered by the *Middle English Dictionary*. One of its arguments is simply that the completion of *MED* makes it possible for the first time to measure Chaucer's rate of innovation, and that this can be shown to be high, manifesting itself not only in the introduction of new forms into the vocabulary of English, but also in the sense-development of pre-existing forms.

This leads to a wider consideration of the role of the first citation. First citations are of course notoriously antedatable: *OED*'s first citation for *moonbeam* is from the 1600 quarto of *A midsummer night's dream*, but it would be rash to assume that nobody had written the word down before Shakespeare. Less obviously, in most fields, a given lexical item may well be coined or borrowed independently by a number of writers. So, for instance, there is no need to see Connelly and Higgins as the only begetters of the English word *lexicology*, and similarly, a word like *unsuperseded* may be coined independently by a series of users. A word attested in a solitary obscure source and then in Chaucer and thereafter in numerous sources—Hailey gives the example *complexioun*—may really have been brought into English usage by Chaucer. Lexical innovation is not, then, an activity which can be measured simply by examining the records offered even by a capacious historical dictionary: the lexicologist has to end up making kinds of judgements which the lexicographer cannot realistically make.

Gabriele Stein's paper on the emergence of lexicology in early modern English dictionaries offers a wide overview of the sort of lexicological information which early lexicographers *could* report. Here as elsewhere in her work, notably her study of Palsgrave (Stein 1997), she points out the lexicological richness and sophistication of the work of early English bilingual and monolingual lexicographers, showing their understanding of the nature of lexicographical comprehensiveness and the openness of the lexical system; of questions such as register and currency; of synonymy and polysemy; and of other aspects of the structure of the word stock of English. One striking feature of this story is the qualitative and quantitative transition from the rather limited glossaries of the earlier Middle Ages to the dictionaries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Perhaps, thirteenth- and fourteenth-century English dictionaries being rather scarce, only a union history of European lexicography could help us understand how that took place. What is clear from Stein's paper is that, extraordinary as was Palsgrave's achievement, it must be contextualized in the lexicological thought of a number of his English contemporaries. Many of these are insufficiently studied figures.

Rod McConchie's paper on Richard Howlet (formerly known by the semi-latinized name Huloet) investigates the frustratingly obscure author of a familiar and important dictionary. McConchie shows, for instance, on what grounds we can associate Howlet with the Elizabethan printer John Day, and thereby suggests a whole social context for him, or indeed several: Day was not only a committed evangelical but also "one of the titans of the Elizabethan book world" (Pettegree 2004). Did Howlet dedicate his *Abcedarium* to the evangelical Thomas Goodrich, Bishop of Ely, simply because he was born near Ely, or because Goodrich was Lord Chancellor, or because they shared sympathies? Who actually printed the *Abcedarium*? It has a title-page device associated with

Day, but the imprint is that of rather an obscure bookseller, William Riddel, and the printing has been ascribed to a third party. Why does the book itself not tell a clearer story? Questions like these lead us towards a richer understanding of what we might call the sociology of the dictionary, both as text and as physical book. One project which will have a hugely stimulating effect on this sort of work is the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, whose appearance in 2004 made it possible to see at a glance how far the biographical scholarship on any of its subjects had progressed: in the present paper, as in his *Oxford DNB* article on Howlet, McConchie shows the way to further work in the field by the questions which he leaves open as well as the ones to which he provides full or partial answers.

In the case of Howlet, the printed dictionary tells us less than we would like to know about its maker, and the manuscript evidence which might have supplemented it appears to be wanting. Paola Tornaghi's paper deals with a chapter in the history of English-language lexicography for which the great majority of the evidence consists of manuscript lexica, namely the making of dictionaries of Old English before the publication of William Somner's *Dictionarium saxonico-latino-anglicum* in 1659. The list of these lexica is, in its broad outline, well-established: the *Vocabularium* of Laurence Nowell (a1567), edited by Albert Marckwardt in 1952, was succeeded by the still unpublished dictionaries of John Joscelyn (c1565–75), Sir William Dugdale (1644), and Sir Simonds D'Ewes (a1650), and by the lost dictionary of Jan de Laet and some minor vocabularies, before at last Somner's dictionary appeared in 1659. The relationships between one dictionary and another, however, are complex, and Tornaghi's important contribution to knowledge in this paper is to present and analyze the cogent manuscript evidence which shows William Somner at work around 1650 with the manuscripts both of Dugdale's dictionary and of D'Ewes's, correcting the one from the other and preparing himself for his own great achievement. Examining this process helps us to re-evaluate Dugdale's place in the history of Old English lexicography; and it reminds us of Dolezal's point about the collective quality of dictionary-making. As the *Oxford DNB* entry for Dugdale points out of his work in general,

It is true that Dugdale benefited to some extent from other men's labours without giving them sufficient acknowledgement. This was a complaint lodged against him in the eighteenth century, but it is beside the point, and characteristic of an age more jealous of individual achievement in scholarship. In the seventeenth century antiquarian research was a co-operative activity, and scholars were desirous of having their protracted schemes brought to fulfilment by another if age or death curtailed their designs. (Parry 2004).

Noel Osselton's paper takes up the theme of the curtailment of designs by identifying and demonstrating a phenomenon which will henceforth surely always be called by the name which he gives it here: that of alphabet fatigue. Early dictionaries, he points out, tended to give entries in the first half of the alphabet more generous treatment than entries in the second half. The increasing weariness of the lexicographer working from A towards Z is, to be sure, a familiar story. As Einar Haugen has put it, echoing Allen Walker Read's remark that "the pathway of English lexicography is strewn with unfinished dictionaries,"

The history of lexicography is littered with abandoned wrecks and dry bones, and few major ventures have been completed by the person who started them. A Danish wit has written a quatrain which we may freely translate: "At the dictionary's letter A / Mr. Brandt is young and gay— / When he finally arrives at Zed, / he's in his wheelchair, nearly dead." (Haugen 1984, 3; cf. Read 1937).<sup>1</sup>

But Osselton takes us far beyond the truism that dictionaries wear their makers out. He makes an elegant quantitative demonstration of the effect to which alphabet fatigue affected some of the completed English dictionaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, using the physical midpoint of a dictionary as an index: the earlier the point in alphabetical sequence which has been reached by the physical midpoint, the more pronounced the alphabet fatigue. He then investigates its causal factors—which include but are by no means limited to the editor's physical exhaustion. Financial pressure is one (the example of the *Trésor de la langue française* springs to mind); less obviously, the refinement of editorial principle is another.

Elisabetta Lonati's paper on the use made in the first volume of John Harris's *Lexicon technicum* (1702) of the Dutch physician Stephanus Blancardus' *Lexicon medicum* (1679, English trs. 1684 onwards) brings several new themes into the collection. One of these is that of the importance to the history of lexicography of the middle ground between the lexicographical and the encyclopedic. Was the *Lexicon technicum* strictly a dictionary? Starnes and Noyes do not devote a chapter to it, but discuss it on account of its influence on John Kersey's additions to Edward Phillips's *New world of words* and on the *Glossographia anglicana nova* (Starnes and Noyes 1946, 85–6, 92–3). They note also that the generous use of cuts which adds to the pleasure of handling the *Lexicon technicum* may have inspired Nathan Bailey's use of cuts in his dictionary of 1727 (*ibid.* 110). As Lonati demonstrates, Harris's work calls both

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<sup>1</sup> Haugen translates an anonymous verse quoted Gullberg 1964, ix: "Ved leksikonnets A hr. Brandt | er ung og slank og elegant — | ved leksikonnets Ø han kør | i rullestol med hørerør." Ø is the last letter of the Danish alphabet.

for lexicographical and lexicological study. It calls, too, for social study, as a work of popularization: a significant early milestone, indeed, in the development of the alphabetical encyclopedias which play such an important part in the history of reading and publishing in the eighteenth century. As Lonati suggests, Harris's work is part of a process by which the technical material presented in Latin by Blancardus was made available to a widening English-reading audience in the decades after the publication of the *Lexicon medicum*. It belongs, then, to the same development in the social history of knowledge as Harris's free public lectures on mathematics at the Marine Coffee House in London. And thirdly, it is a reminder of the international context of English lexicography, so relevant also to Stein's topic. Harris was aware of a major French antecedent of his work, Thomas Corneille's *Grand dictionnaire des arts et des sciences*, and used continental European sources other than Blancardus (Harris 1704, sigs. a2r-v); his work was in turn acknowledged as a model by Diderot and D'Alembert (Shackleton 1970, 390).

Charlotte Brewer addresses a long-standing puzzle posed by the documentation in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: why are eighteenth-century authors not better represented in *OED*'s illustrative quotations? The user of the dictionary regularly comes upon entries such as *make-peace*, which can be a noun (quotations from 1516 to 1657, then 1855) or an adjective (quotations from 1601 and 1836), but is not documented from the eighteenth century as either part of speech. One possible explanation is that the eighteenth century was a period during which writers confined themselves to a self-consciously restricted and classical vocabulary: did words like *make-peace* seem too rustic to be used? Brewer argues meticulously for the other logical possibility, discussing the construction and use of *OED*'s body of quotations, and showing by use of the databases *Literature online* and *Eighteenth-century collections online* how markedly the dictionary does under-represent the lexical scope of eighteenth-century writers—including its favourites such as Alexander Pope, as well as writers further outside the nineteenth-century canon such as William Blake and A. L. Barbauld. Interestingly, since the first version of this paper was read at Gargnano, the proportion of eighteenth-century quotations in the revised part of *OED* has increased. (*Make-peace*, by the way, does not seem to have been a common word in the eighteenth century, and I have found it elusive.)

Like Brewer, Julie Coleman examines some of the working practices and decisions of lexicographers at the end of the nineteenth century, as she writes on Farmer and Henley's *Slang and its analogues*. This eight-volume dictionary (seven original volumes and then a revised vol. 1) and its makers have not always had the attention due to them: Farmer does not at present even have an entry in the *Oxford DNB*, though he deserves one for his lexicography and his publishing projects. Coleman's account of their lexicographical work analyzes a

sample of entries from each volume of their dictionary, showing how its inclusion criteria and features such as the citation of sources and the provision of usage labels change, and asking why the changes happened: was it, for instance, under Henley's influence that the Bible ceased to be cited after the original volume 1? Coleman points out that while volumes 2–7 make little or no use of the Bible, it reappears as a source after Henley's death, in the new entries in the revised volume 1. This revised volume is, more generally, a guide to the ways in which the principles of the dictionary developed over the years: as Coleman says, it makes it possible to differentiate the effects of fatigue from those of experience.

Peter Gilliver's paper likewise discusses the changing strategies of lexicographers moving through the alphabet. The case he examines is a special one, that of the problem posed by the vast number of English words which begin with the prefix *un-*. The productivity of derivational affixes was a problem which Murray and his colleagues had considered in the past, as for instance in a letter of Murray's to the phonetician A. J. Ellis in 1876, which reflected that "the subject is endless & exhaustless, *boundless & bottomless* but the raising of it is not *purposeless* I assure you" (qtd. K. Murray 1977, 192). But *un-*, which brought so many derived forms together in a single alphabetical sequence, caused particular concern to the Delegates of the Oxford University Press, and to the editor responsible for U, William Craigie: the Delegates feared that Craigie was handling the material at impossible length, and Craigie that he was being required to condense it unduly, a kind of conflict which occurred sporadically in the publishing history of the *OED*. This particular conflict was alluded to briefly in the British Academy obituary of Craigie (Wyllie 1961, 280), but has since remained unexplored; Gilliver now uses material from the OUP archives to show its development and also the solutions, in terms of inclusion criteria and typographic design, which resolved it. His paper ends with the intriguing comment that the controversy "does seem to have been a key factor in [Craigie's] becoming disillusioned with (and eventually semi-detached from)" the *OED* project. The great lexicographer's subsequent dealings with the University of Chicago Press also ended with Craigie as a semi-detached dictionary editor, reading proofs for the *Dictionary of American English* at his residence in Oxfordshire, and writing angry letters when his instructions were not followed; one of his correspondents at the press urged him in response to one of these to pay another visit to Chicago, to have "a thorough discussion of the whole question of Dictionary procedure" and "above all else to satisfy yourself that we have not sprouted horns!" (Donald Bean to Craigie, February 18, 1938, in Chicago, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago Press Records, 1892–1965. Box 129, folder 5). A biography of Craigie would be most welcome.

Finally, Laura Pinnavaia's "Idioms in journalese" offers yet another perspective on the interplay of lexicography and lexicology. Idioms have long been a major concern for lexicographers (see e.g. Stein 1997, ad indicem svv. *idioms* and *adages*), and their treatment in dictionaries continues to evolve: compare the treatment of idioms in the *OED2* entry for *pin*, where they are interspersed in the entry so that *pull the pin* "uncouple" is at sense 1o, and *not worth a pin* "worthless" is at 3b, and in the *OED3* entry, where they have their own section, so that *pull the pin* is at P1c(c) and *not worth a pin* is at P2a(a). But as Pinnavaia points out, the flexibility of idioms—the fact that "don't care two pins" or "not care a pin" or "don't give two pins" are all idiomatic variants of *not worth a pin* (they are the forms in *OED3*'s last three illustrative quotations for the idiom)—makes their syntactic behaviour an object of study too. She discusses a set of idioms, those bearing on food and drink which occur in a corpus of articles selected from *The Times*, from a syntactic and semantic point of view, analyzing their variations and arguing for the systematic relationship of their syntactic modifications and the information which they convey.

### 3. Conclusions

Between them, these papers sum up some of the most interesting and valuable features of historical lexicography and lexicology as the field is studied today. Four of these are particularly striking.

The first is a high level of attention to the dictionary-making process as extended in historical time. Thinking of a dictionary as a simple unified object is of course unwise. The last volumes of a major historical dictionary issued over several decades may differ quite markedly from the first. This has been documented, for instance, in the cases of the *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, the *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal*, and the *Dictionary of the older Scottish tongue* (Brenninger 1951; Osselton 2000, 71–2; Dareau 2002). Gilliver's paper in this collection shows how the editors of a late volume in a long-running dictionary may innovate successfully under pressure. Osselton's reminds us of the changes which are likely to take place even within a single-volume dictionary, and Coleman's is a meticulous documentation of the volume-by-volume changes in a dictionary issued over fifteen years.

Another feature which is evident in this collection is a recourse to manuscript materials. Starnes and Noyes addressed only printed dictionaries in *The English dictionary from Cawdrey to Johnson*, and they were quite right to do so; these were the dictionaries to which the greatest numbers of contemporary readers had access. But of course, some printed dictionaries had small circulations—and some dictionaries remained in manuscript because of idiosyncrasies or ambitions which now make them very interesting to us. The

editing of medieval English glossaries and dictionaries has produced valuable results, but much is yet to be done (cf. Stein 1985, 1–120). Even well-known manuscripts in major institutional collections repay re-examination (see e.g. Takeda 2004). Relatively few early modern English dictionaries have been edited from manuscript, though as Ian Lancashire points out (2004a), many of those which remain in manuscript are obviously of great interest; some of them are now being edited as part of the online database *Lexicons of early modern English* (Lancashire 2006–). Also of interest are copies of early modern dictionaries with lexicographical annotations and interleavings, such as Sir Roger Twysden’s fascinating interleaved copy of Cowell’s *Interpreter*, now in the British Library (Add. MSS 24281–24283). There seems to be no overview of English dictionary manuscripts (including, of course, interleaved and annotated copies of printed dictionaries) from the eighteenth century and thereafter. Work like McConchie’s and Tornaghi’s in this collection therefore investigates territory which is substantially unmapped. Although the Murray Papers in the Bodleian Library have been mined by a number of researchers (see the five-page list of those used by Lynda Mugglestone in Mugglestone 2005, 252–7) and Gilliver and others have made effective use of the *OED* archives at Oxford University Press, much material of this sort must lie unused—some of it, as Dolezal suggests in his paper in this collection, in the keeping of publishers who may not be anxious for it to circulate widely.

Another feature of this collection is an increasing demand for statistical accuracy, associated with an increasing use of online material. Since the release of the *Oxford English Dictionary* in machine-readable form, it has been possible to ask a new set of questions about its resources—questions which, it should be added, were foreshadowed more than a quarter of a century ago in the remarkable work of Jürgen Schäfer. This is what John Willinsky began to do in his deeply flawed *Empire of words: the reign of the OED* (1994; for a scathing and authoritative review cf. Stanley 1997), and Charlotte Brewer’s work in this collection and elsewhere uses machine searches together with reading of the physical dictionary to see patterns in its representation of English vocabulary. The release of Johnson’s *Dictionary* on CD-ROM has likewise opened up the possibility of fast, exact searching of its text, and the Johnson Dictionary Project in progress at the University of Birmingham promises more. Other major dictionaries are likewise becoming available for searching on CD-ROM or the Internet, for instance the *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (see Christmann and Schares 2003). At the other end of the spectrum from lexicography to lexicology, Laura Pinnavaia’s contribution to this collection likewise discusses practical and theoretical points in the study of English idiom flexibility with a range made possible by the availability of online textbases. Projects such as *Lexicons of early modern English*, which at present offers 156 lexicons and half a million

word entries to searchers, will clearly extend the possibilities of research in the field much further. Even where dictionaries are not available in machine-readable form, though, work like Coleman's in this volume shows what can be achieved by way of statistical analysis.

A last feature of several of the essays in this collection which I want to point out is their clear awareness of the biographical. Lexicographical biography in English has for some decades had K. M. E. Murray's *Caught in the web of words* (1977) as a shining example of what can be done in this respect by a first-rate writer in full sympathy with her subject and with access to a rich archive. It is now hard to believe that when this book was submitted to Oxford University Press, it was refused as too provocative (Foster 2004), just as it is hard to believe that an academic press should have rejected James Watson's memoir *The double helix* a few years earlier (Aarsleff 1967/1983, viii). The two rejections doubtless came from the same sense that a strongly biographical, let alone autobiographical, approach to the history of scholarship was somehow unsound. It has its dangers, certainly: Simon Winchester's *The surgeon of Crowthorne* (published in North America as *The professor and the madman*) deserves its wide market, and has much to offer scholars, but it is, sometimes frustratingly, not a scholarly book. But the care with which McConchie establishes the parameters of the elusive Richard Howlet's life, or with which Tornaghi and Gilliver examine the relationships of individuals as they can be traced in the archival records of lexicography in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries respectively, are models of a humane and scholarly awareness that dictionaries are made and shaped by people, and that if we are to learn about the dictionaries, we must do our best to understand the people.



## CHAPTER ONE

# WRITING THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LEXICOGRAPHY: IS THERE A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LEXICOGRAPHY AFTER STARNES AND NOYES?

FREDRIC DOLEZAL

### 1. Early Monolingual English Dictionaries: Types and Sources

In the writing of the history of English lexicography, the monolingual dictionary, sometimes called the “general-purpose” English dictionary, is generally and implicitly considered the central object of study. The dictionaries are divided into a set of types which includes glossaries; vocabularies; spellers; monolingual dictionaries; bilingual dictionaries; and multilingual dictionaries. By now articles on the history of English lexicography also describe the history of specialized English dictionaries, including those compiled according to linguistic ideas (for example, historical dictionaries and phraseological dictionaries); taxonomic categories (“topically arranged” dictionaries); language community (national, regional, dialect, and slang dictionaries); and specialized users (for example, learners’ dictionaries). When we consider the range of writing on the history of lexicography in general and of English lexicography in particular, we can extract a good if incomplete outline of dictionary typology. Even so, it is mostly the history of the “general purpose monolingual English dictionary” that influences the way we understand and receive the history of English lexicography.

*The English dictionary from Cawdrey to Johnson 1604–1755* by DeWitt T. Starnes and Gertrude E. Noyes (hereafter cited as *The English dictionary*) is the most comprehensive book on the history of English monolingual dictionaries, despite its covering a limited time period (1604–1755) and a limited bibliography (due to the scope of its authors’ research agenda). As Gabriele

Stein notes, “Their historical account of early monolingual English lexicography still stands to the present day” (Stein 1991, ix). Stein also notes that in the intervening years since the publication of *The English dictionary* we have expanded the idea of English lexicography to include bilingual and multilingual dictionaries, to which we could add dictionaries ordered by concept rather than alphabetically, glossaries and other lists of words, and the study of the dictionary as text. Undoubtedly, Starnes and Noyes continue to have an important and continuing influence on general works on English lexicography: Sidney Landau writes in an endnote to the second chapter, “A brief history of English lexicography,” of his successful *Dictionaries: The art and craft of lexicography* that *The English dictionary* is “the chief source of information for early, monolingual English lexicography” (2001, 428). The same influence can be found in Jonathon Green’s *Chasing the sun: Dictionary makers and the dictionaries they made* (1996). Both authors also rely on articles and books published subsequent to the work of Starnes and Noyes.

A different perspective on *The English dictionary* can be found in the work of Jürgen Schäfer (1970; 1980; 1984; 1989). Schäfer had been working on describing the growth and development of English lexicography in the Early Modern English period at the time of his death. The work he did accomplish and publish called for a reappraisal of some of the basic findings in Starnes and Noyes. Along the way of this research he presented evidence that the *Oxford English Dictionary* fell short in its documentation of the vocabulary of the period, because its policy of treating evidence from dictionaries compiled in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with some circumspection led to an inconsistent treatment of lexical items registered in those dictionaries. So, for instance, he noted that

Some words are cited exclusively [in the *OED*] from hard word dictionaries without reference to earlier sources or to the successive dictionary transmission. Other words are last assigned to the Middle English period without reference to their sudden reappearance in the hard word dictionaries. (Schäfer 1989, 2:16)

His study of early modern lexicography contradicts some widely held notions about the sources of the dictionaries (for supporting and similar evidence see Stein 1986 and Osselton 1990, 1950; for further insight and elaboration on “hard words” see Zgusta 2006, 166ff., “‘Hard words’—‘schwierige Wörter’ in der älteren englischen einsprachigen Lexikographie”).

The research underlying the present compilation was originally prompted by the discovery that the Jacobean compilers of hard words, Robert Cawdrey (*Table Alphabetical*, 1604), John Bullokar (*English Expositor*, 1616) and Henry Cockeram (*English Dictionarie*, 1623), had gathered many of these difficult

words from earlier monolingual glossaries and had not merely Anglicized Latin or Graeco-Latin lemmas taken from bilingual dictionaries of their time, the widely accepted thesis advanced by DeWitt T. Starnes and Gertrude E. Noyes. (Schäfer 1989, 2:2)

Allen Walker Read, precedaneous to Schäfer, made a similar argument in a posthumously published article written in 1935, “The beginnings of English lexicography” (Read 1935/2003). Needless to say, Read’s original essay was not influenced by *The English dictionary*, and was not available to its authors; we can only speculate as to how his findings might have influenced them. Read makes this claim:

The purely English dictionary, in the Coote–Cawdrey–Bullockar–Cockeram tradition, arose as a “schoolmaster’s help” (with or without an actual schoolmaster), and I regard this as the main stream of development. The other streams of influence that converged to produce the English dictionary are as follows:

- (2) The model of the dictionaries of the classical languages;
- (3) Glosses and interlingual dictionaries;
- (4) The impulse from the scientific study of language;
- (5) The antiquarian and etymological dictionaries;
- (6) The specialists’ dictionaries. (1935/2003, 187–188)

In summation he says that “the first faint indication of English lexicography is to be found in the effort during the Reformation to make the scriptures intelligible to common people” and that the “most important names in the ensuing years are John Bullockar, Henry Cockeram, Thomas Blount, Edward Phillips, William Lloyd, Samuel Clarke, Elisha Coles, and John Kersey” (Read 1935/2003, 223–224).<sup>1</sup>

These discoveries tell us how much more bibliographic and textual research needs to be undertaken as part of writing the history of English lexicography.<sup>2</sup> As Schäfer points out—and it is even more relevant today—the availability of microfilm and computer technology allows us to be more comprehensive and discrete in our analyses of the documents covered by *The Short Title Catalogue*

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<sup>1</sup> Read’s inclusion of Lloyd (see Lloyd 1668 and Wilkins 1668) raises the questions of “dictionaryness” and “influence” in the history of English lexicography (cf. Dolezal 1985 and 1986 and Knappe 2004). The English dictionary compiled by Samuel Clarke in 1670 was sold by his bookseller as the twelfth edition of Cockeram’s *English dictionary* (Read 1935/2003, 221). Clarke is not identified by Starnes and Noyes, who cite him as “S.C.,” calling him the “reviser” of Cockeram’s *Dictionary* (1946, 34).

<sup>2</sup> For example, Sidney Landau has recently written that “The first English dictionary occurred almost inevitably as a modification of bilingual dictionaries, some of them of far greater importance” (2001, 47).

than was possible in 1946 (and 1989). His research helps broaden our understanding of the “hard-word” tradition. Here is what Schäfer writes:

The evidence assembled on the following pages gains significance in further refuting the Anglicization thesis since it strongly suggests that the compilers did indeed take much of their material either directly from contemporary texts or from explanatory glossaries attached to a variety of English publications. This means that their materials should be considered authentic, that is, actually used in Elizabethan texts and that the origins of monolingual lexicography have to be re-examined. (1989, 2:2)

What was the use of an early modern dictionary? Was it a collection of lexical oddities introduced in an ink-hornish manner, or could the “hard words” be found in the printed texts of the day, so that the dictionary was really a reference aid to contemporary readers? The people who consulted and bought dictionaries presumably did not read them sequentially, though this is not to deny that some dictionaries, and related reference texts, have a limited readership, or that some because of their systematic lexical structure even lend support for a readerly construction of narrative.<sup>3</sup> There is even some evidence that the authors of some early dictionaries intended the text to be read in a fairly consecutive manner.<sup>4</sup> The commercial venture of English lexicography and the cultural and individual reception of dictionaries (and the like) require their own respective studies.

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<sup>3</sup> I have addressed the issue of narrative by analyzing *prayer* in a religious text and in a scientific text by Bishop Wilkins (Dolezal, 1994). Topical dictionaries, and the like, belong in this category, and have a place in the definition and historiography of *dictionary* (for a detailed account in the early English tradition see Hüllen 1999). From a related perspective, David Cram (1994a; 1994b) considers the influence of seventeenth-century universal language schemes and “concordances of words” and of “things” in the early history of English lexicography.

<sup>4</sup> Considine (1998) has presented evidence on owners and users of large historical dictionaries (Johnson 1755 and the fascicles of the *OED*) as readers for pleasure; and in a study of some sixteenth- and seventeenth-century dictionaries and phrasebooks he claims that “Early modern dictionaries were texts which were *read* ...,” citing Mainwaring 1644 as an example of a dictionary “to be read from end to end” (2001, 196; 205). At this time, we do not know how many *readers* there were (or are) in relation to the number of non-pleasure-reading *users*, or even among the readers how frequently they consulted or used, rather than read, their dictionaries.

## 2. Establishing a History of English Lexicography

A variety of books and essays since *The English dictionary* have modified and extended our understanding of “influence” in the genealogy of English dictionaries. Writing a history of English lexicography leads us to consider the usefulness of “influence” as a term of art, and to develop a historical perspective more comprehensive than constructing a great chain of vocabulary items organized around a principle of entries borrowed or plagiarized from earlier dictionary sources. A comprehensive study of dictionary texts would require the production of scholarly editions of each text, and this would include, for example, identifying and emending printing errors, and documenting changes to the lexicon across editions. The abstraction, “the dictionary,” is not the printed resolution of a textual chain of events. It is by now widely reported in the literature that the idea of “the dictionary” had taken hold of the literary imagination of readers and authors in the earliest period of English lexicography. Therefore, I have considered the history of English lexicography as a special case of bibliography and textual study (see Dolezal 1986 and 1989); so that, to name one consequence, the ideas of “borrowing” and “plagiarizing” have limited usefulness in understanding not only textual history, but also notions of ownership, property and language. In a broader sense, a history of lexicography provides insight into questions regarding the means of transmitting of information through application of linguistic and lexicographic principles.

The notable achievement of Starnes and Noyes has made their book the standard text on the history of English lexicography. Gabriele Stein (1986) has illuminated the history of English lexicography before 1604, but there is no unified or standard history of English lexicography from 1755 to 1900 to provide a balance of perspective to the standard text, nor has there been a unified revision of the history from Cawdrey to Johnson. One result has been the general acceptance among non-specialists of an historical division of dictionaries into Before Johnson (“curiosities of a neologizing age”), Johnson’s Dictionary (“the standard for all English dictionaries”), and Modern Dictionaries (“authorities of current pronunciations and definitions”). More than fifty years has passed since the original publication date of *The English dictionary*; in those years the published work on dictionaries both in the academic and commercial domains has steadily expanded. Unfortunately, the new information and findings go mostly unnoted by the general scholarly audience, perhaps because the articles and books on the history of lexicography usually follow their own internal logic and principles, and therefore, taken together, do not provide a unified historical or thematic perspective.

## 2.1. English Lexicography in Literary History

A history of English lexicography would not be complete that did not take full notice of dictionaries and the mutual literary, philosophical, and cultural dependencies that are revealed when we look at the print artifacts that provide the sources and legitimation of orthography, history, definition, and so forth that are recorded in the linguistic commodity called the English dictionary. The commodity over time has become a cultural and intellectual standard by which all texts, including the source texts for the dictionaries, are themselves interpreted through the instantiation of meanings and forms found in a dictionary. One alternate major trend in writing the history of English lexicography can be found in literary critical studies. Since Johnson's *Dictionary* stands at the pinnacle of esteem in the literary convention of our time, it is not surprising that he and his dictionary have been the object of the most studies. One well-known example of the trend, W. K. Wimsatt's *Philosophic words*, relying partly on the chronology and narrative of events found in Starnes and Noyes and some word and author counts of Freed (1939), takes English lexicography in the form of Johnson's *Dictionary* into literary and cultural history and intellectual biography. In this kind of history the emphasis is on the dictionary as word-ward and cultural repository. This study and succeeding studies like it do not necessarily show awareness of methods of linguistic and text analysis that would seem essential for adequately describing dictionary text types. As Rüdiger Schreyer points out in his essay on quotations (or illustrations) in Johnson, the categories that have been used to describe the Johnson corpus "tend to be based on criteria often vague and not mutually exclusive" (2000, 75); he shows in particular that because twentieth-century categories can not be used to legitimately describe seventeenth- and eighteenth-century ideas, and because we have no single accepted taxonomy of texts, "Wimsatt's division of authors into classes is simply ad hoc" (78). However, another point is worth making since it touches upon our understanding of any dictionary. Dictionaries are a marketplace commodity. The successful return on investment in making a dictionary requires the maker and the publisher to coordinate, even subordinate, their plans and ideals to their best judgment of what will sell.

Johnson knew he was not expected to collect and describe the English language of his day ... He was aware that his Dictionary would be regarded as a rival of the French dictionary ... And he knew that like its rivals his dictionary was expected to correct, ascertain and fix the language ... It was to be for English what the Italian dictionary and French dictionary were for Italian and French. This was his unique selling proposition. (Schreyer 2000, 69)

Suffice it to say, the literary-critical-based model of dictionary history shows some crucial unexamined premises about dictionary making, linguistic description, and the determination of text types. A dictionary presumes some level of linguistic awareness in the maker; the lexicographer must underwrite the dictionary with an informed language theory that can identify and describe the linguistic vagaries of the language or languages concerned. Certainly those who study dictionaries, rather than consult them for practical purposes, need to have an awareness of sound methods of linguistic and lexicographic analysis. And though we can not re-imagine ourselves as eighteenth-century dictionary users, our studies can not ignore that alphabetical dictionaries are made to be consulted. For the most part, the grammatical information, etymologies, and illustrative quotations and their beauties are contingent upon looking up a word. Undoubtedly, there are “readers” of dictionaries, especially dictionaries replete with illustrative quotations or phrases; even so, those readerly illustrative quotations were most likely culled not by pleasure readings, but by readings for lexical evidence collection.

We can then see how an uncritical acceptance of a distinct period, from Cawdrey to Johnson, and a scope defined by the text types included in and excluded from *The English dictionary* by Starnes and Noyes can lead to an almost unassailable construct of received wisdom about Johnson’s *Dictionary*; of course, Johnsonian studies, like most studies of “great men” and “great works,” are rather fraught with an academic proprietary interest that gives the works and authors an almost decontextualized and autonomous existence. The scope of this present essay does not allow for a treatment of the literary scholarship on Johnson and the *Dictionary*; however, in general, the literary-based studies do not show a broad awareness of dictionary research based in the practical, historical, or theoretical lexicographical (and linguistic) disciplines. One result has been the tendency to promote the ideas of “innovation” and “influence” without sufficient historical and textual evidence.<sup>5</sup>

## 2.2. Typology and the Meaning of History

If we are to attach the labels of innovative format, design, or content to any English dictionary, we must have a unified agreement on which text types count as dictionaries and which of the dictionaries so counted are to be included in a complete chronology of the English dictionary. Additionally, we must take into

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<sup>5</sup> One particular piece of conventional non-lexicographically informed wisdom has Johnson as the inventor of the illustrative quotation; another has Johnson’s dictionary as the main inspiration for the lexicographic format of the *OED*—for a detailed discussion of illustrative quotations in historical dictionaries see especially Zgusta (2006) Chapter One, “History and Dictionaries.”

account that dictionaries are typologically mixed and sometimes answer to particular cultural, philosophical, or technical demands. The idea “historical dictionary” can serve as a good example of the difficulty of fixing a dictionary to a single typology.

Thus, the expression “historical dictionary” is used in reference both to period dictionaries, and to diachronic dictionaries, either of them situated on various points or stretches of the flow of time, or development. That many, perhaps even most dictionaries simultaneously consist of components that belong to different types may go without saying. (Zgusta 2006, 3)

There are some other questions we should ask: for example, what do we mean by “history” in the rubric *History of English lexicography*? “History” in practice has meant documenting a chronology of dictionaries (in general, “a chain of events”) or providing a narrative that explains the succession of dictionaries (sometimes called “historiography”). The consequence of the former would be to establish a causal history: in other words, to determine what texts (the “events”) are relevant (as primary sources) along the chain of events. The consequence of the latter would be to argue that there are commonly held principles of analysis and explanation; this would show how the chain of events and dictionaries along that chain become a narrative. The following statement, excerpted from a study by Zgusta of the history of historical dictionaries in the western tradition, helps bring focus to the question of writing histories for any dictionary (text) type (cf. Reichmann 1984).

As for history as the chain of events itself, there are two types of connection between dictionaries and the chain of events called history (of language): either the dictionary in question (or rather, its author) tries to exercise an influence on that chain of events, that is, tries to determine or change the development; or the dictionary does not attempt that, but by being descriptive it is a source of our knowledge of that chain of events, a source of data that can be used in giving the narrative of these events. (Zgusta 2006, 2)

The strictly chronological narrative has the strength of being accessible and coherent in its presentation; chronology, like alphabetic order, has the advantage of presenting a complex set of texts in an immediately understandable and usable format. However, the very appeal of accessibility and seeming coherence has the possibility of encouraging a narrative of “influences,” or an uninformed ideology of “progress” or “evolution” in the history of English dictionaries. As a result, the answer to the basic question “What is an English dictionary?” is mostly retrospective and inferential. Obviously, any history of lexicography must be conversant with lexicographic principles and practice of the period under examination and of the present day.

A typology of English dictionaries would allow us to both rearrange and preserve the chronological narrative. The scope of this approach is wide-ranging: there are dictionaries of English for specialized purposes and there are the dictionaries of English that attempt to create, modernize, protect, proselytize, or describe a written standard (or are permutations or combinations of the various typologies), which fall under the broader issue of the intended influence of dictionaries on the user. Other typological variations can be found in dictionaries of English connected to single authors (for instance, a dictionary of the words found in the works of William Blake), or, for example, to literary, scientific or cultural movements; we should also consider dictionaries as they reflect, ignore, or disturb prevailing theories of language, historical, grammatical and cultural. In effect there would be an interlocking structure of chronologies; that is, each designated dictionary type would have its chronology that would then fit into the chain of dictionary events.<sup>6</sup>

A primary effect of writing a history of English lexicography would bring attention to the inherent mix of diachronicity and synchronicity found in dictionaries, for “the most unabashedly synchronic dictionary over time becomes a period dictionary” (Zgusta 2006, v). The inherent historicity of all dictionaries makes for a challenging and fruitful set of inquiries.

The history of any subject has its origins in a present moment that describes or explains a past that will finally culminate in a description or explanation of that present moment. We would be surprised if the scholarship on the intellectual history of a discipline claimed that the current generation had engendered ideas and texts inferior to preceding scholars in the discipline. In addition, the succession through time of material events also provides us with a certain logical progression that promises more than the chronological history can deliver. That which we have in our present seems naturally and logically better than that with which others in the past had to make do; the development of a subject then seems predetermined, as if the succession of events had to occur in the sequence and manner our history describes. This is especially true if we think of the history of lexicography as a chronology or succession of dictionaries. Histories can also be invoked to enhance the prestige of a present-day theory or practice by providing a legitimated genealogy that sets off the theory or practice from other competing theories and practices within the academic subject area.

The idea of canonical works is another important consequence of “history.” And yet, histories of academic subjects generally do not hold great interest for most practitioners of the subjects, unless to do “history” means to divide good

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<sup>6</sup> The first chapter of Béjoint 1994, “Dictionaries and The Dictionary,” includes a rather comprehensive overview of dictionary typology and dictionary as objects of study.

genealogy from bad. In other words, if a work from the past has found its way onto a present-day list of the well-received, or canonical, then quite naturally a work in the present day will gain some prestige if its content is genealogically linked to the well-received past. In the contemporary discipline of linguistics we find a notable tension between the historically-engaged humanistic approach and the present-day-engaged scientific approach. The history of linguistic ideas as practiced today was not invented by Noam Chomsky (see Chomsky 1966) but he surely gave linguists permission to acknowledge and, in contemporary words, to own a history. By asserting a linguistic genealogy for generative linguistic theory, Chomsky created a ready-made linguistic canon. In this case, the prestige of a current practitioner of linguistic theory conferred canonical status upon a set of ideas and writings three hundred years in the past. From one set of linguistic milestones from the past Chomsky devised an explanatory narrative of linguistic history for the present.<sup>7</sup>

In the case of lexicography, there is another obstacle to writing a history of dictionaries: in a word, commerce. The demands of selling a product make the dictionary producers wary of any project that may chip away at the built-in authority of the product. Imagine a new and improved product being compared with a product already hundreds of years old, or imagine trade secrets being shared with the world at large. Not surprisingly, publishing houses are loath to allow access to files, notes, and commentaries collected and written in the course of compiling a dictionary.

### **3. Dictionaries as Arbiters of Standards and Ownership**

The history of lexicography is also the history of public and personal attitudes toward language. Ideas about standards, correctness, and word-histories, among others, are of primary importance when people consider their expectations for a “good” dictionary. Recently, work in lexicography has revealed a greater interest among scholars in the topic of dictionary users and the uses of dictionaries; the interest in dictionary use has further revealed that we know very little about how people use dictionaries. Most of the studies on dictionary users have focused on learners, but the focus is not all that clear since we do not have a method that separates first-language learners from second-language learners (why consult a dictionary if not to learn?). What we know from the studies and our own anecdotal evidence, including introspection, tells us that an

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<sup>7</sup> Chomsky (1966) has been harshly criticized by some prominent historiographers of linguistic ideas. I am not concerned here with the acceptance or correctness of Chomsky’s ideas; the nature and specificity of his thesis provided a literary vehicle to advance the awareness of history in the restricted domain of linguistic theory of the time.

entry that simply records an easily decipherable pronunciation and gives an indication of syntactic function, a standard spelling, and a short paraphrase will suffice for most uses and users of dictionaries. We also know that there are few studies of users and learners and empirical studies are fewer still: see Dolezal and McCreary 1999—in which we found that authors working in a certain discipline do not usually provide cross-referencing to other disciplines that consider or touch upon studying learners, users, readers, and dictionaries, an academic sociology that probably also pertains to studies in the history of English dictionaries—and for a detailed method for eliciting information from users consulting dictionaries and a detailed exploration of the structure of entries and the typology of dictionaries see Wiegand 1998. The little reliable information that exists about the uses of present-day dictionaries is far more than what we know about the uses of say, Robert Cawdrey's *A table alphabeticall* (1604), or John Bullokar's *An English expositor* (1616), or Nathan Bailey's *Dictionarium Britannicum* (1730), or even Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English language* (1755). However, we can make some general observations. Dictionaries are mostly used for practical reasons by people who want answers for practical questions. The practical dictionary users also want to find the answers as quickly as possible. An alphabetical organization insures that practicality of use is a primary goal. All other notations and notational systems—the use of punctuation, indentation, font, and the like—while capable of carrying nuanced theoretical information of great interest to scholarly readers, have their first effect on the ease of accessing information.

For the most part, when people turn their attention to their language, they concern themselves with ideas of correctness and standards, as well as seeking information about the spelling or meaning of an unfamiliar word; without these pragmatic concerns the market for dictionaries would be severely limited. By now the expectations most people have about dictionaries being the arbiters of correctness and authority are supported by the scholarly convention that the history of English lexicography illuminates the triumph of a standard, or standardizing, English dictionary.

### **3.1. Englishes and The Dictionary of English**

It might be useful to consider the types of English dictionaries that do not get written or published as a way to reconsider the idea of the progress, or evolution, of dictionaries. The term “Englishes” is used to describe what used to be called “non-native” varieties of English (see Kachru 1975; McArthur 1998, 61–65), and stands for a constellation of attitudes and practices that this current essay can not address for reasons of space. An underlying question implied by the concept of “Englishes” is, who owns the English language? It is a question

that gets traditionally answered in the form of rhetorics, grammars, and dictionaries of English. The conflict between so-called prescriptive and descriptive approaches can be seen as a battle for ownership that is fought on the textual ground of grammars and dictionaries. There may be Englishes, but an English-speaking community without a grammar or a dictionary can not make a strong claim for ownership. There are comprehensive dictionaries of British, American, and Australian English, but not of any African Englishes, or Indian English, or Singaporean English, or Caribbean English (see Dolezal forthcoming 2006).<sup>8</sup> Many dictionaries for these Englishes that do get written concentrate on legal and religious terms, on names of flora and fauna, and on words peculiar to the region or locale. In the earlier texts there is also a linguistically contrastive perspective inherent in the approach to lexicon formation and grammatical description. The complexities of language, culture, and identity in the formation of a dictionary tradition can not receive adequate attention here, so I will return to a central theme concerning some observations on dictionary users and buyers.

One interesting impetus for the non-comprehensive dictionaries that do exist is particularly germane to the discussion: there are dictionary users who read literary texts by authors writing in one of the new Englishes. The readers become dictionary users because they require help in understanding the words and phrases of a variety of English unfamiliar to them. In other words, these dictionaries of Englishes are to some degree written for readers of literature. The so-called hard-word tradition of early English lexicography is not limited to a reliquary of obsolete print artifacts. Kachru gives the following illustration from a publication of 1848, J. D. Stocqueler's *The oriental interpreter and treasury of East India knowledge*, that describes the need for a dictionary:

Every fortnight brings a mail from India, and the intelligence which it imparts is fraught with words which perplex the speeches in Parliament, turning upon Eastern Affairs—the Oriental novels, travels, and statistical works—likewise obscured with terms “caviare to the general.” (qtd. Kachru 2005, 1274)

The full history and tradition of English lexicography must weigh heavily upon any intrepid compiler of a largely undocumented regional or national English. Mostly, comprehensive dictionaries of Indian English or Caribbean English, for example, do not exist because those Englishes have not been

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<sup>8</sup> Read (1935/2003, 187) makes this point: “Dictionaries develop very late in the history of a language. The forms of a language are set and its vocabulary expands to wide limits even before writing is felt to be a necessity ... Anyone, therefore, who attempts to catch speech and to imprison it in books must have some special motives that arise from his time and situation.”