# FUDAN JOURNAL OF
## THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
### (THE HUMANITIES ISSUE)

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世纪文景

复旦大学人文社会科学论丛(人文版)
**Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences（the Humanities Issue）**
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# "What Is Out of Sight Is Lost Forever?":
# In Lieu of a Preface to *The English-Chinese Dictionary*(2nd Edition)

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I BEGIN BY QUOTING SAMUEL JOHNSO'S REMARK WHEN HE commented on the widespread rural illiteracy in Scotland in his time (Vincent 48), suggesting that those who knew nothing of written language were doomed to live only in the present tense. With a twist — I have changed Dr Johnson's full stop to a question mark — the remark is hereby quoted with a view to showing that although a tradition, that of Samuel Johnson's included, is often "out of sight," it percolates down and is not "lost forever." Time being a continuum, all vagaries of fashion notwithstanding, we live to some extent in the shadow of what is "out of sight." In the field of lexicography we therefore write, using a *double entendre*, in the past as well as the present and future tenses.

However, if one cares to look ahead across the lexicographic landscape, what catches the eye, I presume, is the future tense writ large. Living in the computer age, when we consult a dictionary most of us "click, look and listen."[1] True, the trend unmistakably and irreversibly makes for dictionaries whose information is transmitted through such electronic media as computers, CD-ROMs, the Internet, or plug-in memory chips. A good many of them enable a speedier look-up of a wealth of data and are much user-friendlier with a multimedia combination of texts, graphics, images, video clips, audio clips, and animation, allowing greater user autonomy in virtual space or even soliciting user participation in or interaction with the dictionary text by cutting, copying and pasting, indexing, bookmarking, hyperlinking, up- or down-loading, deleting, adding or fleshing out entries with a click of the mouse or a turn of the track ball in real time in "an experimental 'internet collaborative project'" as is quoted from the foreword of "*The Alternative Dictionaries*" (www.notamo2. no/~ hcholm/altlang/). There are online, user-written dictionaries without an editorial staff such as Wiktionary launched by Wikipedia in 2002, billed as future of lexicography, even though it is widely reviled as a lexicographic rumpus and flop (Lepore). No wonder when the Second Edition of *The Oxford English Dictionary* was published in 1989 in both p-(ink-and-paper) and e-(CD-ROM) forms, the sales ratio of p- to e- was approximately 1: 10 (Mai

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[1] See back cover of *The Random House Compact Unabridged Dictionary* (Special Second Edition, 1996).

123). Taking one step further from there, the *OED* Online which was made available in March 2000, boasting some twenty search options, not only incorporated its sizeable *Additions* in three volumes, but also ruled out the problem of CD-ROM wear and tear, creating in addition more look-up options by numerous pop-up windows for the purpose of customization. Therefore, it is hardly an overstatement to say that from now on practitioners of lexicographical art and craft will primarily "write in the future tense" and it is predicted with assurance that the dictionary market for tomorrow will teem with works like the *OED* Online. But the "future tense" lexicography, as it were, looks backward as well as forward — no mistake about it. The December 2003 *OED* Online Update, for instance, pinned quite a number of words down etymologically by antedating, say, "nit-picking" from 1970 to 1961, and "noisy" from 1693 to 1609, obviating looking forward alone.

Machines are made by man. So are computers with their programs. However state-of-the-art the computer ware is, be it hard or soft or firm or whichever, in the final analysis it is always the wizardly liveware (people working the computer) or the "wet ware" (jocularly the human brain) drawing unceasingly on an accrual of human wisdom that ultimately counts. Put another way, he who writes in the future tense cannot do away with the present and the past tenses, and whatever is "out of sight" is NOT "lost forever." Johnson, for instance, is very much alive not in that as a cultural relic his *Dictionary* sells at 10 000 to 30 000 USD (Hitchings 229n) apiece today, but in that as recently as in February 2000 seventeen U.S. Congressmen brought a federal lawsuit against the then President Bill Clinton, who, according to them, had no constitutional right to bomb the former Yugoslavia without Congressional authorization. An issue at stake was the exact meaning of "to declare" and that of "war." A decision was thereupon reached to appeal to nonpareil dictionary authority and this authority was none other than Samuel Johnson of course! (O'Hagan 12 – 3) More interestingly, perhaps out of a propensity to revive inkhorn archaisms, the owl in the hit novel series about Harry Potter is named Pigwidgeon (meaning a teeny thing), one of a panoply of quaint entry words Johnson's *Dictionary* abounds in.

Most dictionaries of today — and of tomorrow presumably for that matter — provide grammatical and pragmatic information such as parts of speech, irregular inflexions, usage or register labels which are all taken for granted. But has any one ever paused to think who initiated the paradigm in the first place? In the 150-odd years of English lexicographical chrysalis prior to Johnson there had been some twenty-ish works ranging from Robert Cawdrey's *Table Alphabeticall* to Henry Cockeram's glossary of "hard words" (who was the first to call his work a dictionary) and to Nathan Bailey's *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* of 1721. It is interesting to note that the above-

mentioned *Table* contained no entry words in the W, X and Y sections while the last left behind the perpetual laughing stock of defining "cat" as "a creature well known" and "black" as "a colour" and of circular definition or of *ignotum per ignotius* ("definiens" befogging "definiendum" in technical parlance or, plainly, explaining the difficult with the more difficult) aplenty so that "to wash" was "to cleanse by washing" and "to get" was "to obtain." The learned world had yet to wait for Samuel Johnson to introduce grammar and pragmatics in his *Dictionary* of 1775, to which we are indebted even today after the lapse of nearly 250 years, although we may offer to disagree with him upon his legendary truculent diatribes about Whig politics and about oats being a Scottish human staple but an English horse fodder. The liberally used but sometimes misplaced "cant" label of his has spawned a multitude of usage or register labels we apply and will continue to apply in dictionary-making. *Plus ça change* indeed!

The Johnsonian lesson, as I see it, lies first and foremost in the lexicographer's fervour in reading. Johnson had meant to plunder the wordlists from predecessors such as Nathan Bailey and Robert Ainsworth.[2] But the more he read with a view to ransacking quotable nuggets, the more was he carried away by reading over 500 authors spanning more than 200 years, so much so that his own wordlist — especially in the latter letters — eventually was generated in a large part by illustrations he had gleaned from reading. For a total of 42,773 entries he supplied approximately 110,000 quotations — only half of all he had collected, thus winning himself a fame of "a robust genius, born to tackle with whole libraries" (Boswell 78). Johnson, having made a point of regulating an "undefiled" [ *sic* ] English language rather than indulging it, read eminent authors of a past age such as Shakespeare and Milton, setting an example of what I call "literary realism" (using REAL English from the assembled matter of literacy and canonicity) to be taken over by Sir James Murray's *OED*[3], who even went so far as to identify lexicography in terms of "a department of literature" (Hitchings 81). And it was his wide-ranging interest and unquenchable curiosity that induced Johnson to read vastly and variously about not only, say, Aristotle, Isaac Watts and John Locke, but also about exotic flora and fauna and about the then novelties such as coffee houses, spa towns, cricket, ginseng and tea. Living contemporaries usually didn't pass muster with him, although later he relaxed his rule a little bit and even smuggled in some thirty of his own written samples marked as "anonymous." His was not the kind of leisurely reading on the part of a connoisseur making fetishization of books, but that under an oil lamp in the prison house of learning for the specific

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[2]   Johnson referred to Ainsworth 584 times and to Bailey 197 times (de Vries 64).

[3]   Murray, being a like-minded man of letters, copiously quoted Johnson in over 1700 places in his own work. The Herculean work he didn't live to see accomplished in entirety contains 414, 825 entries with 1, 827, 306 illustrative examples out of a total of five million.

purpose of enriching his dictionary with refined elegance of a bygone age occasionally interlaced with a smattering of novel "otherness" (according to him, for example, the number of possible combinations of the letters of the English alphabet is 1 391 724 288 887 252 999 425 128 493 402 200!) — a tradition reinforced by the *OED* afterwards although the editors of the latter professed a descriptivist interest in non-canonical examples and ephemera from modern newspapers and magazines (Mugglestone 20 - 1). See the following figure.

Today we are wont to speak of corpora painstakingly developed by teams working with scanners. To be sure, what we have in the end is a massive cache of riches. But remember: many men, many minds and many criteria, and scanning by machine is more often than not indiscriminate. Coming across such useless examples as "He is a muppet" under the entry word "muppet" in a prestigious British dictionary of the 2000s and a dubious one "I don't want a cigar now, thank you, but I'll take a rain check on it" [4] under the entry "rain check" in another — both claiming to have derived from well-stocked corpora — we would undoubtedly be nostalgic about Samuel Johnson's selective acumen in providing apposite illustrative examples. Quoting literary giants verbatim may appear DWEM-ish and snobbish by present-day standards, but in the age of

| Top Five Authors by Citation in Johnson's *Dictionary* (Vol. I) | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Author* | *Citations* | *Leading Title, Publication Date (Citations)* |
| 1.William Shakespeare | 8,694 | *King Lear,* 1605 (584) |
| 2. John Dryden | 5,627 | *Virgil's Aeneid* (tr.), 1697 (568) |
| 3. John Milton | 2,733 | *Paradise Lost,* 1667 (1,661) |
| 4. Francis Bacon | 2,483 | *History Naturall and Experimentall,* 1638 (878) |
| 5. Joseph Addison | 2,439 | *The Spectator,* 1711-14 (789) |
| Total 21,976 or 39.3% of citations in Vol. I (55,932) | | |

[4] The example, as I see it, is both possible and probable — but atypical if it is taken out of its social etymon. Can one take a rain check, for instance, on a slap in the face?

## Top Twenty Authors by Citation in *OED1*
( Willinsky, 211)

| | Author | Citations | Leading Title, Publication Date (Citations) |
|---|---|---|---|
| • | 1. William Shakespeare | 32,868 | *Hamlet*, 1597 (1,580 citations) |
| • | 2. Walter Scott | 15,877 | *The Heart of Midlothian*, 1818 (941) |
| • | 3. John Milton | 12,293 | *Paradise Lost*, 1667 (5,760) |
| • | 4. John Wyclif | 11,921 | the Bible (tr.), 1382, 1388 (8,000) |
| • | 5. Geoffrey Chaucer | 11,696 | *Troilus and Criseyde*, c1374 (1,258) |
| • | 6. William Caxton | 10,172 | *The Golden Legende* (tr.), 1483 (1,369) |
| • | 7. John Dryden | 8,987 | *Virgil's Georgics* (tr.), 1697 (2,023) |
| • | 8. Philemon Holland | 8,095 | *Pliny's Historie of the World* (tr.), 1601, (3,034) |
| • | 9. Charles Dickens | 7,490 | *Our Mutual Friend*, 1865 (808) |
| • | 10. Alfred Tennyson | 6,827 | *In Memoriam*, 1850 (688) |
| • | 11. John de Trevisa | 6,418 | *Bartholomeus De proprietatibus rerum* (tr.), 1398 (3,914) |
| • | 12. Thomas Carlyle | 6,370 | *The French Revolution*, 1837 (1,468) |
| • | 13. Edmund Spenser | 5,988 | *The Faerie Queene*, 1596 (4,025) |
| • | 14. Alexander Pope | 5,860 | *Homer's Odyssey* (tr.), 1726 (1,443) |
| • | 15. William Langland | 5,855 | *Piers Plowman*, 1362-93 (5,513) |
| • | 16. William Cowper | 5,843 | *The Task*, 1784 (1,753) |
| • | 17. Thomas Macaulay | 5,444 | *The History of England*, 1849 (4,375) |
| • | 18. Jehan Palsgrave | 5,402 | *Lesclarcissement de la langue francoyse*, 1530, (5,211) |
| • | 19. Samuel Johnson | 5,292 | *The Rambler*, 1750-52 (1,223) |
| • | 20. Miles Coverdale | 5,263 | the Bible (tr.), 1535 |

Total 183,951 or 10.1% of citations for *OED1* (1,827,306)

### A Comparison of the Top Twenty Authors by Citation in *OED1* & *OEDS*

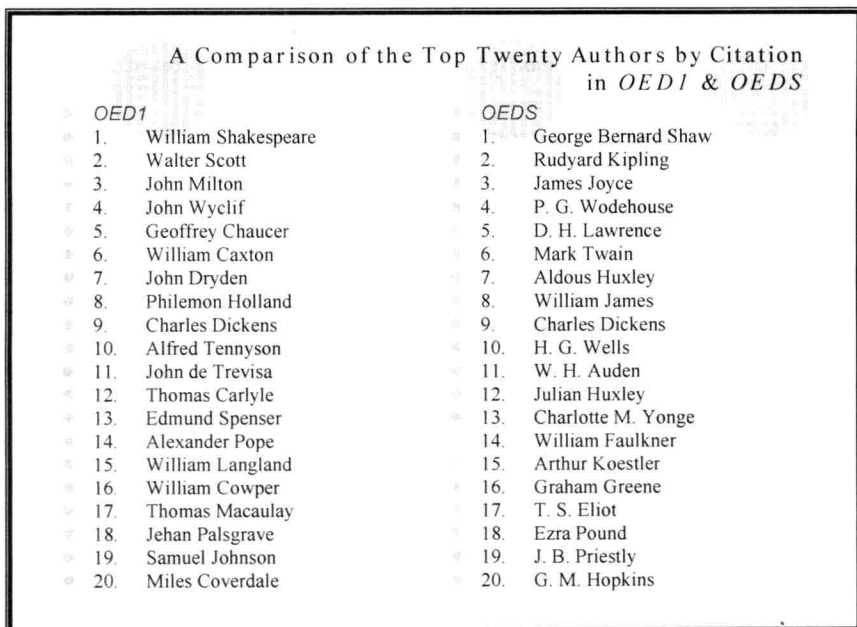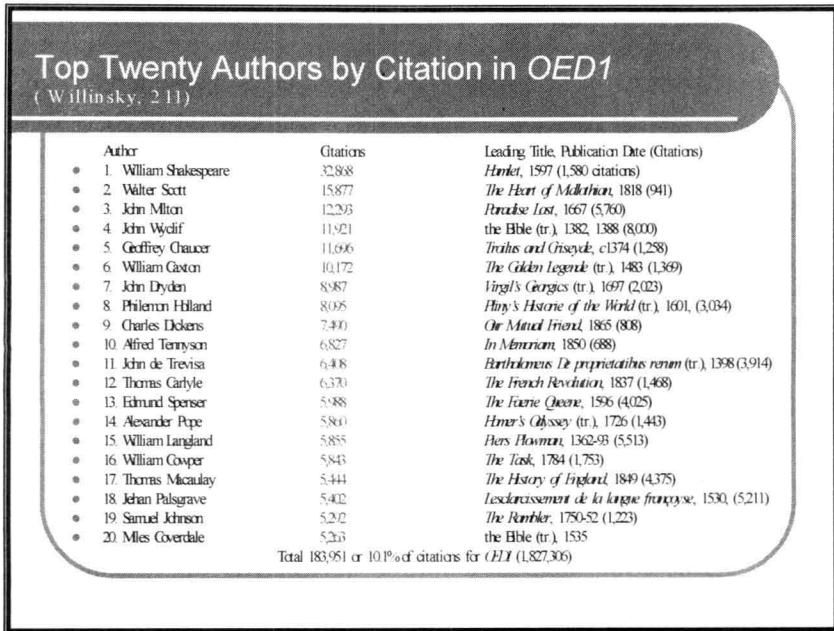| | *OED1* | | *OEDS* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | William Shakespeare | 1. | George Bernard Shaw |
| 2. | Walter Scott | 2. | Rudyard Kipling |
| 3. | John Milton | 3. | James Joyce |
| 4. | John Wyclif | 4. | P. G. Wodehouse |
| 5. | Geoffrey Chaucer | 5. | D. H. Lawrence |
| 6. | William Caxton | 6. | Mark Twain |
| 7. | John Dryden | 7. | Aldous Huxley |
| 8. | Philemon Holland | 8. | William James |
| 9. | Charles Dickens | 9. | Charles Dickens |
| 10. | Alfred Tennyson | 10. | H. G. Wells |
| 11. | John de Trevisa | 11. | W. H. Auden |
| 12. | Thomas Carlyle | 12. | Julian Huxley |
| 13. | Edmund Spenser | 13. | Charlotte M. Yonge |
| 14. | Alexander Pope | 14. | William Faulkner |
| 15. | William Langland | 15. | Arthur Koestler |
| 16. | William Cowper | 16. | Graham Greene |
| 17. | Thomas Macaulay | 17. | T. S. Eliot |
| 18. | Jehan Palsgrave | 18. | Ezra Pound |
| 19. | Samuel Johnson | 19. | J. B. Priestly |
| 20. | Miles Coverdale | 20. | G. M. Hopkins |

**Fig. 1**

Source: Willinsky 211, 215.

ours when science and technology dictate, Johnson's compendium of examples gives the reader a sense of transcendence over what is mundane and mechanical, adding credit to the sagacity of remarkable "wet ware" and breathing some uplifting air into the ambient feculence. With your permission, a tangential word or two by way of digression. "Reading maketh a full man." While the Baconian saying still rings mellifluously in the ears of superannuated people of my age, it gives rise to a hackneyed ennui among modish computer-savvy young men and women who would rather spend days and nights browsing BBS websites or other web pages, emailing, chatting, blogging, googling, playing games on the computer. When they encounter an unknown word in English, they will simply highlight it and click on an electronic dictionary for an equivalent in Chinese. The result of using some low-quality handheld electronic bric-a-brac and, worse, developing a learning strategy thereby, can be disastrous. Some of the grossly mistranslated English store signs and menus such as "Japanese Arrangement" for "Japanese Cuisine" and "cloud swallow soup" for "wonton soup" that are uproariously notorious internationally are a case in point. As a pedagogue, I keep advising my students to read variously and viscerally so as to ensure a minimum of information input of a million words a year while using a sizeable enough decoding dictionary and an annual output of at least 10,000 words with the help of a "radioactive" encoding dictionary. Learning means, above all, an adequate amount of reading plus writing using two different kinds of dictionary, or, in a nutshell, making one "fuller" in the Baconian sense of the word.

Besides being a purposeful reader with scholarly talons laid on every available book, what other qualities are required of a lexicographer? Using Samuel Johnson as an exemplar once more, he or she has to be a bibliophile or a man or woman of letters, not only keen on reading with gusto but also capable of writing with brio. Johnson himself declared that he WROTE a dictionary instead of compiling one. Approximately sixty percent of all Johnson's learned quotes in the dictionary and elsewhere were taken from Greek or Latin savants, with Horace accounting for the most of them (Hitchings 2005: 103). And his writing career began as early as when he wrote for Edward Cave's *Gentlemen's Magazine* in 1731, and, working to order, he could produce as many as — wow! — 10 000 words at one go a day. He edited a complete Shakespeare with a now world renowned preface and proceeded to work on *Lives of the English Poets* otherwise known as Johnson's *Poets*. His most learned essays appeared in the six-page *Rambler*, a magazine underwritten by the said Cave and a few others. It is in these essays that Johnson tried out a Latinate style fraught with words from his *Dictionary*: "adscititious," "efflorescence," "equiponderant," "quadrature," "terraqueous," and "to superinduce". For other Johnsonisms see Fig. 2.
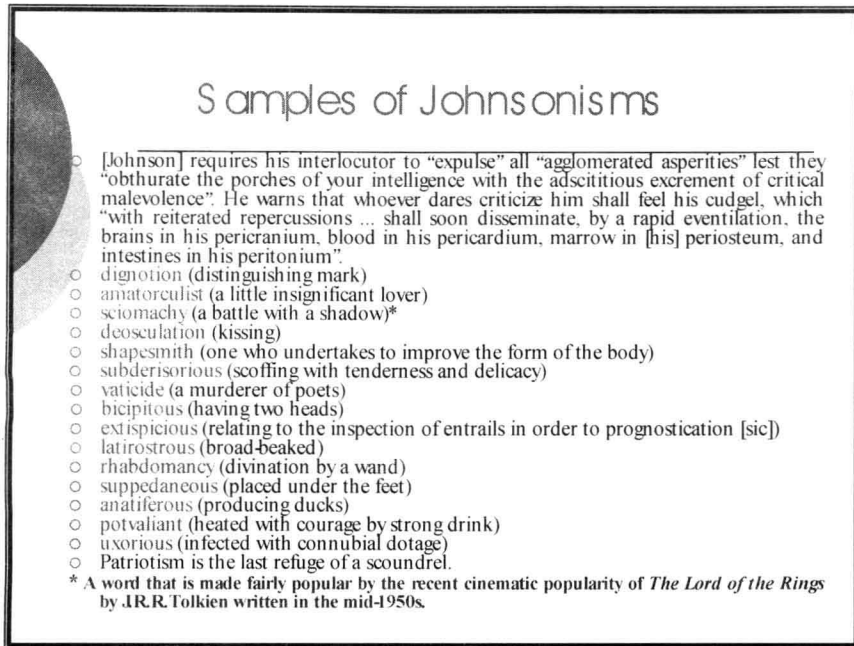
## S amples of Johnsonisms

[Johnson] requires his interlocutor to "expulse" all "agglomerated asperities" lest they "obthurate the porches of your intelligence with the adscititious excrement of critical malevolence". He warns that whoever dares criticize him shall feel his cudgel, which "with reiterated repercussions ... shall soon disseminate, by a rapid eventifation, the brains in his pericranium, blood in his pericardium, marrow in [his] periosteum, and intestines in his peritonium".

- dignotion (distinguishing mark)
- amatorculist (a little insignificant lover)
- sciomachy (a battle with a shadow)*
- deosculation (kissing)
- shapesmith (one who undertakes to improve the form of the body)
- subderisorious (scoffing with tenderness and delicacy)
- vaticide (a murderer of poets)
- bicipitous (having two heads)
- extispicious (relating to the inspection of entrails in order to prognostication [sic])
- latirostrous (broad-beaked)
- rhabdomancy (divination by a wand)
- suppedaneous (placed under the feet)
- anatiferous (producing ducks)
- potvaliant (heated with courage by strong drink)
- uxorious (infected with connubial dotage)
- Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.

*\* A word that is made fairly popular by the recent cinematic popularity of The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien written in the mid-1950s.*

**Fig. 2**

Last but not least, integral to the *Dictionary*'s appeal is decidedly Johnson's letter written on the 7th February 1755 to Lord Chesterfield, a disdainful lip-server of a patron who was now prepared to partake of the success of the project, a letter to salve the writer's own acrimony as well as to admonish the imposter. Deservedly, it is a masterpiece of English prose, a sample of controlled rage and epistolary satire — satire in prose rather than in its Johnsonian definition of being always in verse. Being so regularly and enthusiastically given to words is admittedly going a long way to being a wordsmith worth his salt. But Johnson was a wordsmith of common sense rather than abstrusities. His observations about it being easier to translate homelier words like "bright" and "sweet" into another language in a bilingual dictionary than explain them in the mother tongue in a monolingual one and about linguistic corruption happening most frequently and flagrantly as a rule at the extremes of the social spectrum are worth more than tons of the now voguish academic gibberish. To me at least.

Part of being a wordsmith is to know as many languages as possible. Johnson was conversant in eight while James Murray allegedly knew twenty! A few years ago a Chinese dictionary-maker claimed to know thirteen. He was scoffed at all around but I kept wondering why he was never put to test to see if he was a really worthy polyglot. Yours Humbly knows only Chinese and English, with six years of Russian in secondary school and one year of college German to

boot. However rusty and paltry my knowledge about the latter two languages, it comes in handy in dictionary-making. For example, it was my knowledge of Russian that helped to decide if the plural form of Bolshevik was Bolsheviks or Bolsheviki, depending on whether the entry was treated as a totally naturalized English word or a Russian loan. As this presentation is being prepared, it is the Christmas season of 2006. I have always heard sung and seen as a lighting ornament the word NOEL but had to look it up in a dictionary to know that it comes from Latin "natalis" to refer to the birth of Jesus Christ. Similarly, when I perspired profusely sitting in a sauna, I didn't know the word had originated in Finnish, the language of a very, very cold country. In such circumstances I would wistfully lament that I didn't take the trouble of learning more languages in order to be a well-equipped lexicographer. An indefatigable and vocal critic of the first edition of *The English-Chinese Dictionary* (*Unabridged*), of which I was editor-in-chief, knew Chinese, English, Russian and Japanese. His scathing criticisms offended a no small number of my dictionary colleagues, but I always take my hat off to him and his quirky gibes never fall on deaf ears.

Another requirement is an extraordinary resolve and unusual fortitude plus pliant mutability when and where necessary. It is known to everybody that Johnson identified dictionary-making as "low drudgery" and the illustrative example he supplied for the entry word "dull" was "To make dictionaries is *dull* work." On another occasion he was quoted to say:

> The uncertainty of our duration ought at once to set bounds to our designs, and add incitements to our industry; and when we find ourselves inclined either to immensity in our schemes, or sluggishness in our endeavours, we may either check or animate ourselves by collecting that art is long and life is short [Whoever has] trifled away those months and years, in which he should have laboured, must remember that he has now only a part of that which the whole is little; and that since the few moments remaining are to be considered the last days of Heaven, not one is to be lost (Hazen & Midden-dorf; 1958⁻: III, 97).

Johnson's initial ambitions were towering but hardly realistic. He dreamed that he could do the dictionary in three years single-handedly with the help of several amanuenses. Reality taught him a lesson the hard way that history of dictionary-making is one of deficits and delays. (With the result of many a delinquency or deficiency the conscience-smitten lexicographer would weep over, I'd like to add.) By Christmas of 1750, three years from when he first made his *Plan*, he had done from "A" to the twenty-first sense of "to carry" — a total of 280 pages. Fortunately he was now made excruciatingly aware of the excessive "immensity" of his proposed project, a project that had taken forty French to

spend forty years on it.[5] He was sane and pliant enough to change tacks, shrunk his expansive strategies, sacrificed numerous good enough quotations, loosened the rule about incorporating living authors as it was mentioned above, and so forth. As a result, to an experienced eye, the letters A to C are disproportionately more circumstantiated than those that follow.

A late teacher of mine, a famed dictionary man, Professor Ge Chuangui (or Hertz C.K.Ke by Wade-Giles) by name, signed a contract with the Commercial Press for *A Large-size English-Chinese Dictionary* in the early 1960s. Assisted by a few junior teachers and graduate students, Professor Ge ground away at it for five or six years and ended up finding himself still lingering in the A section. Take alone for instance the gathering of evidence of whether English nouns *beginning* with the letters "h" and "u" are preceded by the indefinite article "a" or "an" — so I am told — the cards Professor Ge and his men made exceed fifty! Regrettably, the *magnum opus* aborted. Professor Ge was a deeply revered and loved person, a perfectionist. I remember writing to him in his twilight years quoting Samuel Johnson:"To pursue perfection, like the first inhabitants of Arcadia, is to chase the sun." Bless his soul chasing the sun in Heaven!

It is common sense that the dictionary is not an anthology of literature or of any other one subject. Nor is it a monograph on it. Knowledgeable persons tend to look at it as "a mine of information, an encyclopedia in disguise" (Eco 49). Johnson's is no exception, offering a miscellany of knowledge rather than an overarching system of it. The nature of the dictionary has decided that a lexicographer be a Jack or Jane of all trades: to name a few — an untiring word-muncher, a discriminate microstructural editor, a hair-splitting meaning explicator, a fault-finding proof-reader, and also, when the work is completed and published, a punching bag for rancorous attacks like Johnson was by Noah Webster on the other side of the Atlantic (Hitchings 244 – 6). But Johnson, living in a haughty time, would rather be a "cudgel" than a "punching bag" because of his pride and prejudice (See Sample One in Fig. 2). Johnson's was basically a one-man show, yet he had to coordinate with his amanuenses. Later, in Sir James Murray's case, he had to work with a fistful of philological stalwarts no meaner in academic standing than himself, not to mention the demanding Delegates of OUP and two thousand-odd outside readers including the "mad professor."[6] An able editor-in-chief, therefore, needs to be equipped with managerial prowess, knowing about the strengths and weaknesses of every member of his team, tapping his/her potential to the full so as to ensure optimal work efficiency. Vis-à-vis publishers/booksellers, he becomes a hard-

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[5] A commonly accepted story. In fact, it took the *Académie française* fifty-five years to accomplish the dictionary in 1635. Who knows if the long delay wasn't the downside of teamwork and the "too many cooks" syndrome?

[6] See Simon Winchester's *The Professor and the Madman*, published by Harper Perennial in 1999.

driving bargainer like Samuel Johnson, who committed himself to the proposed job over breakfast on 18th June 1746 only on condition of getting paid a considerable sum of £1 575, roughly equivalent to £150 000 today. True, there were giants in those times, as the proverb says. But these same giants found an added secretarial dimension to their dictionary work, lugging heavy books, cutting up quires of paper into copy slips, stamping serial numbers on them to prevent misfiling, and so on and so forth. In short, traditional lexicography is the kind of work into which a dozen labours and chores roll, calling for a kind of *esprit de corps*. He/She who master- or mistress-minds a dictionary project and executes it must needs be a lexical steeplejack/jane and a grassroots word hod-carrier at one and the same time. It is by no means an armchair job, hands down, as some visualize it to be. And it goes without saying that with the advent of the computer, a lexicographer's functions have further multiplied as a programmer, an interface designer, and a cyber-CEO perhaps.

Samuel Johnson is phenomenal. Having dwelt upon what ramifications his tradition has held out for posterity, I feel obliged to hasten to add as an afterthought his obvious inadequacies and limitations. In the first place, feedback to his dictionary was and has been controversial (Hitchings 240 − 1). To a modern person, 42, 773 including some verbal rarities and curios doesn't account for anywhere near being adequate when we consider that the English language at the time comprised over 300,000 words, not to mention the present-day vocabulary tally of World English as a common denominator. Secondly, as was pointed out in the preceding context, Johnson's personal prejudices are manifest in some of his definitions and are ethically unacceptable. Thirdly, yes, there are piquant wordings of definition such as "uxorious" as "infected with connubial dotage" and other pithy sallies ("Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel"!) that Macaulay, Coleridge and Lamb spoke highly of. Alongside them, however, there exist definitions that are inaccurate, esoteric and obscure, some of which simply err ("leeward" = "windward") or border on being absurd ("defluxion" = "a defluxion"). The gap between "the past tense" and "the present tense" also bears negatively upon the quality of definitions: for instance, we do not go to Johnson for the contemporary meaning of "penthouse", "car," "urinal," "rapper," "jogger," or "barbecue." Being a cynosure of British letters, Johnson wasn't prescient enough to see that "the American dialect, a tract of corruption" (Hazen & Middendorf 1958 −: X, 202), would one day become a global tongue a third of the world's population now have some command of and the other two-thirds aspire to learn. Furthermore, instances of inconsistency are numerous such as "uphil" but "downhill" and "instal" but "reinstall." To me, technicalities aside, the most objectionable is a professed tendentiousness that attests to Johnson's fusion of a tool book with moral didacticism. All the seven illustrative examples for "to instruct" are

quotes from the Bible and for his own preferred ends he even felt free to change them at will at times. Thus, when Caliban in *The Tempest* by Shakespeare actually said "I know how to curse," Johnson unflinchingly added a NOT to make the utterance negative: "I know not how to curse." This is something a lexicographer should never do — whether in the past, at present, or in future. In my humble opinion, it is a matter of professional ethics although Johnson might have regarded lexicography as above all a consecrated vocation or even avocation rather than a profession.

On balance, none the less, Dr Johnson's *Dictionary* is not an ossuarium but a receptacle of good taste, magnetic effusion, ennobling endeavour, propitious tradition, and creative lexicography, the memory of which hopefully will be kept alive long.

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Editor: Jason C. S. Chu