

Transcripts of Time: Examining Historical Methods in the *Oxford English Dictionary* and Andrew Clark's *English Words in War-Time*.

Across the history of English lexicography, the shaping, and reshaping, of words in time has been a source of both enquiry and renovation. As in Blount's *Glossographia* of 1656, obsolescence and the fate of 'old words' was identified as an important point of intersection between linguistic and other forms of antiquarianism.¹ Two years later, Phillips in his *New World of English Words* scrutinized the shifting crosscurrents of settlement as processes that contributed to history and language history alike. In the eighteenth century, Samuel Johnson's iconic *Dictionary* of 1755 was, at least in principle, to arrest time and change within the English lexicon (Johnson 1747: 11). Nevertheless, patterns of diachronic change could, he suggested, perhaps act as a useful organising principle within lexicography *per se*. 'It will be proper that the quotations be ranged according to the ages of their authors', he commented: 'By this method every word will have its history, and the reader will be informed of the gradual changes of the language, and have before his eyes the rise of some words, and the fall of others' (1747: 31-2).

For Johnson (1755: B2^v), this remained yet another gap which intervened between 'design' and 'execution'. As history confirms, it was the *Oxford English Dictionary* with which a fully-fledged historical method was instead primarily associated. Its first edition (henceforth *OED1*) began publication in 1884 under the title of *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. It reached its final fascicle in 1928. Influenced by on-going work in Germany, France, and the Netherlands (Osselton, 2002), it was, from the beginning, profoundly receptive to ideas of historicism and empiricism as newly endorsed tenets of lexicography. Johnson might have cited some 116,000 thousand citations within his *Dictionary* (and used many more in relation to the underlying analysis that informed each entry). Nevertheless, these remained

¹ See e.g. Thomas Blount, *Glossographia: or A Dictionary, Interpreting all Such Hard Words ... as are Now Used in Our Refined English Tongue* (London: Thomas Newcomb, 1656). An *antiquary*, Blount notes, is 'one that searches or is well skild in Antiquities, as Coyns, Histories, old words'. Comments on time and change appear at a number of points. See e.g. under *Cabala*. 'We use to say, he is not of our *Cabal*, that is, he is not received into our Council, or is not privy to our secrets'; '*Cresset*, An old word used for a Lanthorn or burning Beacon'.

undated (and, at best, loosely attributed) in ways which elided the potential for proper historical exegesis. As under *benign* (a.), for example, authorial surnames accompany the illustrative quotations that are deployed. ‘They who delight in the suffering of inferiour creatures, will not be very compassionate or *benign*’ is credited to ‘Locke’ [John Locke]. Likewise ‘What heaven bestows upon the earth, in kind influences and *benign* aspects, is paid it back again in sacrifice and adoration’ is attributed to ‘South’ [Robert South]. But information on title and date remains absent.

If in some ways, Henry Sweet’s comments on the projected *OED* in 1877 clearly echoed Johnson’s earlier remarks -- the aim was, he stated, ‘to exhibit the history of each word’ by means of chronologically ordered ‘citations from every period of the language’ (MP/20/4/77) – a new rigour, of method and approach, was also perceptible. The early *Proposal* for the *Dictionary* stressed the need for a ‘new and more Scientific Dictionary’ than had hitherto existed in English (*Proposal* (1859): 1). The adoption of the ‘historical method’ was, in this, salient. ‘What is now required is fullness of citations and historical method’, Sweet adds. In the *OED*, ‘every fact’ would be ‘set forth ... on a strictly historical method’, James Murray (editor of *OED1*, 1879–1915) affirmed. The *Dictionary*, he added, was ‘permeated ... through and through with the scientific method of the century’ (Murray 1900: 48, 49): ‘By the completeness of its vocabulary, and by the application of the historical method to the life and use of words’, the nation, as Murray declared in the ‘Preface’ to its first volume (1888: p.v), might now gain a dictionary that was ‘worthy of the English language and of English scholarship.’

Methodology, Murray emphasized, was the critical dividing line between the *OED* and the dictionaries of the past. A strongly data-driven approach, and an early model of crowd-sourcing as realized in e.g. Murray’s public requests for ‘quotations illustrating the use of English words by all writers of all ages and in all senses, each quotation being made on a uniform plan’ (Murray 1879: 1), were distinctive features. Full bibliographical information, and date, accompanied each piece of evidence. ‘Direct observation’, and a process of inductive analysis from the data so derived, both feature, for example, in the entry for *historical method*, a sub-division of *historical* (adj.), written in 1899. This is carefully differentiated from other co-existing collocations such as *historical faith* in which belief rather than fact takes precedence.² As John Tosh has observed, the ‘nineteenth-century view [of history] was straightforward

² This originally formed part of the fascicle *H—Hod*, edited by Murray, and published in 1899.

enough'. The 'basis of all scientific knowledge was the meticulous observation of reality by the disinterested 'passive' observer' such that scholars 'approached their work without preconceptions and without moral involvement' (Tosh 2015: 150). The prime duty of the historian was to 'accumulate factual knowledge about the past', he adds.

Historical projects such as the *OED* exhibit a seamless alignment with ideas of this kind. The dictionary-maker, following Franz Passow's work on Greek lexicography (and the theoretical basis he outlined), is regarded as merely an interface, characterised – unlike Johnson -- by a rigorous impartiality. 'The theory of lexicography we profess is that which Passow was the first to enunciate clearly and put in practice successfully - viz. "that every word should be made to tell its own story"', as the *Dictionary's* first editor, Herbert Coleridge averred (Coleridge (1860): 72). Richard Chenevix Trench's seminal lectures on lexicography, delivered at the London Philological Society in 1857, made a similar point. The dictionary-maker's role was, he stressed, no longer that of a 'critic' of words. Instead, a newly-configured identity as 'historian' affirmed the salience of factual objectivity in which individual predilections about 'good' (or 'bad') usage were firmly set aside (Trench 1860: 4-5). Johnson's evaluative stance such that e.g. *coxcomical* was, irrespective of evidence, declared 'unworthy of use' while *prejudice* in the sense 'to injure; to hurt; to diminish; to impair; to be detrimental' produced outright dissent ('Who can read with patience of an ingredient that prejudices a medicine?') was rejected. So, too, was the capacity of the dictionary-maker to 'pick and choose' among types of evidence or, indeed, types of entry. Instead, the aim of lexicography was to secure a '*Lexicon totius Anglicatatis*' in a form of historical cataloguing of the native tongue (Trench 1860: 64). 'A Dictionary ... according to that idea of it which seems to me alone capable of being logically maintained, is an inventory of the language', Trench stated (1860: 5). The aim, Murray stated, was both rigorous and inclusive, providing the 'life-history' of 'every word that has been used in the language for the last 800 years' (Murray 1900: 47). A dictionary formed on this basis would itself be 'an historical monument, the history of a nation contemplated from one point of view' (Trench 1860: 6).

Ideology and praxis: the historical method in OED1.

Ideals of this kind underpinned what has often been described as a descriptive revolution in English lexicography. Nevertheless, the fact that there can, in a range of ways, be a disconnect between historical rhetoric and certain aspects of embedded historical practice is perhaps unsurprising. As the history of the *OED* itself confirms, the dictionary-maker must, of necessity, intervene at a range of points, not least given the pragmatic constraints of cost and scale that lexicographical projects inevitably involve. As investigation of the extant proof-sheets of *OED1*) readily confirms (Mugglestone 2005), empiricism does not necessarily result in an ‘inventory’ of each and every uses. Instead, the fact of erasure can be made strikingly visible such that detailed entries for e.g. *gravette*, signifying a type of fabric, or *gesticulate* as adjective are both drafted and deleted. Thousands of other words and senses met the same fate, including new-forged scientific forms such as *radium* (a word dismissed on the grounds of its potential ephemerality). James Murray’s intemperate letter to his co-editor William Craigie, elicited by the latter’s drafted inclusion (in proof) of a range of compound forms with *railroad* and *railway* is, in this respect, justly famous, reminding us of other aspects of historical practice and the borders – and judgements -- that historical methods might need to observe:

How abject the failure is appears from the fact that *railway porter* can be illustrated only of date 1894, with the quotation it was a ‘railway porter’, the ... ineptitude of which might make the irreverent scoff ... For whom and what purpose is it intended? Only because you have *named* it above, and think you are obliged, by hook or by crook, to furnish an *ostensible quotation* for it. The mistake is in the principle which involves such miserable failure in its application (James Murray to William Craigie, OED/B/3/8/5).

Craigie’s ‘treatment’, Murray insisted, was ‘not in accordance with the principles and method of the Dictionary’, such that ‘much valuable space [is] consumed on what is of no functional value’. The relevant section was, he instructed, to be redone, bearing in mind the fact that ‘we are tied down to finished the work in a defined number of volumes’ in which ‘the exclusion of every irrelevancy’ was imperative.

Historical principles are, as we have seen, often presented as essentialist such that the dictionary-maker must collect and represent all forms, providing that evidence exists. The reality of representation, as behind the scenes evidence of this kind suggests, is, however, often contingent on a range of other issues. What is judged ‘relevant’ or ‘useful’ (‘of functional value’, as Murray states) can be open to subjectivities of judgment and interpretation, even as the historical method is applied. Trench in his lectures might have separated the roles of ‘critic’ and ‘historian’ as a fundamental tenet of a newly-instituted lexicographical practice. Nevertheless, as his own comments on language made plain, compounds and collocations were, for instance, early recognised as a problematic category. That the ‘innumerable family of compound epithets’ had no ‘admission by right’ clearly problematized the ‘inventory’ to be made (Trench 1860: 60–61). Seen pragmatically, of course, as Murray likewise endorsed, words of this kind exhibit ‘infinite capacities of extension’. In consequence, as he admits (Murray 1888: p.vii), only ‘the more important’ were to be included, irrespective of the historical evidence with which they might be supplied. The *Dictionary* ‘was never for a moment intended to exhibit ... all the attributive collocations’ and ‘support them by quotations’, he informed Craigie in 1902 (OED/B/3/8/5). Henry Bradley’s entry for *nerve* in *OED1* provided appropriate illustration. As this confirmed (*nerve* (n.), sense 11), ‘only some of the earlier or more prominent’ attributive forms had been included, while omission is made overt. Seen in this light, ‘all words’ can easily become ‘some words’, while the judgment of the dictionary-maker inevitably intervenes in crafting the limits of representation.

Other fault-lines can, however, also be discerned. Entries such as that for *blindly*, written by Murray and published in 1887 in the fascicle *Batten–Boz*, confirm, for example, the value of what we might see as the standard model of historical lexicography in *OED1*. Courtesy of a set of dated and verified citations in which provenance, alongside page or folio number, is meticulously recorded, the entry exemplifies the model of lexical biography such as Trench had early advocated. *Blindly* is hence traced to its ‘birth’ in Old English with a subsequent lineage refracted through Wycliffe in 1380, and Shakespeare (in a citation from *Richard III* v. viii. 24: ‘The brother blindlie shed the brothers bloud’). Dryden, Carlyle, and Longfellow all provide later examples in an impeccable narrative of time and change.

Scrutiny of other entries such as those for e.g. *back-hand*, *between*, *cassock*, *sacrilege*, or *blindingly* (among a number of other examples) points, however, to the undeniable presence of other co-existing models. Here, certain types of evidence – particularly that deriving from generic categories such as advertising and popular news discourse – can elicit what is, in effect, a kind of compromised historical practice in which key historical markers are elided, even if citational evidence remains intact. *Blindingly*, defined as ‘In a blinding manner; so as to blind’ (an entry printed in 1887), was, for example, accompanied by two citations. The first – taken from Julius Hare’s *Parish Sermons* of 1849 (‘The darkness which lay blindingly on the hearts and souls of mankind’) -- establishes the earliest citational evidence for this word.³ Text, volume, and page number affirm a careful attention to detail and source. The second reveals a conspicuous difference of approach. The extract is brief (‘The snow flying blindingly’). Provenance, too, is accorded minimal specification. The sole identifier provided is the generic ‘Newspaper’, accompanied by the temporal marker ‘Mod’ (a contraction for ‘Modern’).⁴ *Back-hand* (n.), as used in the sense ‘Handwriting with the letters sloped backwards’, provides a similar example. Citational evidence (‘Other letters produced were written by Street in his back-hand’) is credited to a ‘Mod. newspaper’. Bibliographical information is consciously curtailed. Confusingly, the date of 1885, supplied against this citation in the modern *OED Online*, refers to the date of publication of the original fascicle rather than to that of the citation itself, just as ‘1887’, which accompanies the evidence discussed above for *blindingly*, refers to the publication date of the fascicle *Batter-Boz*.⁵ Meanwhile, other supporting evidence for *backhand* as taken from canonical sources such as Sir Walter Scott’s *St. Ronan’s Well* (1824) or Sir John

³ Bibliographical information changes slightly in the modern *OED Online*, re-identifying Hare’s work as his *Sermons Preacht in Herstmonceux Church*. See *blindingly* (adv.), *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, December 2018. Accessed 31 January 2019.

⁴ That other citations from popular sources, collected in support of *blindingly* (and still preserved in the *OED* archives) remain unused is perhaps equally telling. See e.g. an unused citation from the *Daily News*, July 9, 1886, ‘perhaps no other match was ever played out in such blindingly bright weather’.

⁵ See respectively *blindingly* (adv.) and *back-hand* (n.), *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, December 2018. Accessed 31 January 2019.

Vanbrugh's *The Mistake, A Comedy* (1706) complies fully with the formal desiderata of *OED* methodology.

Patterns of this kind are not systematically applied. Nevertheless, while it might be tempting to attribute variabilities of this kind to the trial and error of early fascicles, they appear, in reality, across the *Dictionary*'s first edition and with historical legacies that, as indicated above, can continue into the modern digital text, as well as being introduced for e.g. new evidence as inserted in the *OED Supplements* of 1972-86.⁶ In *OED1*, we can locate examples in e.g. *hog* (v.) in the sense 'To cause (a ship, her keel, a plank, etc.) to droop at the ends and rise in the centre, as the result of a strain' which gains the testimony of a '*Hull Newspaper*' (undated), while *swale* (n.), defined as 'A hollow, low place', is verified via a '*Canadian Newspaper*' in 1911 ('Their crop is swale hay; in other words swamp grass'). The final citation under *cockly* (an adjective meaning 'wrinkled' 'puckered') is attributed to a '*Yorksh[ire] Newspaper*' and given a date of 1885 (though no further details are provided), while *cassock* is attributed to a '*Scotch newspaper*' and given the approximate date formulation 'a1888'. A similar practice informs, among others, entries for e.g. *harbour* (v.), *inturned* (adj.), *jumping* (vbl. noun), or *parted* (adj.) in the sense 'charged with a dramatic part of character'.

Relevant identifying formulae, as these examples suggest, can display considerable variation. Temporal approximations – in ways that suggest further problems for the implementation of the historical method and its claimed rigour – also appear as in e.g. the final citation in *burn* (v.): 'a1887 *Mod. Newspaper*. The first and second floors of the front building were burned out, roofs off'. Similar is the sole example of usage provided under *caniculture*, defined as 'The rearing of dogs' ('a1888 *Newspaper*. The most philosophic of the protests against caniculture'). Source-texts of other kinds can, of course, provide precedent for the use of approximate dating formulae of this kind (see e.g. 'a1300' which appears alongside citations from *Cursor Mundi*, or 'a1757' which accompanies those deriving from Colley Cibber's *The Careless Husband*). It is nevertheless indisputable that modern newspapers, unlike medieval manuscripts or play-texts, are precisely dated on every page. To attest, say, *crèche*, with the loose specification '*Mod. Newspaper*' and the date approximation 'a1893' is clearly anomalous

⁶ See e.g. *aggressive* (adj.), sense 1c, an entry which, edited by Robert Burchfield, appeared in 1972: '1930 *Vancouver newspaper* (Advt.), Aggressive clothing salesman with ambition, to manage a large...store. Good salary..for the right man'.

(‘a1893 *Mod. Newspaper*, The Crèche and Infant Home at Stepney-causeway is a public nursery for infants. The institution provides entirely for some 30 infants, whose mothers are in hospitals or convalescent homes. Besides these, from 100 to 130 are left daily by their mothers while at work, a charge of 2d. a day being made for each child’). Still more striking are those examples, as under *harbour* or *infamous* (‘*Mod. Newsp.* A warrant being issued against him for an infamous crime, he fled the country’) where no date at all appears.

Linguistic evidence from recent advertisements often elicited similar treatment in *OED1*. Only the loosest of bibliographical information hence accompanies citational evidence provided under *let* (v.), sense 35: ‘a1902 *Mod. Newspaper Advt.*, Wine and Spirit Vaults ... Let-offs could pay all rent’. Likewise, for *inside* (adj.) in the sense ‘Of a person: Employed within a house or building; working indoors’, the concluding quotation in the entry as it exists in *OED1* takes the form ‘a1900 *Mod. U. S. Newspaper Advt.*, Situation wanted as inside man in private family’.⁷ Contracted but equally non-specific formulations are common, if not invariable: ‘1883 *Newsp. Advt.*, Piece Goods, Apparel, etc. for Sale by Auction’ (under *apparel*); ‘*Mod. Newsp. Advt.*, Umbrella tippers wanted, indoors’ (under *tipper*). Here, too, there are, in practice, a range of bibliographical parameters that can be employed, from the full specification which appears under *tutorial* (‘1891 *Academy* 31 Jan. 102/2 (*Advert.*) His duties will be to assist the Professor ... and to direct tutorially the English work of the Normal Students’), to what we might see as partial-representation, as under *tank* (v.) (‘1890 *Colliery Advt.*, The water pumped or tanked out’), to the minimal information provided under *insertion*: ‘*Mod. Newspaper Notice*. ‘Trade notices are charged at the rate of 1/6 per insertion. All communications in reference to the insertion of Advertisements to be sent to the Advertisement Manager’. *Delectable* (adj) and *grist-cart* (n.)

⁷ Later revision means that, in the modern *OED*, this citation is followed by mid-twentieth century examples in which bibliographical information is given in full: ‘1946 K. TENNANT *Lost Haven* (1947) viii. 113 The ‘inside men’, who fished the lakes..also appropriated any convenient grassy slope; 1948 ‘N. SHUTE’ *No Highway* vi. 165 He's an inside man ... He's deeply interested in research, and he doesn't concern himself very much with user problems.’ See *inside* (adj.), *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2018. Web. 2 February 2019.

provide parallel cases: ‘*Mod. Advt. Delectable Lozenges, for clearing the throat*’; ‘1893 *Newspaper Advt., Wanted, Man to Milk ... and occasionally go with Grist Cart*’.

Redefining the historical method – elaborated and restricted modes of practice

Murray’s censure of Samuel Johnson for the latter’s apparent failures in data attribution (‘Johnson’s plan of merely naming the author, without specifying the particular work quoted, or giving any reference whereby the passage could be turned up’ (Murray 1900: 39)) can, in this light, acquire a certain irony. Johnson was, we might note, notably even-handed in lexicographical practices of this kind; canonical and non-canonical texts alike share similarly compressed forms of reference across his *Dictionary*. Across *OED1*, in contrast, differential patterns correspond—if inconsistently -- to a form of evaluative cultural hierarchy by which a multi-tier set of practices was clearly in operation, and in which the historical method could, in practice, be realized in very different ways. These can be formally identified as:

- (1) A fully elaborated historical method, as under *blindly*, in which full bibliographical and temporal information is provided.
- (2) A range of variously restricted or compromised historical methods in which specification, as we have seen, is restricted to date and genre. This format is usually elicited by recent evidence taken from popular news discourse and advertising; there are no comparable examples in *OED1* in which specification by date and genre-type extends to e.g. ‘novel’, or ‘poem’, or, say ‘scientific writing’.
- (3) Other, still more reductive, models can also be identified in which generic markers are retained for the categories of newspapers and advertising but date is reduced to an approximate signifier, itself variably realized via the marker ‘a[pprox.]’ (as for *caniculture* (n.)). Still greater historical imprecision, in practice, attends the related use of ‘*Mod.*’ (for ‘Modern’), given that ‘*Mod.*’ in earlier *OED* fascicles adduces, as for *delectable* (adj.), recent Victorian use though, by the final fascicles, it gestures towards diction and meaning more typical of the late 1920s.
- (4) A further compromised historical model exists in the category of invented citations in which date and source text are, of necessity, absent, as is genre specification (see e.g. *about*, as illustrated by ‘*Mod. Better to earn a little than hang about doing nothing*’, or *adapted* (adj.), illustrated by ‘*Mod. Adapted comedies are being played*

at several theatres'). While invented examples are assumed to derive from the pens of individual editors, no attribution of authorship is given.

Invented citations arguably form a special case in this respect, being recognized from the beginning as an undesirable but unavoidable form of compromise to be deployed only when vital pieces of evidence were absent. The treatment of recent popular sources (and the practice, if inconsistently, of using generic rather than specific designators) in *OED1* is, however, more problematic, resonant as it is of patterns of cultural shaping and a form of qualitative engagement which, *pace* Trench, was formally precluded in historical lexicography of this kind.

The *OED*'s own history, and the conflicted trajectories that this reveals, can, however, provide some evidence of how and why practices of this kind might have emerged. Murray's own interest in popular sources of evidence is, for example, undoubted. 'To the philologist & historian of language – newspaper quotations are the *most valuable* of current instances – they show how the language grows – they make visible to us the actual steps which for earlier stages we must reconstruct by inference', he made plain (MP/9/6/1882). 'I never read the leaders of the daily press without finding some word worth extracting', he declared, addressing the Philological Society in his own role as President (Murray 1880: 127). Frederick Furnivall, another early editor of the *OED*, likewise sent in tens of thousands of examples deriving from his own reading of the daily press, seeing these as vital contributions to the linguistic democratization that the *Dictionary* formally espoused.⁸

Nevertheless, the making of *OED1* also came to reflect, in complex ways, its own conditions of production in ways that impact, in particular, on the use and representation of evidence of this kind. While the Delegates of Oxford University Press agreed to underwrite the publication of the *Dictionary* (swayed, in part, by Max Müller's insistence on its philological and national merits),⁹ they also embarked on what could, at times, be a markedly interventionist

⁸ See, in particular, his *Circular to the Members of the Philological Society* (9 November 1862) and the mission statement this contains in relation to the projected *Dictionary*: 'We have set ourselves to form a National Portrait Gallery, not only of the worthies, but of all the members, of the race of English wordsFling our doors wide! all, all, not one, but all, must enter'.

⁹ See Friedrich Max Müller, *Observations by Professor Max Müller on the Lists of Readers and Books Read for the Proposed English Dictionary* (OED/B/3/1/2). As Müller stressed, 'in an

policy in relation to both its making and its contents. Their iterated resistance to the use of recent citational evidence from newspapers, and their equally committed preference for exemplification from canonical British texts, is telling. That ‘quotations illustrative of modern literary words’ are to ‘be taken from great authors, and those from newspapers to be as few as possible’ forms, for example, part of a detailed set of ‘Suggestions for Guidance’ made by the Delegates for the benefit of the *Dictionary* in 1883 (MP/18/4/1883). Similar is a further set of edicts from 1896 which specifies, among other desiderata, that ‘New words, which have appeared (generally in newspapers) during the last 15 years [are] to be simply ignored’ (MP/24/4/1896). ‘We should always get the best authority we can for a word or phrase’, as Henry Hucks Gibbs, another Delegate, had early urged Murray (MP/14/6/1882). ‘Hasty writing in newspapers is not the best authority, except when it is the *only* authority, and ... then it must be used’, he clarified in ways that can likewise shed light on the methodological compromises that the *Dictionary* came to exhibit, as well as the pattern of inconsistencies therein. General statements under a range of *OED1* entries that informed readers that e.g. *snap-shot* as a verb is ‘frequent in recent newspaper use’, or that compounds with *slum-* are plentiful ‘in recent newspaper usage’ serve, in similar ways, to supplant the testimony of evidence with that of the dictionary-maker, in ways which present other problems for the historical method and its intended rigour.

Appropriation and Dissent: Collection and the Historical Method in Andrew Clark’s ‘English Words in War-Time’

Evaluative practices of this kind, and their assimilation within the historical method of *OED1* (as well as their continuance in later iterations of the *Dictionary*) undeniably bring a certain critical unease. This was, however, at a number of points, clearly shared by earlier readers of the *Dictionary*, too. Andrew Clark’s independent (and co-terminous) project in historical lexicography, headed ‘English Words in War-Time’, carried out between 1914-1919, offers, in this respect, both a deliberately countercultural model of the *OED*, as well as an intriguing

undertaking of such magnitude, in which one might almost say the national honour of England is engaged, no effort should be spared to make the work as perfect as possible, and at all events no unworthy rival of the French Dictionary lately published by Littré, or the German Dictionary undertaken by the Brothers Grimm’.

exploration of the ways in which the historical method could be renegotiated in relation to on-going history and its representation in relation to popular discourse.

Clark's work on language was consciously experimental. Now archived in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (MS Eng. Misc.e.265–329), it exists in almost a hundred densely-documented manuscript notebooks. 'English Words in War-Time', alongside associated files and folders, might, *pace* Trench, also aim to create a 'historical monument' in which the 'history of the nation' is refracted in linguistic terms. But Clark's 'point of view' was, from the beginning, directed in very different ways such that canonical evidence is elided while texts marked by their own temporality and responsiveness to on-going events take centre-stage.

His familiarity, in both theory and practice, with the historical method is, in this context, particularly important. By no means a naïve linguistic observer, Clark had, when WW1 began in August 1914, almost two decades' experience as a volunteer reader (and critical reader) for *OED1*, as well as a range of philological and historical interests, and publications, of his own.¹⁰ His network of friends and acquaintances included Murray and Furnivall, as well as philologists such as Max Müller, alongside a number of the Delegates of the Press. Murray's private correspondence confirms Clark's value as a contributor to the *Dictionary*, as does his public praise of Clark's scrutiny of, and contributions to, *OED* draft entries and proof sheets in his role as critical reader.¹¹

¹⁰ See Lynda Mugglestone (forthcoming), *Words in War-Time. Andrew Clark and the Search for Meaning in WW1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). A preliminary account of Clark's work can be found in Lynda Mugglestone, 'Reference Works in Progress. Words in War-Time Project', *Dictionaries: Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America* 38.2 (2017), 89—105, while [wordsinwartime@wordpress.com](http://wordsinwartime.wordpress.com) presents some of the early findings. Thanks are due to the Leverhulme Trust for a Research Fellowship granted for this project.

¹¹ See e.g. James A. H. Murray, 'Preface to Volume II', *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. Vol. II. C (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893), vii; James A. H. Murray, 'Preface to Volume V', *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. Vol. V. H to K. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), vii. See also James A. H. Murray, 'Preface to Volume VII', *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. Vol. VII. O, P (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), [n.p.].

For Clark, behind the scenes knowledge of this kind served, however, to provide compelling insights into the challenges – and problems – of historical lexicography. A process of comparative reading with the *OED* in a set of early notebooks on language, headed ‘Notes on English Words’ (Bodl. MS. Eng.lang.e.5-8), undertaken by Clark as war approached, vividly illustrates, for example, his preliminary exploration of the different parameters which the dictionary-maker might observe. Clark’s neatly-inscribed ‘Not in N.E.D.’ already accompanies a range of entries. Older as well as recent texts prompt similar scrutiny. So, too, do clippings from the popular press. Evidence is carefully dated while linguistic accuracy (Clark stresses the importance of ‘the exact context, & the exact sense’) is prized, irrespective of the type of evidence at stake.

Ancillary research of this kind underpinned Clark’s decision, from the summer of 1914, to dedicate his endeavours to a self-standing enterprise in which both collection and evidence assume highly independent forms. The legacies of Murray’s ‘Directions to Readers’ – a twelve point set of instructions sent to all volunteers on the *Dictionary* project – would, in this, remain clear. ‘Make a quotation for every word that strikes you as rare, obsolete, old-fashioned, new, peculiar, or used in a peculiar way’, Murray had instructed: ‘Take special note of passages which show or imply that a word is either new or tentative, or needing explanation as old or archaic, and which thus help fix the date of its introduction or disuse’. In ‘English Words in War-Time’, Clark’s reading was, however, redirected to a social and geographical spectrum of newspapers, ranging from the *Scotsman* (‘the newspaper for ‘people in Scotland, and Scots out of their native country’, Clark notes), to say, the *Star*, described by Clark as ‘a low-class paper ... which contains very little real news, very few sensible articles, and a profusion of second-rate advertisements’) but which was nevertheless read carefully as a useful source of evidence. Other newspapers, such as the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Echo*, and the local press were scrutinized with similar intent, as was evidence from ephemera and advertising.

‘Original work, patient induction of facts, minute verification of evidence, are slow processes, and a work so characterized cannot be put together with scissors or paste’, Murray had proclaimed (1900: 48). Here, too, Clark would venture to disagree. In the metalanguage Clark appropriates from the *OED*, the individual pieces of written evidence, complete with specification of headword, grammatical information, source, and notes on meaning and use, are still referred to as ‘slips’. Nevertheless, these no longer exist on the discrete pieces of paper that

Murray's 'Directions' had envisaged – such as might, of course, easily be dispatched to Oxford for the purpose of the *Dictionary*. Instead, courtesy of scissors and paste, tens of thousands of clippings were assembled into a highly distinctive word-hoard, bounded by the events that came to make up WW1.

Clark's aim, as he stressed, 'to give a fairly full statement ... of *English Words* as they are found in common use during this war', and to provide 'a record of the struggle from a linguistic point of view'. Headed 'Newspaper cuttings for single words A-Z', his first volume was complete by mid-September 1914. Over a thousand entries cluster across its pages. Within a further two weeks, a second – containing 'Single words A-R in the later half of Sept. 1914' -- was also full. A third, finished in October 1914, records the remaining section of the alphabet before a new phase of collection began once more. As in his earlier notebooks, if popular sources dominate, they are meticulously – and uniformly, documented in relation to provenance, date, and page, while considerations of utility (Murray's 'functional value') are firmly re-orientated. An advertisement for e.g. Murray's Mellow Mixture (a brand of tobacco) is, for example, rendered a useful source for *to do one's bit*, already identified by Clark as a 'stock phrase' of war-time use. 'Do your bit at home -- see that the brave boys on land and sea are supplied with their favourite smoke -- Murray's Mellow. And -- smoke it yourself, you'll know then what pipe pleasure really is', states the accompanying evidence. The headword is underlined in line with Murray's 'Directions', while source information (p. 2 of the *Scotsman*, 18th August 1915) is carefully supplied. Meanwhile, the colloquial *Zeppelinitis* – a coinage, as Clark argued, profoundly resonant of shifting public anxieties in total war, is documented via the popular press as well as e.g. an advertising poster for the topical play 'Kiss Me, Sergeant' (performed at the Middlesex Theatre in London in 1915): 'The funny story with Music ... One of London's Biggest Successes AND THE BEST ANTIDOTE TO ZEPPELINITIS'.

An expanding – if notably time-bound -- material culture likewise prompts a range of entries such as *Zeppelin barometer* (a war-time device, still unrecorded in the *OED*, in which measurements of air pressure are linked to the probability of Zeppelin attack, and documented in clippings from the *Evening News* (4/2/1916)), *Zeppelin nighty* (a coinage prompted by the newly vexing matter of what to wear during an air raid, documented in the *Star* (27/9/1916)), or *war necklace* ('The coloured bead necklaces now so much in vogue as "war necklaces" owe their revival to Princess Mary, who originated this new industry in order to benefit various war funds',

documented in the *Daily Express* (27/1/1916)). Formal lexicography, then as now, reveals a committed silence of forms of this kind. Clark's model of short-term historical lexicography is, in contrast, marked both by its inclusivity as well as by his committed interest in recording words which, however transient they might prove, were seen as profoundly eloquent of historical process. Seen 'individually, these are of no value', he admitted; seen collectively, Clark stressed, 'they may ... give some idea of English ways at this time', as well as the language in which these were conveyed. 'No survey of the newspaper press of 1915 (or, in fact, of any recent year)' would, he added, be 'complete' without considerations of this kind.

Clark's determined extension of the historical method is widely visible in other aspects of the war-time 'inventory' he creates. That 'the N.E.D. excludes geographical adjectives and attributions from names of persons ... as I think too rigorously' prompts, for example, a different form of collective enterprise such that the vernacular geographies of the Western Front, or the expressivities which came to attend names such as *Louvain* or *Reims* were carefully recorded, alongside the transferred uses these exhibited.¹² The Delegates' resistance to non-canonical nonce words in *OED1* was countered in a similar way. While, as Murray had been advised, 'Words coined for the nonce can hardly be worth recording unless the writer's authority is so great as to lead to the permanent adoption of any word that he uses' (MP/2/4/1896), Clark did not agree. 'The war has given rise to a large number of nonce-words, not formerly in use but thought apposite to the present occasion', he observes in 'Words in War-Time' (XXX: 8). Nonce-words -- alongside a wide range of other new-forged terms -- provide, Clark argued, particularly important evidence in their responsiveness to the temporality, and the shifting parameters of experience. That the *Scotsman* chose, for example, to deploy the neologism *assassin cruiser* in reporting the German bombardment of English coastal towns in December 1914 rather than *battle-cruiser* (the latter, as Clark noted, also remained absent from *OED1*)¹³

¹² See *WW1 and the language of place: from Louvain to the Dardanelles* <https://wordsinwartime.wordpress.com/2015/06/24/ww1-and-the-language-of-place-from-louvain-to-the-dardanelles/>.

¹³ *Battle-cruiser* was added to the *OED* in the *Supplement* of 1933 edited by William Craigie and Charles Onions. Usage is traced from 1911 onward. 'Words in War-Time' provides the second citation. On the *OED*'s partial reading of Clark for the 1933 *Supplement*, see Lynda Mugglestone, 'Living history': Andrew Clark, the *OED* and the Language of the First World War'. In I. Tieken Boon van Ostade and Wim van der Wurff (eds.), *Current Issues in Late*

was likewise part of the historical record that should be made. ‘Not battle cruisers did these ships deserve to be called. Assassin cruisers was a better name. Perhaps Germans thought we would be frightened by attacks on defenceless seaside towns’, the *Scotsman* defiantly declared (19 December 1914). *Assassin* invoked a moral culpability, and delegitimization, that *battle-* lacked. ‘I have’, Clark makes plain, ‘generally included certain classes of words which N.E.D. deliberately excluded’. What is deemed representative can itself be open to change. Collections can be made in different ways.

Compounds, often forcibly constrained, as we have seen, in the making of *OED1*, were subject to similarly liberal rethinking. ‘The smaller daily papers’, as Clark early confirmed, contain ‘a great number of compound-nouns and adjectives, of a type almost unknown in earlier English writing; and a great number of words formed by suffixing ordinary terminations, of new constructions’. *Hopeless-looking*, *lop-wheeled*, *parchment-faced*, *sallow-skinned*, *sore-backed*, and *stubby-bearded* were, for example, all documented from a single article in the *Daily Express* on 9 April 1915. A clutch of other forms across Clark’s archive such as *death-tortured*, *bullet-ploughed*, *blood-spattered*, *grave-studded*, *hell-swept*, and *fire-swept* evocatively document *no-man’s land* – another compound that was subject to its own transformative history across the war.¹⁴ While it is Old English that, as for Kay and Allen (2015: 8), is habitually acknowledged as the high point of compounding, this is, we might note, a deduction based on the comprehensive records of relevant forms that exist for earlier periods of this kind. As the historical methods of *OED1* affirm, we do not know how many compounds characterise late modern English. Seen in this light, while Clark’s evidence remains, of necessity, incomplete, it also offers interesting

Modern English. Peter Lang. 2009, 229-249. See *battle-cruiser* (n.). *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2018. Web. 31 January 2019.

¹⁴ In *OED1*, *no man’s land* appeared as a combinatory form under the lemma *no man* (1907). Organising principles of this kind prompted other forms of dissent in Clark’s engagement with language as a historical form. As he noted in his very first volume of ‘English Words in War-Time’, ‘In my own idea, a great many of the compound forms, which in N.E.D. are crowded together at the end of headwords & by no means easy to find, are of sufficient frequency & importance to deserve separate record, explanation, and illustrative quotations in their own alphabetical place’.

pointers for the ways in which compounding as historical process in early twentieth-century English might productively be reassessed.

This article allows, of course, merely a snapshot of Clark's vast work on war-time discourse to be presented, alongside the critical departures in the role and implementation of the historical method that he sought to make. His interest in its potential for creative (but rigorous) appropriation in relation to sources often marginalized or under-represented in *OED1* is, however, plain. His work is, as such, both innovative and intertextual, providing an 'inventory' of war-time use in which canonical voices are suppressed and in which the ordinary and vernacular are given precedence, alongside a determined focus on aspects of change and variation. Clark's awareness of the forms of cultural privileging that, as we have seen, intervene in the making of *OED1*, and the narratives of the past that it provides, remains, in this, a key aspect; he both offers, and implements, a critical restitution for the compromised methods he saw in evidence, while providing a meticulous documentation of the popular sources he preferred. News discourse, just as Murray had argued, would indeed prove an unparalleled resource for examining the 'actual steps' by which new forms of use emerge. The fact that Clark's collective principles take place within the autonomy of a private manuscript text has, of course, its own significance in this respect, enabling him to document a micro-history of usage irrespective of the potential longevity of the forms he chose to include, or the amount of space they might require. All historical lexicography, as Michael Adams (2018: 4) has recently observed, is, by definition, always 'a form of memory about ... language'. For Clark, however, it was the nature of what we remember – and, perhaps more importantly, what we might forget if a meticulous record is not made – that was, across 'Words in War-Time', to be made a spur to an extraordinary collective venture.

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