

Chapter 13. 'Goose-quill or Gander's?': Female writers in Johnson's *Dictionary*

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Published in Freya Johnston and Lynda Mugglestone (eds.), *Samuel Johnson: The Arc of the Pendulum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 120-39. Author's pre-print copy

In his discussion of *The Rambler* (*Works* 6.100-4), Hazlitt's characterization of their author is decidedly paradoxical. On the one hand, he accuses Johnson of treating all matters with a homogeneity of style that flattens differences ('it reduces all things to the same artificial and unmeaning level [and] destroys all shades of difference'); on the other, Hazlitt's image of 'the oscillation of the pendulum' and his account of Johnson as a 'balance-master' figure him dealing with binary opposites but unable to reconcile them.

To some extent, this inconsistency may be related back to Hazlitt himself. At the same time, however, it points revealingly to unresolved issues and contradictions in Johnson and his literary projects, a trait that can also be detected in Johnson's attitude towards women writers. A comparable series of paradoxes characterizes eighteenth-century attitudes to women's writing and women's education more widely. During the course of a century in which the professional woman writer became recognized as a social and economic phenomenon, female authorship and learning remained controversial – so that well into the nineteenth century Hazlitt himself declared 'I have an utter

aversion to *blue-stockings*. I do not care a fig for any woman that knows even what *an author* means' (*Works* 8.236).

Johnson's *Dictionary*, first published in 1755, is an illuminating focal point for some of these paradoxical positions, in relation both to Johnson himself and to his age. It has been established beyond doubt that 'Johnson...always encouraged women writers. No influential author of the century gave them more practical advice or helped them more to publish,' and his patronage was crucial in helping female writers become better accepted as respectable professionals over this period.ⁱ Yet he printed a proportionally tiny number of quotations from female writers in the *Dictionary*. This might initially seem unremarkable – after all, Johnson's stated 'purpose' was to 'admit no testimony of living authours' into his *Dictionary*, and he 'studiously endeavored to collect [quotations] from the writers before the restoration' – a period largely devoid of recognized female writers – whose works he regarded 'as the *wells of English undefiled*' (*Yale* XVIII. 95). Notwithstanding such an objection, however, this chapter seeks to explore Johnson's under-representation of female quotation sources in his dictionary, with the aim of showing that their absence from his record of the language is more interesting and less obvious than might at first be thought.

It is clear that many of Johnson's contemporaries (and near-contemporaries) thought that women's use of language was distinctive and notable. In his letter published in *The World* on 28 November 1754, Lord Chesterfield gave some specific advice to Johnson on female diction, as an issue

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to which perhaps he may not have given all the necessary attention. I mean the genteeler part of our language, which owes both it's rise and progress to my fair countrywomen, whose natural turn is more to the copiousness, than to the correction of diction. I would not advise him to be rash enough to proscribe any of those happy redundancies, and luxuriances of expression, with which they have enlarged our language.ⁱⁱ

These comments on the profusion and redundancy of women's language are evidently something of a joke, one that Chesterfield continues to make in a second letter (5 December 1754). Here he again emphasizes the distinctiveness of female language use, in terms of praise so fulsome that they undo themselves: 'Language is indisputably the more immediate province of the fair sex: there they shine, there they excell'.ⁱⁱⁱ After enlarging on the sort of language which women write, Chesterfield comments specifically on female poetry: 'When this happy copiousness flows, as it often does, into gentle numbers, good Gods! how is the poetical diction enriched, and the poetical licence extended!'

But all this raises a ticklish question for Johnson, Chesterfield says. Should he put these distinctive female locutions ('hastily begot', and 'ow[ing] their birth to the incontinency of female eloquence') into his dictionary or not? If he leaves them out, he will get into trouble with 'the ladies'; if he puts them in, he will get into trouble with 'the learned part of his readers', i.e. the men. Unfortunately, Chesterfield provides no examples of the ways in which women have enlarged

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‘poetical diction’, and only three examples of female oral usage (or in his own terms, what he hears when he sees ‘a pretty mouth opening to speak’): *flirtation*, *to fuzz* (‘dealing twice...with same pack of cards’), and *vastly* in the sense ‘very’, as used to describe a snuffbox that is ‘vastly pretty’ because ‘vastly small’.

How did Johnson respond to Chesterfield’s advice, and in particular to the implication that women’s poetry differed from men’s? Only one of the entries for Chesterfield’s three words is identified in his *Dictionary* as specifically female: *flirtation* (defined as ‘a quick sprightly motion’), which is said to be ‘a cant word among women’ – though a quotation from Pope is used to illustrate this usage.^{iv} Johnson also ignores the sexual sense implied by Chesterfield, which as Chesterfield mentions is found in Cibber – attributed to a female character. *Fuzz* in Chesterfield’s sense is not recorded, while *vastly* is illustrated with quotations from male authors rather than female, and the loose use of the term is not mentioned (and as it happens, elsewhere Chesterfield identifies *vastly* as typical of vulgar male speech).^v Nevertheless, Johnson (who was later to warn in *Idler* 77 (*Yale* II.240) against ‘female phrases and fashionable barbarisms’, clearly associating women with uncontrolled or inappropriate language use) does designate a number of other usages as specifically female and by implication undesirable. Examples include *horrid* to mean ‘Shocking; offensive; unpleasing’, identified as a sense occurring ‘in womens cant’ – again illustrated from Pope, who puts the word in Belinda’s friend Thalestris’s mouth in *Rape of the Lock* (1714) (‘Already I your tears survey, Already hear the horrid things they say’); *frightful*, ‘A cant word among women for any thing unpleasing’, not supported

with a quotation; *frightfully* (sense 2), ‘a woman’s word’, with a quotation from Swift’s satiric impersonation of a woman in his ‘Journal of a Modern Lady’ (1729) (“Then to her glass; and Betty, pray,/Don’t I look frightfully today?”); and *odious* (sense 4, only in the fourth edition of the *Dictionary*), ‘A word expressive of disgust: used by women’, again quoted from a male poet mocking a female character (‘Green fields, and shady groves, and crystal springs,/And larks, and nightingales, are odious things’, a view attributed to ‘Fulvia’ in Edward Young’s ‘Satire V on Women’ (1726)). These definitions suggest that Johnson concurs with Chesterfield’s view that distinctive, and inferior, female modes of utterance exist (if not in these instances associated with poetry), although his actual evidence on such locutions, when supplied, is filtered through quotations from male sources ventriloquizing women, not female ones.

This linguistic failure (if it is not too harsh, and anachronistic, to judge it as such) to illustrate female locutions from female sources is an interesting one, since Johnson’s use of quotations is otherwise – in accord with Hazlitt’s pendulum swing – one of the most significant linguistic features of the *Dictionary*. Hazlitt conceded that Johnson was not ‘a man without originality’ (*Works* 6.100), but where lexicography was concerned he broke new ground, being the first monolingual English dictionary-maker to base his definitions on real examples of language use and thus playing a significant role in the evolution of English lexicography; an achievement duly recognized by his greatest successor, the chief editor of the *OED* James Murray, who described how his innovative method (carried over into the *OED*) ‘involved and rendered possible’

a much greater awareness of the range of meanings and nuances a word might convey.^{vi} But Johnson's quotations have more than a linguistic function in his dictionary: they also tell a cultural story which lies behind the words and the *Dictionary* itself. The content and provenance of the *Dictionary's* quotations are significant carriers of non-linguistic information, so that the meaning of the work is constructed partly through Johnson's choice as to *who* to quote as linguistic evidence, and partly through the views (however de-contextualized from its original source) communicated by their utterances: as Johnson rightly said in the *Plan*, 'the credit of every part of this work must depend' on the 'authorities' or quotations (*Yale XVIII.55*) .

Now that the *Dictionary* is searchable in electronic form (in Anne McDermott's edition for Cambridge University Press), it has been calculated that seven sources alone are responsible for nearly half the quotations in the *Dictionary*: Shakespeare, Dryden, Milton, Bacon, the Bible, Addison, and Pope; while nineteen authors account for nearly 70% of the total.^{vii} As commentators have noted, 'By selecting the domain of research, Johnson limited both the kind of English and the kind of knowledge his book could contain', and 'the very act of selecting a corpus such as Johnson's "wells of English undefiled" is potentially prescriptive'.^{viii} In explaining that the quotations were the central plank of his dictionary, Johnson justified his choice of which authors to cite by declaring that he would follow the list already drawn up by Pope. Unsurprisingly, none of these was female.^{ix} Although in the event Johnson spread himself much more widely, this initial list was clearly influential on him, and Pope himself, extensively

quoted in the *Dictionary*, was characteristically responsible for some of its most misogynist material, e.g. ‘Nothing so true than as you once let fall,/Most women have no characters at all’ (quoted twice, in slightly different forms, in the entries for both *at* and *character*); ‘Men, some to pleasure, some to business take, /But every woman is at heart a rake’ (also quoted twice, under *heart* and *rake*); ‘O woman! woman! when to ill thy mind/ Is bent, all hell contains no fouler fiend’ (quoted under *fiend*).

Such misogyny is found on a wider scale throughout the *Dictionary*’s quotations and is in line with prevailing cultural assumptions both of the time and of the centuries before and after: that women are morally and intellectually weak and certainly weaker than men, that they are fickle and have poor judgement, and so on.^x Where language in particular is concerned, Johnson chooses some quotations that reflect standard folk-linguistic notions about women’s talkativeness: under *leaky*, for example, he prints, from L’Estrange, ‘Women are so leaky, that I have hardly met with one that could not hold her breath longer than she could keep a secret’; under *taciturnity* he chooses Donne’s ‘Some women have some taciturnity, Some nunneries some grains of chastity’. Johnson also prints a number of quotations directly militating against the participation of women in public literary activity and in learned pursuits (thus qualifying as eligible quotation sources), supporting the commonplace assumption that such unnatural behavior went hand in hand with a neglect of household duties and of proper female conduct: e.g. the noun *turn* is illustrated with ‘Female virtues are of a domestick turn. The family is the proper province

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for private women to shine in' (Addison), and *talkativeness* is supported by Swift's 'Learned women have lost all credit by their impertinent talkativeness and conceit'.

It may not seem surprising, therefore, that out of the 114,000-odd quotations in the *Dictionary*, fewer than thirty, by my count, are from female authors: one each from Jane Barker, Elizabeth Carter, and Hester Mulso, two from Jane Collier, and a remarkable nineteen from Charlotte Lennox; there is probably a handful more.^{xi}

But this striking imbalance can be viewed in two ways. On the one hand, as already stated, it reflects the predominant culture of the time. Much contemporary evidence indicates that both women and men felt it was not only indecorous but also immoral for women to be published authors or playwrights – and notably some famous published women did lead indecorous lives (e.g. Aphra Behn or Delarivier Manley). Moreover, Johnson was seeking to record not 'fugitive cant' – the ephemeral colloquial language of the day, whether uttered by men or women – but (as we have seen) the '*wells...undefiled*' of pre-Restoration English. He wished, for the pedagogical and aesthetic reasons outlined in his *Plan*, to 'contribute to the preservation of ancient, and the improvement of modern writers' (*Yale XVIII.55*), and he did this by quoting heavily from established literary masters of the past. As Chesterfield put it in his first letter to *The World*, English contrasts with French in that the French language spread over Europe as a result of military conquest: 'Whereas our language has made it's way singly by it's own weight and merit, under the conduct of those great

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leaders, Shakespear, Bacon, Milton, Locke, Newton, Swift, Pope, Addison, &c. A nobler sort of conquest, and a far more glorious triumph, since graced by none but willing captives!'.^{xii} Although this may be nonsense as far as linguistic and literary history in Europe is concerned, it shows the strength of the view that great writers represent the English language – that in some way they are the English language. Similar views can be found centuries later, whether voiced by cultural commentators like J. H. Newman, or linguists like George Marsh who helped contribute to the *OED*, or indeed by the *OED* itself, whose editor James Murray identified 'all the great English writers of all ages' as the first port of call for that great dictionary's stock of over five million quotations.^{xiii} Women writers almost never occur in early lists of great writers, such as Chesterfield's, and have been comparatively little treated in most literary histories up to the present day. In addition, throughout print history there have been far fewer female than male authors published (though the number rose sharply over the eighteenth century).^{xiv}

Tracing the swing of Hazlitt's pendulum, however, one can look at the matter differently. Notwithstanding his stated intention to concentrate on pre-Restoration sources, Johnson quoted in large numbers from post-1660 writers, notably Dryden (c.11,400 quotations), Addison (c.4,400 quotations), Pope (c.4,000) and Swift (c.3,200).^{xv} These men were active over the very period in which women writers established a well-recognized role in public literary life -- a role attested both by the growing abundance of their published work and by the ubiquitous discussions in essays, periodicals, books, collections of poetry,

and other sources, by men and women alike, of the propriety and desirability of women appearing in print. The fact that female authorship was being debated so avidly means, of course, that lots of women engaged in it (as Chesterfield effectively complains). Certainly post-Restoration women had long been hailed as capable of producing writing as good as that by men, both aesthetically and intellectually – the ‘matchless Orinda’ Katherine Philips (1632-44), lauded by Vaughan and Cowley among others, Mary Astell (1666-1731), Anne Finch (1661-1720), Jane Barker (c.1652-1732), Catherine Trotter Cockburn (c.1674-1749), and their many contemporaries, who between them covered all the genres most liberally represented in Johnson’s *Dictionary*: poetry, plays, learned and philosophical works, and translations. Repeatedly, both male and female writers maintained that equal value might be attached to writers of both genders, as typified in the Preface to *Poems by Eminent Ladies*, an anthology published the same year as the *Dictionary* by Johnson’s friends George Colman and Bonnell Thornton. These volumes (reprinted in 1757 and issued in revised editions in 1773 and c.1785) were claimed by its editors as ‘a standing proof that great abilities are not confined to the men, and that genius often glows with equal warmth, and perhaps with more delicacy, in the breast of a female’, with many of their excerpted authors having been ‘particularly distinguished by the most lavish encomiums either from Cowley, Dryden, Roscommon, Creech, Pope, or Swift’.^{xvi} Other contemporary examples of anthologies, discussions and advocacy of women writers include Robert Dodsley’s much reprinted *Collection of Poems by Several Hands* (first published 1748), which contained a number of examples

of works by women, John Duncombe's poem *The Femiuiad* (1754), and George Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies...Celebrated for their Writings* (1752).^{xvii}

Such contextual evidence makes the absence of female sources from Johnson's *Dictionary* more notable. When one looks at a page of Johnson – at all but a handful of pages of Johnson – one encounters a barrage of male authorities, but no female ones. For the latter part of the period treated by the *Dictionary*, this is not an accurate reflection of the use of language by culturally significant writers: both linguistically and culturally speaking, Johnson cut out a significant portion of his potential sources. In doing so, incidentally, he ignored an alternative folk-linguistic view, that women and language were not only strongly but benignly linked. Discernible in Chesterfield's satirically phrased remarks as already quoted (e.g. on language as 'indisputably the more immediate province of the fair sex'), this view is found in the epigraph to one of the most remarkable works of scholarship to have been published in the previous fifty years, Elizabeth Elstob's 1715 grammar of Anglo-Saxon, whose title page bore a letter from the learned encyclopedist George Hickes identifying the special appropriateness to women of literary and linguistic study: 'Our Earthly Possessions are truly enough called a PATRIMONY, as derived to us by the Industry of our FATHERS; but the Language that we speak is our MOTHER-TONGUE; And who so proper to play the Critick in this as the FEMALES'.^{xviii}

Johnson's neglect of female sources is additionally notable in the light of non-dictionary evidence on his relationships with women writers and his views on their work. It is true that in 1753, while working on the *Dictionary*, he wrote

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in *Adventurer* 115 that ‘In former times, the pen, like the sword, was considered as consigned by nature to the hands of men...the revolution of years has now produced a generation of Amazons of the pen, who with the spirit of their predecessors have set masculine tyranny at defiance’, and that *Amazon* was a double-edged term to apply to women (*Yale* II.457-8).^{xix} But, as noted at the start of this chapter, Johnson’s personal and professional connections with female authors made an important contribution to literary history. Many of these connections (e.g. with Frances Burney and Hester Thrale) flourished after the *Dictionary* was published, but there is good evidence of Johnson’s respect and regard for female writerly achievements more or less contemporary with the *Dictionary* too – notably those of Charlotte Lennox. Such regard might, one would have thought, have caused Johnson to be interested in quoting from their post-Restoration predecessors.^{xx} As Isobel Grundy has pointed out, the prominent writer Elizabeth Singer Rowe (d. 1737) was in 1756 publicly ranked by Johnson with Isaac Watts (who himself recognized the ‘superior sweetness’ of her muse), though Johnson did not repeat the pairing when he asked his publishers’ permission to include Watts in the *Lives of the Poets*. In Grundy’s words, ‘It is tantalizing to think what might have been the effects on subsequent literary history and even on the course of literature if Johnson’s *Lives* had included even one woman!’ – or, one might add, if he had quoted more from female authors in his *Dictionary*. As Grundy points out, ‘he made no move, however, either by direct or indirect means to revise the canon;’ and the same applies to his choice of quotation sources for the *Dictionary*.^{xxi}

Johnson's reluctance to cite texts written by women appears striking for at least one further reason, too. As in the case of Watts, who edited Rowe's work as well as admiring it, some of the post-Restoration male writers most lavishly quoted in the *Dictionary* were deeply intermeshed, in both their literary and their social lives, with female writers who were not only highly erudite, intelligent, and accomplished, but also publically influential.^{xxii} Pope's relationship with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, in both its benign and its vituperative phases, is an outstanding example of this phenomenon (and we may note in passing that Johnson later singled out Montagu's *Letters* as the only book he read through, 'in his whole life', 'which he did not consider as obligatory').^{xxiii} 'Verses to the Lady Mary Wortley Montagu', persistently attributed to Pope in their many eighteenth-century printings, wittily exhibit the profound ambivalence with which learned male writers regarded their female colleagues, combining (in accord with Hazlitt's oscillating pendulum) admiration for their learning with a strong sense of its primal transgression:

But if the First *Eve*,
 Hard Doom did receive,
 When only *One Apple* had she,
 What Punishment New,
 Shall be found out for You,

Who Tasting, have rob'd the *whole Tree*^{xxiv}

In the light of Hazlitt's account, Johnson can on occasion be seen to hold himself in the centre of this pendulum swing between admiration and derogation, as when (in a discussion of strife in marriage in *The Rambler* -- a periodical full of depictions of women), he said he 'endeavoured to divest my heart of all partiality, and place myself as a kind of neutral being between the sexes', a phrase anticipating Hazlitt's term 'balance-master' (*Yale* II.98). At other times, he seems to be at one end or other of the oscillating extreme. He was capable of showing exaggerated regard for women in relation to men ('Men know that women are an overmatch for them ... If they did not think so, they never could be afraid of women knowing as much as themselves', *Life* V.226), yet he could also deny women's ability to act as intellectual equals – whether in the notorious remark on women's preaching ('like a dog's walking on his hinder legs' (*Life* I.463) or in admitting them as quotation sources for his *Dictionary*.

All this makes one turn with some interest to the female-authored quotations Johnson actually did print (see accompanying Table on p.**). The first question, evidently, is why he should so strikingly have favoured Lennox. Johnson himself explained that that he quoted from living authors only 'when some performance of uncommon excellence excited my veneration, when my memory supplied me, from late books, with an example that was wanting, or when my heart, in the tenderness of friendship, solicited admission for a favourite name' (*Yale* XVIII.95).^{xxv} Friendship must have counted for something where Lennox, Carter, and Mulso were concerned – and so perhaps did Lennox's praise of Johnson in the *Female Quixote* as 'the greatest genius in the present

age', in a chapter once suggested to have been written by Johnson himself.^{xxvi} Looking at the quotations themselves, however, one sees that eight of those from *Shakespear Illustrated* are distinctive for their content, and may therefore have additionally qualified as a 'performance of uncommon excellence'. Under *sally*, *virtue*, and *wreath*, Johnson picks three quotations, only two pages apart, from Lennox's discussion of Shakespeare's originality and ingenuity in presenting the character of Prince Henry; under *unravel* and *unnecessary* we learn about Shakespeare's handling of plot; under *wherever* and *wonderful*, Shakespeare's art is compared with that of the novelist; while under *uncle* – for which entry Lennox's is the only quotation – Johnson chooses a striking remark on Hamlet's motivation in killing Claudius. All this sheds a new light on his views of *Shakespear Illustrated*, a work for which (as for the *Female Quixote*) he wrote the Dedication.^{xxvii}

'Uncommon excellence' may also explain the origin of the Mulso quotation. An anonymous reviewer tells us that 'Dr Johnson, on reading this ode ['To Stella', from which Johnson imperfectly quotes] several years ago in MS. declared that "he never before had any opinion of female poetry;" and, though a copy was refused him, having retained great part of it by memory, soon after quoted the fourth stanza in his Dictionary, to exemplify the meaning of the word *Quatrain*, with the name of *Mrs. Mulso* annexed to it, a name then unknown to the literary world.'^{xxviii} This anecdote is reinforced by Samuel Richardson's report to Elizabeth Carter, on 2 October 1753, that Johnson had '*rambled* thither [to Richardson's house in Fulham] principally on her [Mulso's] account. He is in love

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with her. And extremely fond of her verses to Stella. Most magnificently does he express himself of them'.^{xxix} Johnson similarly admired Carter (quoted s.v. *proportion*) herself: while exchanging Greek epigrams with her in 1738 he told Edward Cave, 'She ought to be celebrated in as many different Languages as Lewis le Grand' (*Letters* 1.17).

Biographical details aside, none of Johnson's quotations from female authors (other than those from Lennox already discussed) appears particularly remarkable either for use of language or for sentiments expressed. This is true even of the four or five which touch on issues of gender: it is difficult to see anything distinctive, for the period, about the notion that women should be angels of the household (s.v. *life*), that a female face might be well proportioned (s.v. *proportion*), that husbands may in some ironically nuanced way correct their wives (*marital*), that a woman may *prink* in front of the glass, or (in the only quotation to mention language, under *volubility*) be loquacious enough to draw 'a gentle reprimand' from a father. More significant may be that the fact that none of the entries concerned begins with a letter occurring in the early part of the alphabet: it is only from *l* onwards that Johnson cites female authors. Given the dates of publication of the Lennox and Collier works concerned, it is tempting to think that Johnson had these texts to hand when he was working on the relevant parts of the *Dictionary*.

One can speculate why Johnson should have changed his citation policy (however minimally) half-way through the alphabet, what it was about *The Female Quixote* and *Shakespear Illustrated* that especially took his fancy –

perhaps that both, in their different ways, constitute works of literary criticism? – or indeed why Collier and Lennox should have been cited by the titles of their works rather than their names.

We can also ask whether the *Dictionary* would have been significantly different if Johnson had quoted from female sources more extensively. Both he and Chesterfield believed that women's use of language was demonstrably different from that of men, and it is not difficult to find the same view expressed by others too, for example, Robert Gould: 'Succeeding Times will see the Difference plain,/And wonder at a Style so loose and vain'.^{xxx} Taking 'Style' to refer to content, we can certainly conjecture that the views communicated by the quotations – the *Dictionary's* cultural hinterland – might have been more varied and less misogynistic if Johnson had quoted texts written by women. For instance, under *stickler*, to mean 'An obstinate contender about any thing', Johnson quotes Addison: 'The inferior tribe of common women have, in most reigns, been the professed sticklers for such as have acted against the true interest of the nation'. Instead, Johnson could have quoted from the 'Essay in Defence of the Female Sex', written by a woman, probably Judith Drake, in 1696: 'Our Company [i.e. women] is generally by our Adversaries represented as unprofitable and irksome to Men of Sense, and by some of the more vehement Sticklers against us, as Criminal'.^{xxxi} As its title implies, this essay is full of sentiments arguing women's equality with men, and Johnson could have drawn widely on such remarks in many other female-authored texts.

At first glance, it might seem that quoting female-authored texts would have affected Johnson's record of vocabulary too. Drake provides several examples of words or senses not included in the *Dictionary*: for instance *stinkpot* to mean 'naval bomb', not treated by Johnson, and a figurative sense of 'artillery' where Johnson has only literal illustrations:

we have a sort of ungenerous Adversaries [i.e. men], that deal more in Scandal than Argument, and when they can't hurt us with their Weapons, endeavour to annoy us with Stink-pots. Let us see therefore, Madam, whether we can't beat them from their own Ammunition, and turn their own Artillery upon them. (58-9)

Johnson's single quotation for *stinkpot* is from Gabriel Harvey (1665), referring to a disinfectant with an unpleasant smell – 'The air may be purified by fires of pitch-barrels, especially in close places, by burning of stinkpots' – but, given her martial imagery, Drake's meaning is clearly that of *OED* sense 2, dated to 1669: 'A hand-missile charged with combustibles emitting a suffocating smoke, used in boarding a ship for effecting a diversion while the assailants gain the deck'. As it happens, Drake's figurative use of *stinkpot* antedates by 42 years the first instance recorded in *OED* (from Warburton), and it is easy to find many more such examples of words and senses, missed both by Johnson and the *OED*, in other texts written by women (Jane Barker is a good source).^{xxxii}

But a moment's reflection, together with further reading in both dictionaries and primary texts, will confirm what is self-evident in the cases of *stink-pot* and *artillery*: one cannot assume that words and senses found in female authors, but unrecorded by Johnson, constitute a specific female vocabulary that women used and men didn't. Thus *stink-pot* is in Swift, and *artillery* is used metaphorically by Cowley (to characterise Katherine Philips's reworking of male poetic traditions, as it happens).^{xxxiii} One cannot therefore say that by limiting himself to male sources, Johnson omitted a distinctive category of language that he might otherwise have included: it is just as easy to find words and senses, missing from both Johnson and the *OED*, in male-authored texts too. Drake herself discusses this point, and was almost certainly correct to respond as she did, to detractors such as Gould, that 'they will no more be able to discern a Man's Style from a Woman's, than they can tell whether this was written with a Goose-Quill or a Gander's'.^{xxxiv}

So in confining himself to male quotation sources Johnson did not necessarily, by that act alone, reduce the lexical scope of his *Dictionary*. He did, however, limit its cultural perspective. He misrepresented the ratio, male to female, of linguistic and cultural endeavor from 1660 onwards, when the number of women writing and publishing began to rise steeply, and in doing so he may be thought to be guilty of the 'timidity' of which Hazlitt accuses him ('no advance is made by his writings in any sentiment, or mode of reasoning' (*Works* 6.102)).

Over the nineteenth century the productivity, visibility, and respectability of women writers continued to increase (if not their eligibility to be considered great writers on a par with men), and the next great English dictionary, the *OED*, admitted a number of them into its ranks, including some from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries: notably Behn, Manley, and Centlivre, each cited around 200 times (the *OED* favoured female dramatists and prose writers over poets, despite Chesterfield's testimony on the abundance of female poetic diction). But the imbalance between male and female sources in the *OED*, though less absolute than in Johnson, remains stark. Many female authors, though well-known in their day, are quoted in tiny numbers or not at all, while Pope, Johnson, Dickens, Tennyson and other major male authors of the past are each cited under thousands of entries.^{xxxv}

Owing to the *OED*'s infinitely more comprehensive and authoritative treatment of the history of the language – and its lack of a specified single author, working over an identifiable period in time – this later dictionary gives the misleading impression that its quotation sources fairly represent literary and linguistic culture as far as gender is concerned. By contrast, any student of the eighteenth century will or should be aware that Johnson's *Dictionary*, magnificent as it is, constitutes a very partial record. This is not least because we know, from critics such as Hazlitt, that it is the work of a complex individual driven by many contrary influences.

ⁱ Laurence Lipking, *Samuel Johnson: the Life of an Author* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), 60, citing Isobel Grundy, 'Samuel Johnson as Patron of Women', *Age of Johnson* 1 (1987): 59-77, and James Basker, 'Myth upon Myth: Johnson, Gender, and the Misogyny Question', *Age of Johnson* 8 (1997): 175-87.

ⁱⁱ *The World* No.100 (28 November 1754), 603.

ⁱⁱⁱ *The World* No.101 (28 November 1754), 606.

^{iv} Unless otherwise noted, all definitions and quotations discussed are in both first and fourth editions of Johnson's *Dictionary*.

^v David Roberts (ed.) *Lord Chesterfield's Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), September 27 o.s. 1749, 161-5.

^{vi} James A. H. Murray, *The Evolution of Lexicography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), 38-9. For the use of quotations in earlier dictionaries, see Paul Korshin, 'Johnson and the Renaissance Dictionary', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 35 (1974), 300-12.

^{vii} Rüdiger Schreyer, 'Illustrations of Authority: Quotations in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*', *Lexicographica*, 16, 67.

^{viii} Robert De Maria, 'Johnson's Dictionary', in Gregory Clingham, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Samuel Johnson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 90; Geoffrey Barnbrook, 'Johnson the Prescriptivist?', in Jack Lynch and Anne McDermott, ed., *Anniversary Essays on Johnson's Dictionary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 96.

^{ix} They include Bacon, Hooker, Dryden, L'Estrange, Locke, Addison, Swift, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, all among Johnson's most quoted authors. See Joseph Spence, in James M. Osborne, ed., *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), I §389-90.

^x See e.g. Felicity Nussbaum, *The Brink of All We Hate: English Satires on Women, 1660-1750* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), Robert Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850* (London: Longman, 1998), and cf. Jennifer Coates, *Women, Men and Language* (Harlow: Longman, 2004), chapter 1; also (seen at proof stage by kind permission of the author) Giovanni Iammartino, 'Words by women, words on women in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*', in John Considine, ed., *Adventuring in Dictionaries: New Studies in the History of Lexicography* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 94-125.

^{xi} Anne McDermott ('Johnson's "Dictionary" and the Canon: Authors and Authority,' *The Yearbook of English Studies* 28 (1998), 62 n64), states that Johnson includes quotations from Catherine Cockburn and Margaret Cavendish too; I have been unable to identify these in electronic searches of her edition.

^{xii} *The World* 100 (28 November 1754), 602-3).

^{xiii} See further Charlotte Brewer, 'The Use of Literary Quotations in the *OED*', *Review of English Studies* 61 (2010), 93-125.

^{xiv} See Charlotte Brewer, "'Happy Copiousness"? *OED*'s recording of female authors of the eighteenth century', *Review of English Studies* (forthcoming).

^{xv} Figures derived from Schreyer, 'Illustrations', 67.

^{xvi} Preface, iii; the first edition anthologises eighteen well-known female poets, including Elizabeth Carter (cited by Johnson in his *Dictionary*).

^{xvii} Dodsley anthologised a total of 130 writers of whom ten were women (figures drawn from Robert Dodsley and Michael F. Suarez, ed., *A Collection of Poems by Several Hands* (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1997), 1: Introduction).

^{xviii} *The Rudiments of Grammar for the English-Saxon Tongue* (London: W. Bowyer, 1715).

^{xix} As amply documented by Nussbaum, *Brink of All We Hate*, 44-50.

^{xx} See Grundy, 'Johnson as Patron of Women', 62ff; Duncan Isles, 'The Lennox Collection', *Harvard Library Bulletin* 18 (1970), 317-44; 19 (1971) 36-60, 165-86, 416-35; and (for the account of the party Johnson threw for Lennox on the publication of her first novel) John Hawkins, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D* (Dublin: Chamberlain, Colles etc, 1787), 254.

^{xxi} Grundy, 'Johnson as Patron of Women', 66; Isaac Watts, 'To Mrs Elizabeth Singer, on her divine poems', *The Miscellaneous Works...of Mrs Elizabeth Rowe* (London: R. Hett and R. Dodsley, 1739), I, cxviii.

^{xxii} Schreyer's figures indicate that Watts is quoted just under 1,000 times in the *Dictionary*.

^{xxiii} Reported by Hester Lynch Piozzi, *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson* (Dublin, 1786), 259 – though Johnson similarly distinguished 'Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe, and the Pilgrim's Progress' (*ibid*, 281) as well as Burton's *Anatomy* and Fielding's *Amelia*; see Robert DeMaria, *Samuel Johnson and the Life of Reading* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 181-2.

^{xxiv} Quoted from *A New Miscellany of Original Poems* (London, T. Jauncy, 1720), 274, in which they are attributed to Pope.

^{xxv} Allen Walker Read, 'The Contemporary Quotations in Johnson's Dictionary', *English Literary History*, 2 (1935), 246-51, identifies the Mulso quotation (and its discussion in the *Gentleman's Magazine*), five of the Lennox ones, and provides information on a number of others (all male).

^{xxvi} See Margaret Anne Doody (ed.) *The Female Quixote* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1989), 414-5, 419-22.

^{xxvii} Allen T. Hazen, *Samuel Johnson's Prefaces & Dedications* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, Oxford University Press, 1937), 104-10, 94-98.

^{xxviii} *Gentleman's Magazine* 45 (1775), 88; author unidentified in James M. Kuist's *Attributions of Authorship* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

^{xxix} Quoted James L. Clifford, *Dictionary Johnson* (London: Heinemann, 1980), 121.

^{xxx} Robert Gould, 'A satirical epistle to the female author of a poem, call'd Silvia's revenge' (London: R. Bentley, 1691), 22.

^{xxxi} *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex*, London: A. Roper, E. Wilkinson, and R. Clavel, 1696), 8; see Hannah Smith, 'English "Feminist" Writings and Judith Drake's "An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex" (1696)', *The Historical Journal* 44 (2001), 727-47.

^{xxxii} Brewer, "'Happy Copiousness?'".

^{xxxiii} 'To the most excellently accomplish'd, Mrs. K. P. upon her Poems' in Katherine Philips, *Poems* (London: R. Marrriott, 1664), sig. A3v. *OED* records the figurative use of *artillery* (in male-authored texts) from 1592 onwards.

^{xxxiv} 'Essay in Defence' (London, 1697 [3rd edition]). These remarks occur in a letter (unpaginated) added to the third edition at the front of the volume entitled 'The Lady's Answer'; the text is reproduced in subsequent editions. –why change in edn here ? page no ?

^{xxxv} See Brewer, 'Happy Copiousness?' and, for some comparative figures, 'The *OED*'s Treatment of Female-Authored Sources of the Eighteenth Century', in Ingrid Tieken Boone van Ostad and Wim van der Wurff, ed. (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 209-38.