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Sarah Ogilvie. 2012. *Words of the World. A Global History of the Oxford English Dictionary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 241 pages. ISBN-13: 9781107605695.

When R. W. Burchfield turned up at Oxford University Press to edit the second Supplement to the OED in 1957, he spent the first day of his new job reading through a copy of *The Times*, looking up every word both in the OED itself (published 1884-1928) and its first catch-up Supplement (1933). ‘The results,’ he found, ‘were a revelation’:

The *OED* was shown at once to be a product of the Victorian and Edwardian period, and not up-to-date at all. The reigns of George V and George VI had witnessed wars, scientific discoveries, and social changes of immense importance, but these were very poorly reflected in the *OED* and its 1933 Supplement, *body-line bowling*, *Bolshevism*, *questionnaire*, and such unmissable terms apart. The early centuries of English vocabulary had been scrutinised and analysed with meticulous care. But the language that had come into being in the period since 1879 (when J. A. H. Murray undertook the *OED*) had been collected and dealt with only in the manner of a Sunday painter. Subject for subject, word class for word class, the first *OED* Supplement of 1933 was a ruffraff assemblage of casual items, in no way worthy of the magnificent monument to which it formed an extension. (Burchfield 1989: 191)

This is less of a cruel judgement than it might appear. The OED had completed its stock of five million-odd quotations (on which the first edition was based) around 1905, and had concentrated a vast proportion of its efforts both before and after that date on sifting through this evidence rather than reading widely to keep up with the flood of new words and new usages entering the language during the first two decades of the new century. The latter job was the designated task of the first Supplement, published five years after the main dictionary was completed in 1928, but its two editors W. A. Craigie and

C. T. Onions were impossibly constrained both in time and resources. There was no sustained reading programme, only a swift rifling of material which had been set aside over the previous decade or so, when evidence of new words or usages came to light too late to publish in the relevant instalment of OED itself. And the publishers put constant pressure on the two editors to complete the work as soon as possible, thus freeing OUP of the huge burden of lexicographers' salaries and overheads they had borne for decades. As one of them wrote to Craigie in 1933, 'the right thing to do is to do what you can over the remainder of the field quickly without any regard to counsels of perfection. The Supplement, after all, is avowedly a scratch supplement, and it is no use trying to make it complete or to make some parts complete and leave the others blank' (Brewer 2007: 60).

By contrast, Burchfield spent not five but twenty-nine years on the second Supplement, working with a team of in-house editors and many readers both in the UK and worldwide. Over this period he first devised and then several times revised a set of procedures for editing the Supplement — what to include, how to build on the OED itself, how to read for and research and manage the project — and he built up a network of contacts with other English language lexicographers. Unsurprisingly, his work was not only much longer than that of Craigie and Onions — four volumes totalling 5,523 pages to their single volume of 867 pages — but also greatly superior in content. As he himself pointed out, he maintained the OED's coverage of literary sources on the one hand, and on the other greatly extended its treatment of scientific and technical terms, of colloquial vocabulary (including slang and words relating to sex and the body), and of World Englishes. Anyone picking up a volume and leafing through the pages will see evidence corroborating this claim.

Sarah Ogilvie's book sets out to expose Burchfield for promulgating what she takes to be the false and self-serving myth that he had been the first editor of the OED to champion 'words of the World', and she grounds this assessment in a comparison of the two twentieth-century Supplements. She is not interested in a wider evaluation of these two works, however — their significantly different remits, and the contrasting conditions under which they were compiled — and this narrow focus reduces the force of her conclusions. Nevertheless, she has some arresting things to say about the relative treatment of World Englishes. She shows that, notwithstanding Burchfield's claim that he was the first to include non-European terms in the OED in any extensive way, the first editor, J. A. H. Murray, had done just that from the first instalment of the original dictionary (1884) onwards — often in defiance of pressure to restrict OED to Anglo-centric insularity. She argues that the youngest editor of the original OED team, C. T. Onions, followed suit in the 1933 Supplement, and should therefore be rightly acclaimed as 'the true champion of loanwords and World Englishes in the OED Supplements' (p. 202; i.e. not only his own, but Burchfield's too). She quotes from

Burchfield's writings and interviews to show that he misrepresented the original OED's policy on such vocabulary — he wrongly stated, for example, that 'Murray preferred to fend off overseas words until they had become firmly entrenched in British use' — and she produces evidence to support her claim that far from being a supporter of loanwords and World Englishes in the OED, Burchfield actually deleted several of these terms from the dictionary record — all from the 'riffraff' first Supplement he had been so scathing about on his first day at the office.

This latter claim was picked up in the press and generated a great deal of interest, so much so that the author was forced to take to a blog in *The Guardian* newspaper (Ogilvie 2012) and deny its wildest rephrasings. But is it true? So far as it goes, yes. As has long been known, a small number of (usually very brief) entries in the 1933 Supplement were not carried over into Burchfield's later work, although in all other respects the latter can be said to have subsumed and surpassed the former. Some of the missing items are examples of what would now be called World Englishes, and Ogilvie lists a selection on page 182 of her book. They include some obscure-looking formations (to UK eyes at least) such as *bancal*, *chief hare*, *sand-draw*, but also more striking examples, e.g. *cake*, v., *chic*, adj., *eagle*, n., *labour*, n., *pail*, n. *swampy*, adj. This does indeed look alarming: can Burchfield really have deleted the adjective *chic*? On looking it up it turns out that *chic* in its normal sense was covered by *OED1*. What Burchfield deleted was not the adjective *chic* but a single once-attested sense, found in a quotation from the *New York Tribune* of 1892, interpreted by Craigie (responsible for the American entries in the first Supplement) to mean 'chivalrous'. Presumably Burchfield was unable to find corroborating evidence and decided to drop the sense altogether. Many of Ogilvie's list of deleted items are similarly not words but senses, supported by one quotation alone in the first Supplement. It may well turn out, after further research, that Burchfield made a misjudgement when he decided against reproducing them, and the matter is clearly interesting. As they state in their online Preface (Simpson 2000), the editors of the third edition of OED have gradually been putting these entries back. Ogilvie is wrong, however, to say that 'the deletion of entries went against all OED policy before and since'. No such policy was in existence until the early 1990s, when work on the third edition — the first ever revision of OED, on which Ogilvie herself worked for a few years — started up.

Ogilvie's contentions are based on samples from the two Supplements, and the book contains charts displaying the relative proportions each carries of World Englishes. It is hard to describe this display of information as other than misleading. It shows clearly that words from non-UK English (most of them US terms) occupy a larger proportion of the first Supplement than they do of the second — but 'proportion' is the operative term here. Ogilvie shies away from actual numbers, and instead presents ratios. The proportion of World Englishes may have been greater in the 1933 Supplement than in

Burchfield's four volume work (1972-86), but the actual number of entries for World Englishes — and the wealth of quotations attesting their usage — was, surely, much greater in Burchfield's dictionary than in that of Craigie and Onions. This is the view of the OED editors (including one quoted by Ogilvie) who worked on the second Supplement, checking it systematically against the first. As neither Supplement has been digitalised, the only way of demonstrating this definitively would be to repeat the back-breaking sampling work Ogilvie herself carried out. But Burchfield's dictionary was over six times longer than that of Craigie and Onions, and as we have seen he was concerned to produce a balanced account of all the vocabulary that had entered the language during the course of the twentieth century — derived from a full reading programme, carried out over decades, of sources drawn not just from World Englishes but from all other fields of language over the course of the twentieth century. It is not surprising, therefore, that World Englishes form a smaller proportion of Burchfield's dictionary than they do of the first Supplement, heavily reliant as the latter was on the large number of US terms supplied by its Chicago-based editor Craigie, then working on a dictionary of American English. Indeed, it would be remarkable if they did not. Ogilvie chooses to take the relative proportions she observes as an indication that Burchfield fell down on World Englishes while trumpeting his inclusion of them. It is here that the narrowness of her focus on one category of vocabulary in isolation lets her down. And until she details the relative numbers, as opposed to proportions, she cannot be said to have made the case.

What of the book's other claims? By contrast, Burchfield's quoted remarks on his pioneering of World English in the OED, in combination with the evidence in Ogilvie's first chapter of Murray's receptiveness to such vocabulary, do bear out Ogilvie's charge that Burchfield was, at best, inaccurate in his claims. She might also have noted that the unfortunate Burchfield is on record for writing and saying many inaccurate things, and for treating many types of vocabulary inconsistently (to be charitable, before the advent of electronic lexicography it was hard to avoid such inconsistency). Where Onions is concerned, Ogilvie's views are unconvincing: she describes how in the course of her researches she came to believe, though without conclusive evidence, that it was he who was responsible for dropping the 'tramlines' symbol from the 1933 Supplement (this had been used in the first edition of OED to designate, also inconsistently, words from other languages, including classical ones, not yet naturalised in English), and she interprets this as indicating a more hospitable attitude on Onions' part towards non-UK vocabulary than that of Burchfield himself. Together with what she claims is the higher proportion of World Englishes in the portions of the 1933 Supplement for which he was responsible, this makes Onions, so her argument goes, into their 'true champion'.¹ However, the letter found by Peter Gilliver in the OED archives as her book went to press — commendably squeezed in just in time on p. 160 — is scarcely

couched in terms of championship: ‘I made no use in the *OED Supp.* of the symbol || because I found, or thought that I found, that not a few entries in [the] main work could not with full certainty be so marked . . .’ It is hard to see this as full-throated advocacy for non-UK English and it pales beside Burchfield’s widely attested and explicit enthusiasm, which Ogilvie also quotes.

These important qualifications apart, the book is a helpful account of a major area of vocabulary in the OED (though one would like to know more about the work being undertaken in today’s OED, for example on Hong Kong, Singapore, Korean or Philippine English; Salazar 2013). It quotes much interesting material from archival and other sources. Ogilvie is certainly right to draw attention to the many non-UK words in the first edition of the OED and her discussion of the Stanford Dictionary controversy sheds valuable light on Murray’s rather possessive attitude towards this vocabulary (this does not mean, however, that Murray was a pioneering advocate of World Englishes as we now understand the term: he was interested in foreign words as used by ‘Englishmen’). Her book is clearly written, though the lists of ‘case study’ results occasionally betray its origins as an academic dissertation. Elsewhere, Ogilvie has worked hard to make her subject accessible to a more general audience, particularly in the opening chapter which lays bare her personal and professional involvement with the OED. In seeking to portray her own feelings she is sometimes less than kind to her former colleagues. *The Observer* headlined its review ‘Drudge with a grudge’, and while this is also unkind, it is true that the occasional indication of personal animus casts a slight shadow over the book.

Note

1 Ogilvie’s account of the relative contribution of World English terms to their Supplement by Craigie and Onion is mistaken, since she disregards the fact that Craigie was responsible for the majority of the US items (by far the largest category of World English) in Onions’s portion of the alphabet. This is clearly stated in the editors’ own Preface (p. vi) and abundantly attested in the OED archives.

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Iseabail Macleod and J. Derrick McClure (eds). 2012. *Scotland in Definition: A History of Scottish Dictionaries*. Edinburgh: John Donald. xiv + 342 pages. ISBN 978-1-906566-49-4 paperback. Price 25.00 GBP.

Susan Rennie 2012. *Jamieson's Dictionary of Scots: The Story of the First Historical Dictionary of the Scots Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. xvi + 282 pages. ISBN 978-0-19-963940-3 hardback. Price 70.00 GBP.

Both of the titles discussed here represent significant firsts. *Scotland in Definition* is the first book to chart the lexicographical history of two of Scotland's languages—Scots and Scottish Gaelic—and in doing so it illuminates the progress of projects and ideas that have bequeathed a significant legacy to ongoing scholarship. *Jamieson's Dictionary of Scots* provides a detailed analysis of the contribution made by one of the pioneers of Scottish lexicography. The Reverend John Jamieson, compiler of the substantial nineteenth-century *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language* (EDSL), has remained an obscure figure despite his major contribution to the documentation and study of Scots, but this monograph does much to redress the shadowy nature of this character. One of the key objectives for Jamieson was the documentation of old language that would otherwise be 'lost', but discussions of Scots in the twenty-first century are more positive about its status as a living language. The publication of these two books is therefore timely. In recent years, Scots and Scottish Gaelic have fought and (often) won recognition in popular and official contexts, and the positive statements made about both in Scotland's educational blueprint, 'A Curriculum for Excellence', appears to bode well for the health of these cultural cornerstones. It was not always thus, and many improvements in the treatment and perception of Scots have been directly influenced by the tireless commitment and perseverance of the authors, in various guises: Iseabail Macleod was Editorial Director of the Scottish National Dictionary Association from 1986 to 2002; J. Derrick McClure's *Why Scots Matters* (1988) remains an important text for anyone interested in language rights and the cultural politics of the UK; Susan Rennie