

Schäfer, J. *Early Modern Lexicography*, vol. I, *A Survey of Monolingual Printed Glossaries and Dictionaries 1475–80*; vol. II, *Additions and Corrections to the OED*. Pp. x + 488; v + 227. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

THESE two beautifully produced volumes present an exciting new thesis on the origins of English lexicography. Jürgen Schäfer wrote an article twenty years ago suggesting that Starnes and Noyes's views on the origin of English monolingual lexicography were in some respects in need of revision.<sup>1</sup> His new work, posthumously published, provides a full corpus of evidence to substantiate that claim. In so doing, it also provides a wealth of information to show that *OED*'s coverage of the Elizabethan and Tudor periods is notably inconsistent and unrepresentative.

Starnes and Noyes argued that the early lexicographers were heavily influenced both by the great Latin-English dictionaries of the later sixteenth-century and by the spelling lists of orthographic reformers and schoolmasters. But Schäfer has found that the early hard word dictionaries 'contain many entries which could never have been gleaned from any spelling-list or Latin-English dictionary of the sixteenth century' (i.4). He believes he has identified an important additional source, namely monolingual printed glossaries.

The early lexicographers, Cawdrey, Bullokar, and Cockeram, all pitch their dictionaries at 'Ladies, Gentlewomen, or any other unskilled persons', that is, as Schäfer says, 'those on the other side of the Elizabethan language bar without benefit of grammar school education' – unable, therefore, to identify and use the 'hard words' which were flooding into the language as a result of loans from Latin. Curiously enough, the title pages of all three volumes emphasize that their material is based on contemporary literature. This interesting coincidence sent Schäfer off in pursuit of what might be the source of the hard words in current use – and he ended up, inevitably, at the many glossaries of all forms, shapes, and sizes, attached to contemporary

editions of a variety of literary and other works. His research demonstrates conclusively the links between such glossaries and the early dictionaries: to give one example, Cockeram seems to have extracted some fifty entries for his *English Dictionarie* from Joshua Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas's *La Semaine*, an immensely popular work whose editions of 1605 and 1608 had appended to them a glossary of more than 800 entries under the running title 'An Index of the hardest words'. Schäfer reminds us that "hard word" in contemporary usage meant "difficult" in a general sense and included not only learned terms from Latin but also words from modern languages and obsolete terms from mediaeval writers'. And he emphasizes the importance of

the recognition that the Jacobean compilers, far from merely remodelling spelling lists or Latin-English dictionaries, had ... direct recourse to works of their own period containing such monolingual glossaries of 'hard words', that is, those introduced by English authors and translators. (i.4)

Most of these glossaries – other than E. K.'s glosses to the *Shepherd's Calendar* – have been little studied elsewhere, and, as Schäfer points out, 'have never been discussed as a group although they reflect major trends in the Elizabethan intellectual world and are of considerable interest in their referential techniques' (i.4). They vary enormously: more than half are attached to translations of sixteenth-century Latin texts, others to works of religious instruction, general edification, and polemics.

What is the significance of this revision of Starnes and Noyes's thesis? First of all, a re-evaluation of the work and significance of the early lexicographers. They were not 'merely indiscriminate copiers but true pioneers in the field of lexicography, worthy ancestors of Samuel Johnson' (i.8). More importantly, if Schäfer is right, many of their words – however absurdly unusable they look to us now – may have come from 'real' sources, that is, contemporary printed non-lexicographical sources. For example, Cockeram excerpted Thomas Nashe's moralistic treatise *Christ's Teares ouer Ierusalem* (1593);<sup>2</sup> and many of the early dictionaries'

<sup>1</sup> Jürgen Schäfer, 'The Hard Word Dictionaries: A Re-Assessment', *Leeds Studies in English*, iv (1970), 31–48; D. T. Starnes and Gertrude E. Noyes, *The English Dictionary from Cawdrey to Johnson, 1604–1755* (Chapel Hill, 1946).

<sup>2</sup> To produce lemmas such as *anthropophagize*, first cited in *OED* from Cockeram's dictionary.

entries derive from introductory manuals and from explanatory glossaries appended to contemporary publications. These glossaries increase in number during the sixteenth century, peaking between 1590 and 1610 and then decreasing again. Schäfer summarizes as follows:

The origin of the monolingual dictionary is best understood as a gradual process and not as a sudden inspiration of Cawdrey's resulting in the *Table Alphabeticall*, whose concept differs fundamentally both from the spelling list and the bilingual dictionary. Its beginning is the first glossary appended to a book publication and explaining hard words. After a century of development they emancipated themselves from their ancillary rôle as mere appendices and became publications in their own right which exhibited ever greater comprehensiveness. (i.8–9)

After a short introduction, Schäfer's first volume provides a description of each in turn of the 130 or so glossaries and dictionaries he has unearthed which were published between 1475 and 1640.<sup>3</sup> He is scrupulously careful to identify different editions of the same work, and for each item gives full bibliographical details, listing in addition the number of lemmas, an indication of their range, a brief account of their arrangement, an example of a typical entry, whether and to what extent the work was used as a source for *OED*, and finally a list of scholarly sources in which the work is discussed. All this constitutes invaluable information, and makes for fascinating browsing. It is followed by a computer-assisted compilation of the lemmatical material, listed according to various methods which thoughtfully anticipate some of the questions likely to be asked by researchers into Early Modern English. For example, the many lemmas unlisted by *OED* or the *Supplement* are alphabetically integrated into a comprehensive list of lemmas, but also listed separately, divided into various lexical groups.

Schäfer thus provides a splendid resource for tracing the links between the various different glossaries and dictionaries, and also for tracking down mystery words resulting from typogra-

phical errors at some stage in the transmission from one source to another. In addition his lists shed invaluable if unforgiving light on the compilation and reliability of *OED*, since they offer significant quantities of corrective and/or additional information. These citations cannot be dismissed as 'dictionary' sources which *OED* might have properly overlooked: dictionary sources were used and many times cited by *OED*, while in addition – so Schäfer himself argues and repeatedly demonstrates – many of the hard words in these early dictionaries were taken from non-lexicographical sources. The section recording *OED*'s treatment of the glossaries listed by Schäfer provides disturbing reading. Some ninety of the total of 130-odd glossaries listed by Schäfer were used by the compilers and/or cited in *OED*'s bibliography; yet time and again Schäfer records *OED*'s partial and often inconsistent choice of words from these sources. It becomes manifestly clear that the grounds for admitting or rejecting words from these sources were simply never thought out or articulated. Surprisingly, Schäfer does not give us the numerical total of his lemmas; my very rough estimate is that he lists about 18,400 in all, of which about 3,850 – a fifth or so – were omitted by *OED*. Many of these – it would be interesting to have the exact figures, which presumably could be produced by the computer – are nevertheless to be found in sources listed in *OED*'s bibliography.

In his second volume, entitled *Additions and Corrections to the OED*, Schäfer takes up the issue of *OED* coverage in greater depth, building in part on his important book *Documentation in the OED* (Oxford, 1980). With great respect, and, it must be said, repeated pulling of his punches, he builds up a damning case. He begins by noting that, although *OED* compilers gave special attention to sixteenth-century literature,<sup>4</sup> there are various reasons why their coverage is nevertheless defective. *OED*'s three main weaknesses are (i) restriction to literary sources,<sup>5</sup> (ii) limited availability of sixteenth-

<sup>3</sup> For his search methods, see p. 10. He believes that only a handful of sources – statistically irrelevant – will have escaped discovery.

<sup>4</sup> *Documentation in the OED* tells us that 'in the Shakespearean period nearly twenty times as many works were examined as for the decades around 1500' (51), although the present volume does not refer us to this information.

<sup>5</sup> Schäfer tells us, however, that 'this deficiency has been exaggerated by some critics, who underestimate the many basic sixteenth-century publications in various fields of

century texts at the time of compilation, and the absence of research tools such as the *Short-Title Catalogue*, and (iii) *OED*'s 'inescapable' reflection of 'the inclinations and aversions of the later nineteenth century, not only in the prudish omission of four-letter words, but also in its attitude towards the vocabulary of certain disciplines'; notably the language of rhetoric.

Schäfer's main aim in the second volume is to provide a far fuller lexical basis for the study of Early Modern English than is found in *OED*. To those who would argue that 'the space allotted to Early Modern English documentation in the *OED* is broad enough to convey an adequate impression of linguistic developments during this period', and that 'in terms of sheer numbers *OED* citations may be considered adequate', he produces a strong reply. First, comprehensive computer storage is now feasible, which means that there is, in theory, no limit to the amount of information that can be stored (given that Early Modern English is a finite entity). So there is no need to select from the lexical evidence: all can be included. Secondly, although *OED* undoubtedly did select, its principles for doing so seem to have been completely inconsistent. On this Schäfer comments:

Words of comparable lexical status – whether found in a writer's text or in a dictionary – were sometimes included, sometimes omitted; and there is reason to assume that in all problematical instances *OED* editors were at the mercy of the restricted technical means available to them. Why, for example, was Cockram's *abarstic* ('insatiable') included, but not *abambulation* ('a walking away')? Why is the Chaucerian *anlace* documented from several hard word dictionaries, the Chaucerian *accoy* from only one and the Chaucerian *allegement* from none? Indeed, it may be that the overall statistics of the *OED* balance out such minor discrepancies, but this is a mere assumption

knowledge, actually examined for the *OED* and who also overlook the fact that the earliest citation of a word describing or anticipating a technological innovation may sometimes be found in a non-technical text' (ii.1). Schäfer instances '*diving-boat* for "submarine", used by Thomas Nashe a quarter of a century before Cornelius van Drebel demonstrated the amazing possibilities of his new vehicle to King James on the river Thames'. But he gives us no further information on Cornelius, nor alerts us to the (surely relevant) fact that the first *OED* citation for *diving-boat* is dated 1802.

and would require scholarly substantiation; beyond this, statistical arguments neglect the history of individual words. (ii.5)

Schäfer also makes the interesting and important point that *OED*'s criteria for selection seem to have been to some extent influenced by the teleological or evolutionary notion of language prevailing at the end of the nineteenth century – that the language had been honed to perfection over the preceding centuries, and that therefore what was most interesting was looking at the origins of the language as presently constituted, not at the various excrescences, genetic defects as it were, which had as a result of their unsuitability been weeded out by time and usage. *OED*'s view of language was synchronic – from a nineteenth-century perspective, that is. But that view ignores sixteenth- to seventeenth-century perceptions of language. The bulk of new words may well have seemed indistinguishably bizarre and exotic to contemporaneous eyes, so that little difference would appear to exist between Cockram's *autonomy* ('Libertie to liue after ones owne law') and his *aurigation* ('A driuing of a Coach'). Puttenham is now famous for recommending *numerosity*, *poilitien*, and *assubtling* as indispensable, while proscribing *audacious* and *compatible*. As Schäfer comments,

When the historical lexicographer, fully aware of this peculiar situation, discriminates between lemmas worthy and not worthy of registration, he inevitably reverts to a prescriptivism difficult to reconcile with the principles of modern linguistics. In addition, the resulting truncated view of the lexical situation of the English Renaissance precludes any further studies as to which, or how many, of the new formations survived and for what reasons. (ii. 3)

One of the areas notably underinvestigated by *OED* is rhetoric – not surprisingly, given nineteenth-century literary predilections. Schäfer has turned up indispensable information here, abundantly illustrating the above quoted point. Rhetorical terms were included in the *OED* if they happened to have survived into the nineteenth century. If resuscitated by twentieth-century scholars, they stood a chance of getting into the *Supplement*. But this selective record inevitably presents a distorted picture of the function and significance of such terms at the

time of their greatest usage, when they co-existed with many others that have gone unrecorded, and together constituted the 'terminology of a discipline central to the intellectual life of Shakespeare's day'.

This splendidly rich and thoroughly researched body of information is a major contribution to lexicography. Even more important than the extensive new evidence Schäfer provides on Early Modern English is his reflection on and analysis of lexicographical methodology, the fruits of which should be applied to the lexicography of all periods of English. Together, the two volumes constitute an essential tool for the compilers of *OED*<sup>3</sup>.

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Stephens, J. and Waterhouse, R., *Literature, Language, and Change: From Chaucer to the Present*. Pp. xvii + 293 (Interface Series). London and New York: Routledge, 1990. Hardbound £40.00; paperback £10.99.

*LITERATURE, LANGUAGE, AND CHANGE* aims to provide a consideration of 'diachronic shift as perceived in literary uses of English', and aims to do so by focusing on the relationships between the paradigmatic and syntagmatic aspects of language in literature. The selection of this as critical method can at times be useful; detailed concentration on small sections of relevant texts (from Chaucer to Woolf and after) forces an important awareness of the nuances of syntactic and semantic choice and meaning, though the monotony of treatment and repetitive qualities of discussion can paradoxically combine to give not the (presumably intended) impression of 'change', but instead one of uniform 'sameness'. More worrying is an evident reluctance to engage with terms used; Austen, Sterne, and much of the nineteenth century apparently write in 'speech-based prose', an entity which lacks thorough definition, but which reflects a tendency to assume and generalize on the part of the authors. Judgements of 'grammaticality' and 'ungrammaticality' are used with similar lack of caution, especially with reference to early texts (though the authors seem somewhat happier with later ones), assumptions of 'language norms' need,

but do not get, the necessary careful handling, and what is 'expected' or 'unexpected' is frequently pronounced upon, without any substantiation or specification of the foundations which underlie such verdicts. The stated awareness that language is culturally coded, and that the 'socio-linguistic' will be an important part of their methodology fails to develop in any real sense beyond the introduction; the sociolinguistic is in particular never referred to again, unless by 'sociolinguistic', the authors mean certain vague comments about 'society' which are inserted here and there. Though the first chapter gives a useful outline of the potential of this kind of critical investigation for the interaction, and interpretation, of the literary and the linguistic, regrettably that potential is still largely unfulfilled by the time the end of the book is reached.

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Popp, M., *Die englische Aussprache im 18. Jahrhundert im Lichte englisch-französischer Zeugnisse*, I, *Das Dictionnaire de la Prononciation angloise 1756*. Anglistische Forschungen, 199. Pp. xix + 185. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1989. DM45.00.

DR POPP began her work on *Dictionnaire de la Prononciation angloise* (Paris, 1756, the author perhaps one Brady, christian name possibly James) as part of a doctoral dissertation in the University of Cologne, completed as long ago as 1973. It has still some of the characteristics of a thesis, good in quality but not easy to use, and, without a list of words discussed, not easy to refer to. A frank account is given of how this work grew, and how the work of 1973 needed to be improved. Only seven copies of the *Dictionnaire* are known to exist, four of the first edition, three of the second (Paris, 1781). It is not surprising, therefore, that not much attention has been paid to it in the scholarship of the history of Modern English pronunciation (though, we are told, Skeat knew of the second edition). That neglect is to be regretted because, according to Dr Popp, the *Dictionnaire* is highly reliable. She has investigated the corrections made by the author in the printing of the various issues of each edition, and especially changes made for the second edition. Dependence on