4. Coulton, p. 105.
5. Coulton, p. 108.
6. Coulton, p. 111.
7. Coulton, p. 118.
8. Coulton, p. 120.
9. Coulton, p. 121.
10. Peter Sutcliffe, *The Oxford University Press: an Informal History*, 1978, p. 151.
11. This letter and others quoted from *infra* are in the files of the Oxford University Press in Oxford.
12. I am grateful to my *OED* colleague, Dr R. E. Allen, for considerable help with this section on Lucian.
13. H. W. Fowler in a letter to R. W. Chapman, 27 December 1925: 'As to puzzles, I thank goodness the MS of POD was sent in before the cross-word was ever heard of.'
14. 'It is of course true that we have acquired a modicum of expertry at the job, & natural that it should be thought foolish to waste this.' (Letter by HWF to OUP, 6 January 1911)
15. 'Reflection, & the casting of a business eye over a few pages, does not convince us that the abridging of an abridgment is attractive work, but on the contrary that it would be like nothing so much as pulling out the hairs of one's own head one by one.' (Letter by HWF to OUP, 6 January 1911)
16. Coulton, p. 145.
17. Letter by HWF to OUP, 20 June 1909.
18. Dr Onions was still talking of this conflict in the late 1950s, and still maintaining that Fowler was wrong. Perhaps the old quarrel accounted for his glee on hearing that Fowler's definition of *adultery* in *COD* ('Voluntary sexual intercourse of married person with one of opposite sex') did not appear to exclude the sexual intercourse of married couples. The definition has since been amended.
19. E. A. Gowers, *H. W. Fowler: the Man and his Teaching*, English Association, 1957, p. 14.
20. *Listener*, 13 March 1958, pp. 449–51.

5 The Genealogy of Dictionaries

Precise texts and eclectic results

Genealogy is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'an account of one's descent from an ancestor or ancestors, by enumeration of the intermediate persons: a pedigree.' As with most abstract nouns, figurative extensions are permissible and the *OED* itself gives an example of 1793 in which Thomas Beddoes speaks of 'the genealogy of significations' of words. I am here concerned with the ways in which English dictionaries are related to one another, with particular attention to Dr Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*, the dictionaries connected with the name of Noah Webster, and the Oxford dictionaries. Indebtedness and cross-linkage will form part of the theme, and also the need for the emergence of a new sub-group of bibliographical scholars to turn my outline account into a much more professional form.

Genealogical tables – that is, 'family trees' – exhibit startling and unpredictable directional changes of pattern because of unforeseeable deaths or marriages. New hereditary lines needed to be drawn, for example, when Prince Charles married Lady Diana Spencer, and, similarly, when Princess Margaret married Anthony Armstrong-Jones (Lord Snowdon) and, later, when their marriage was dissolved. The ordinary dislocations and joinings of life provide endless opportunities for genealogists to display their skills.

For lexicographers, one of the more startling discoveries of genealogy – 'the climax of genealogical ingenuity', A. L. Reade called it – is that Samuel Johnson and Lord Chesterfield, the 'poor scholar' and the 'aristocratic patron', separated by the formidable social barrier of patronage, were linked by marriage and kinship through the peer's

brother, Sir William Stanhope, to the Reverend Cornelius Ford (died 1731), first cousin of Johnson.[1]

The genealogical chart of a particular dictionary is in a sense less complicated than that of a member of the Royal Family, or even, for that matter, of an ordinary citizen. Obviously there are more people, all with individual names, than there are dictionaries. Nevertheless the lineage of a given dictionary is normally less obvious than might appear to be the case. Prefaces of dictionaries seldom give an accurate account of the way in which the work that follows has been compiled, and promotional handouts or blurbs even less so.

One of the traditional assumptions of textual criticism was that if an ancient work existed in several manuscripts, and the autograph manuscript of the author had not survived, it was reasonable to believe that the remaining manuscripts were descended from a single archetypal ancestor. By a process known as 'recension', the archetypal readings were deduced (or, at any rate, approximately deduced) by systematically rooting out readings that, for one reason or another, could not have formed part of the original text. The resulting text, 'the residue' as it were, represented the nearest that one could rescue, or reconstruct, of the author's original work.

Later scholars – the French medievalist E. Vinaver and the English Renaissance scholar W. W. Greg among them – came to see that the genealogy of manuscripts of works surviving in many versions was much more complex than had once been assumed. They treated variant readings on their merits and arrived at what might be called eclectic texts.[2] At first sight it would appear that the connection between the ramification of the manuscripts of *Piers Plowman* and of other medieval works on the one hand, and that of families of dictionaries on the other, might be difficult to demonstrate. But I am not so sure.

Lineal descent is not a common feature of dictionaries, however much the works of a given dictionary house are plastered with words like *Concise, Collegiate, Pocket*, etc. Conflation, reduction, and adaptation occur on such a scale in the members of a family of dictionaries that one can normally detect only a general similarity between one such dictionary and another. But my concern is not so much with the relationships of the dictionaries within one family as with those between the products of different publishing houses.

The key dictionaries in any study of the genealogy of dictionaries are those of Dr Johnson, Noah Webster, and Dr J. A. H. Murray. If we knew no more about the editors of all subsequent English dictionaries, and the way in which they were prepared, than we know about the authors or scribes of the seventeen surviving manuscripts of the A-text of *Piers Plowman*, and had only the text of the dictionaries themselves to go by, it would be possible to build family trees showing the complex genealogical relationships of these dictionaries and of the way in which they themselves are related.

The nature of the relationships would, of course, be revealed more quickly if publishing houses would open up their correspondence files, and if lexicographers would set down accounts of their actual sources and their week-by-week working methods. But as neither of these processes seems likely to occur, lexicographical genealogists must needs employ the techniques of textual criticism and of genealogy to establish the kinship of dictionaries.

Let me start with a trifling question. Which dictionary do you think lacks the words *anus, irritable*, and *euphemism*, though the words were well-established at the time?

Anus is first recorded in 1658, *irritable* in 1662 (in the work of the seventeenth-century philosopher Henry More), and *euphemism* is listed in several dictionaries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, leading off with Thomas Blount's *Glossographia* (1651–81). The absence of these reasonably ordinary words from Samuel Johnson's dictionary in 1755 demonstrates a principle of lexicographical genealogy – that the mere existence of words at a given moment and even the use of them by a lexicographer in his own work (since Johnson certainly used *irritable*, for example) do not guarantee the inclusion of such words in dictionaries. In 1755 dictionaries were much more like herbaceous borders in a private garden, filled with well-cultivated flowers that had been planted with reasonable deliberation. Numerous classes of words that are now admitted 'on principle' were then excluded on principle. And a certain haphazardry was also more obviously at work then than at the present time.

Of course there are differences between the genealogy of medieval manuscripts and the genealogy of dictionaries, but I am focusing on the similarities. The date of composition of many medieval works needs to

be deducted from the script itself, by other palaeographic means, or by looking for external evidence. Thus, for example, from the work of Professor E. J. Dobson on the *Ancrene Wisse*:

> We know that the 'Corpus revision' must have been made after 1224, when the Franciscans came to England, and was probably a little later than 1227, the approximate date of the establishment of their house in Hereford.

Such external evidence is less apposite for the dating of modern dictionaries though it is not entirely inappropriate. The date of publication of new dictionaries and of new editions is not usually in doubt, even if by skilful use of the copyright device © a dictionary can be made to seem more up-to-date than it actually is. External evidence, however, is occasionally useful in the dating of new *impressions*, the sort described as 'reprinted with corrections'. Date-determinable items like *ayatollah*, *yomping*, and *zero option* establish dates before which particular impressions could not have been published. The habits of medieval scribes, as Professor Dobson says, can also be paralleled in minor ways:

> Scribe D did not use *wynn*, or *yogh*, or *eth*, and apparently did not understand the last when he saw it.[3]

By the same token the conventionally printed versions of modern dictionaries will shortly be distinguishable from the print-outs of electronic word-processed packages by the abandonment in the latter of such ordinary conventions as ligatured letters (e.g. *fi*, *œ*, *æ*), old-style Arabic numerals, and a range of diacritical marks that are awkward for microcomputers to reproduce. Other orthographical devices of the first 500 years of printing – for example, the ligatured *we* and *wo* and some other sets of letters in Caxton's type 2*, the long *s*, the use of the apostrophe, the employment of final *-t* instead of *-ed* in words like *wished* and *kissed* (thus *wisht*, *kist*) – have come and gone, and can be used as useful orthographical watermarks of particular periods. A 2-shaped *r* is a useful guide for the dating of medieval manuscripts. The spellings *authentick* and *critick* usually point to a date between 1700 and 1800.

Our own period is characterized by similar date-determining conventions. For example, all Oxford dictionaries before the 37th edition (1967) of *Hart's Rules for Compositors and Readers at the University Press*,

Oxford used the spelling *connexion*, with an *x* – thereafter *connection*, with medial *-ct-*. The programming of microcomputerized dictionaries of the future is bound to lead to normalization of many matters of spelling and punctuation. Modern equivalents of the 2-shaped *r* are bound to disappear – among them, I suspect, the freedom to use *-ise* or *-ize* according to taste, and the more important spelling differences between American and British English, the types *center/centre*, *color/colour*, *marvelous/marvellous*, and *esthetic/aesthetic*. And the development of even more sophisticated Optical Character Recognition machines will lead to pressure on people to make the shapes of their handwritten letters of the alphabet more uniform, and also to reduce the variety of founts of type available for any given letter of the alphabet.

I turn now to the heart of the matter.

The *American College Dictionary* and its derivatives

Let me follow a path of descent. In 1947 a new American collegiate dictionary was published – the *American College Dictionary*, edited by Clarence L. Barnhart. The introduction reported that it was 'a record of the English language prepared by more than 350 scholars, specialists, and editors . . .'. It was 'The first abridged dictionary to be prepared by a staff larger than is usually assembled for an unabridged dictionary . . .'. It also claimed to be based on significant advances in the study of language by linguists and psychologists; and, in general, this claim was justified. Some of the more dazzling names of the period were listed as advisers for general areas or special fields (Leonard Bloomfield, Charles C. Fries, Kemp Malone, Zellig S. Harris, Allen Walker Read, Sir William A. Craigie, George L. Trager, and numerous others), as well as scores of authorities in subjects like anatomy, plant physiology, insurance, medieval history, textiles, typography, etc. It was an exceedingly good dictionary. Its policy about inclusion and exclusion was based upon the frequency of appearance of words and meanings in print, and upon certain principles of phonetics, and so on, that seemed acceptable at the time. As far as one could tell it was a 'fresh start', and not an abridgement of any other dictionary.

Under the careful eye of Clarence Barnhart the dictionary went through various editions and in the normal manner absorbed new words and meanings and abandoned others to make room for the new

items. It became established as an ideal dictionary for use at college or university in the United States.

In one of the introductory sections, Irving Lorge, a member of the Editorial Advisory Committee, drew attention to the words *aorist*, *enclose*, and *stupefacient*; and to the names *Pohai* (a place-name) and *Marie Antoinette*. Let me set out the definition of *aorist*:

> **n. Gram.** 1. a tense of the Greek verb expressing action (in the indicative, past action) without further limitation or implication. – *adj.* 2. of or in the aorist.

Now move on twenty-four years to *Hamlyn's Encyclopedic World Dictionary* (1971), edited in London by Patrick Hanks. Under *aorist* what do we find?

> **n. Gram.** 1. a tense of the Greek verb expressing action (in the indicative, past action) without further limitation or implication. – *adj.* 2. of or in the aorist.

Move on ten more years to the *Macquarie Dictionary* (1981), edited in Australia by A. Delbridge and others, and we find:

> **n.** 1. a tense of the Greek verb expressing action (in the indicative, past action) without further limitation or implication *as to completion, continuation, etc.* – *adj.* 2. of or in the aorist.

Admittedly the phrase (my italics) 'as to completion, continuation, etc.' is new, but by then this phrase had also crept into Barnhart's *American College Dictionary*.

In Barnhart's *ACD* and Hanks's *EWD* the definition of *enclose* is identical, except that Hanks inserted '*Law* or *Archaic*' before the spelling *inclose*; and he also spelt the word *cheque* in a British way in place of the American *check*. *Macquarie* repeats *EWD* except for the pronunciation (which is shown in the IPA system instead of *EWD*'s and *ACD*'s respelling system).

By now you will not be surprised to learn that the entry for *stupefacient* is identical in all three dictionaries[4] except that *ACD* allows for the probability that any Americans encountering the word might be inclined to pronounce it as /stu:p-/ not /stju:p-/.

Exactness ends at that point. Barnhart's *ACD* entry for *Pohai*, 'a NW

arm of the Yellow Sea, forming a gulf on the NE coast of China', survives intact in Hanks's *EWD*. But the observant Australians have dropped it to make room for the New Zealand word *pohutukawa* (which they seem to have picked up from the *EWD*). Similarly the *ACD* entry for *Marie Antoinette* survives intact in the *EWD* but was dropped from the *Macquarie*.

Let me apply another test. On one opening, *ACD* has accompanying illustrations of *Malta*, *Mammillary structure of malachite*, *Columbian mammoth*, *Florida manatee*, *Manchuria*, *Mandalay*, and *Mandible* (of a bee).

EWD has *Malta* (identical), *Woolly mammoth* (i.e. a different genus), *Florida manatee* (identical, except for a slight variation in the size of this aquatic herbivore), *Manchuria* (identical except that the illustrator seems to place Peking in Manchuria), *Mandalay* (identical), and *Mandible* (redrawn, with a different caption). The illustration for *Mammillary structure of malachite* does not appear because in British English the word *mamillary*, spelt with only one medial *m*, is a column of type away.

In the *Macquarie* a policy decision removed all maps or parts of maps. Accordingly *Malta*, *Manchuria*, and *Mandalay* were excised. Of the original seven illustrations only the *Woolly mammoth* and (yes) the *Florida manatee* survive. The definition of *mandible* is still that of 1947 – but the illustration shows the mandibles of a human jaw instead of the mandibles of a bee.

The comparisons made are based on editions of the three dictionaries that happen conveniently to lie at hand. For all I know – but it lies outside my brief – Barnhart's *ACD* had also dropped maps and changed their mandibles by the time the *Macquarie Dictionary* was prepared.

What emerges with the utmost clarity is that the exact wording and ordering of senses has been carried over, and deemed appropriate, from an American dictionary of 1947 to a British one of 1971 and then to an Australian one of 1981.

I tested the three dictionaries in another way in order to see what relationships emerged for typical local expressions from each country – what might be called the 'nationality test'.

Typically American items

ACD (USA)	EWD (GB)	Macquarie (Australia)
chowder	(identical)	(identical)
coyote	(identical)	(2 of 3 senses identical, 1 dropped)[5]
kibitzer	(identical)	(identical)
lagniappe	(identical)	(no entry)

To judge from this sample the editors of *Hamlyn's Encyclopedic World Dictionary* were prepared to accept the text of their exemplar as it stood. The Australians were willing to exclude items deemed to be too exotically American, but not to adapt the other definitions for Australian consumption. Exclusion, not adaptation, was the test applied; the axe, not the plane.

Typically British items

ACD (USA)	EWD (GB)	Macquarie (Australia)
boot (in motor vehicle)	(slightly revised)	(same as *EWD*)
pram (cross-referred to *perambulator*)	(main definition at *pram*)	(same as *EWD*)
(no entry)	prang (n. & v.)	(same as *EWD*)

The same general picture emerges. Some Briticization occurred in *EWD*, and this was carried straight over to the *Macquarie*.

Typically Australian items

ACD (USA)	EWD (GB)	Macquarie (Australia)
corroboree	(identical)	(identical)[6]
(no entry)	(less elaborate entry)→	*didgeridoo* (elaborate entry)
dingo	←(identical)	(elaborated definitions)
no entry	(identical)→	jumbuck

Again some local adaptation has occurred but, surprisingly, a 1947 American definition of one of the most Australian of all words, *corroboree*, was still judged to be suitable for Australian users in 1981.

The editors of *EWD* admitted their indebtedness to the *American College Dictionary*. By the time the package had moved on to Australia, the connections were set in much less explicit terms:

Naturally, we could not prepare a book of this size without having access to another good dictionary for use as a base. We were fortunate in having access to the *Encyclopedic World Dictionary*, published by Hamlyn in England in 1971. This dictionary was itself based on the well-known *American College Dictionary*, first published in 1969.   (Preface, p. 12)

The primary derivativeness of the dictionary was fudged, not by the blurb-writers, but by the editor in chief, Professor A. Delbridge himself. I estimated that the amount of material shared by all three dictionaries was of the order of 93 per cent of the whole. The distinctive American vocabulary that was removed by the Hamlyn dictionary and replaced by British vocabulary was about 7 per cent of the original. The unshared 7 per cent constituted the 'Britishness' of *EWD*, and a different unshared 7 per cent made up the Australian distinctiveness of the *Macquarie Dictionary*.

And the derivativeness, as I have suggested, is not restricted to the text. The same illustrations, not even redrawn – of *bald eagle*, *capybara*, *raccoon*; and (of Australian subjects) *boomerang*, *dingo*, *kangaroo*, *koala*, etc.; as well as general English subjects like *davit*, *eclipse*, *halberd*, and *kettledrum* – were carried over from the *ACD* to the *EWD*. And all of them have made their remorseless way, along with hundreds of others, into the *Macquarie Dictionary*.

My comment in a review of the *Macquarie* was, I admit, uncharitable: 'one can only say "Thank you England and America." ' I also said, however, that the taking on board of material from other dictionaries was not necessarily in itself reprehensible. But the amount of the indebtedness should have been made clear; and it could even have been turned into a virtue.

Webster's Third and the *OED*

Perhaps the most surprising example of indebtedness, that became clear as my investigation continued, was that of *Webster's Third New International* to the *OED*. I should make it clear at once, though, that it is a restricted and, as you will see in a moment, an unavoidable indebtedness, given that the Merriam-Webster quotation files, magnificent as they are, have been built up on the assumption that

dictionaries prepared from the evidence contained in the files would be dictionaries of 'current English', not of the English of former centuries.

Webster's Third set the year 1755 as its backward terminal limit. In general terms – Shakespeare and the Authorized Version of the Bible apart – their exclusion zone included the whole of the period before 1755. But their quotation files are extraordinarily rich from the period since 1900, and progressively thinner as one works backwards from 1900 to 1755. In other words, for classes of words that flourished and possibly died in the period 1755 to 1900 they had very little confirmatory or disconfirmatory evidence of their own, and had to resort to the great historical dictionaries, the *OED* itself and the historical dictionaries of special periods and special regions.

It is not easy to demonstrate the indebtedness in the way that I have done above for the *American College Dictionary* and its derivatives; but it is not impossible.

The arrangement of senses in *Webster's Third* for most words is strikingly and admirably fresh. The editor and his staff systematically reconsidered the facts, no doubt with a weather eye on the *OED*, but mostly with a view to arranging them in a way that reflected their quotational material. Their filed-away citations – some thirteen million of them – are numerically richer than those held by any other dictionary house.

One important area in which the genealogical relationship of the *OED* and *Webster's Third* can be tested is in the treatment of phrasal verbs: that is, in expressions of the type *to make out, to put off,* and *to put over.*

The synchronic rules of *Webster's Third* prevented it from taking such expressions back to their beginnings. For example, the phrasal verb *to put over* is subdivided into eight senses in the *OED*, beginning with a specialized sense in Falconry from the *Book of St Albans* (1486). By proper application of the synchronic rules, these eight senses were reduced to just one in *Webster's Third*, this one sense surviving only because it was revived in the United States in the sense 'to delay, to postpone' from about the time of Mark Twain.

> If you can without fail issue the book on the 15th of May – putting the Sketch book over till another time.
>
> (Mark Twain, 1871)

> The only thing to do is to put it over for a week.
>
> (H. Kemelman, 1978)

Naturally, the rather thin entry in *Webster's Third* for this phrasal verb only very poorly illustrates the historical development of the expression in its various old senses. And it baldly illustrates the two common present-day meanings by short examples from writers (not known to me) called Alzada Comstock and Rosamund Frost. Such synchronic treatment of words inevitably resembles attempts to reconstruct the true shape of ancient hominids from fossilized remains found by chance in scattered caves and gorges.

In a great many other entries the deletion rules have been applied with skill – the old discarded senses have been left like so many tombstones in the *OED* and only the living senses are left in *Webster's Third*. Close analysis of some other phrasal verbs, however, bring out the transatlantic dependence.

Thus, for example, the fifteen senses and sub-senses of the phrasal verb *to make out* in the *OED* (senses 91a to n) correspond closely in their ordering and in their wording to the fifteen senses and sub-senses in *Webster's Third*. Some of them could only be drawn from the *OED*, especially those marked *dial., chiefly dial., dial. Brit.,* or *obs.* Thus the *Webster's Third* sense 3 of 'to make out' – '*obs.*: to count as or complete (a total)' – corresponds to sense †91e in the *OED*: 'Of an item in a series: To complete (a certain total). *Obs.*' The snag is that this sense existed only in the sixteenth century and should have been deleted under the 1755 cut-off rule of *Webster's Third*.

A detailed study of the phrasal verbs, and of other complicated items with many senses, would bring out the extent of the direct dependence of *Webster's Third* on the *OED*. It is substantial and it is not acknowledged. The date of publication of Dr Johnson's dictionary, 1755, had been chosen as the cut-off date because the editors dared not venture into territory where their own citation files were sparse or nonexistent. It is rather like an aeroplane that can do dazzling manoeuvres and stunts as long as the fuel holds out, but then becomes merely a glider, a pretend-aeroplane, kept buoyant only by thermals and its aerodynamic shape.

The Random House and Collins connection

Let me turn to a branch of another family tree. In 1979, with much swashbuckling publicity, Collins, one of the largest publishing houses in Britain, put out *Collins Dictionary of the English Language*. It was a dictionary of collegiate size, mid-way in size between the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* and the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. The publishers' foreword described it as 'a completely new and original English dictionary'. The editorial director was Laurence Urdang; the editor was Patrick Hanks; and the managing editor was Thomas Hill Long. The chief defining editor was Paul Procter and the deputy defining editor Della Summers. I set to wondering how such an ambitious project as 'a completely new and original dictionary' could have been compiled, as nothing in the prefatory matter gave any clue to the way in which the evidence had been assembled and the editorial work done. There was no mention of extensive quotation files and of the kind of classified scholarly information that we have permanently available in the *OED* Department in Oxford and that Merriam-Webster's have in Springfield, Massachusetts.

The names of the main editors set me on the trail. The trail led first to Longmans (*Longman Dictionary of English Idioms*, 1979, editorial director, Thomas Hill Long, and managing editor, Della Summers). And then to *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* College Edition (*RHDC*), 1968 (and later impressions): editor in chief, Laurence Urdang, and senior editor (with seven others), Thomas Hill Long. The *Longman Dictionary of English Idioms* proved to be a false scent. But the Random House connection was quite another story. In the Collins promotional matter released with their dictionary it was said that they began by feeding into a computer data-bank the headwords of five different (unspecified) existing dictionaries. It soon became evident that the *Random House Dictionary* (College Edition) was one of them – and not only the headwords. Compare the following definitions:

green manure
Random: 1. A crop of growing plants plowed under to enrich the soil.
Collins: 1. A growing crop that is ploughed under to enrich the soil.
Random: 2. Manure which has not undergone decay.
Collins: 2. Manure that has not yet decomposed.

Green Mountain Boys
Random: The soldiers from Vermont in the American Revolution, originally organized by Ethan Allen in 1775 to oppose the territorial claims of New York.
Collins: The members of the armed bands of Vermont organized in the 1770s to oppose New York's territorial claims. Under Ethan Allen they won fame in the War of American Independence.

It was at once apparent, however, that the genealogical relationship of the two dictionaries was much more complicated than that of Barnhart (*ACD*), Hanks (*EWD*), and *Macquarie*. *Collins English Dictionary* had no illustrations, whereas *Random House* had an average of two or three per opening. *Collins* had a high proportion of proper names; by comparison *Random House* had relatively few, and some of these were not in *Collins*.

Collins	Random House
Hoad, Lew A.	Hoangho (China)
Hobart	Hoare, Sir Samuel
Hobbema, Meindert	Hobart
Hobbes, Thomas	Hobbema, Meindert
Hobbs, Sir John Berry	Hobbes, Thomas
Hoboken (Belgium)	Hobbs (New Mexico)
Hochhuth, Rolf	Hoboken (New Jersey)
Ho Chi Minh	Hobson, Richmond Pearson
Ho Chi Minh City	Hoccleve, Thomas
Hockney, David	Ho Chi Minh

The sharing of names is not such as to suggest any kind of direct indebtedness except in so far as any such list is useful in establishing and carrying out a policy for a particular class of lexical items.

The collation of medieval manuscripts is often assisted by seeking out shared errors. An error found in two of a number of manuscripts of the same text helps to establish the line of descent. But this stemmatological method does not help in the present case. I found a recurring error in *Collins*, namely the repetition of phrases like *to bury the hatchet* and *to burn one's fingers*, once under the first main word in the phrase and then under the other main word, differently defined in each case. Thus:

bury the hatchet, to cease hostilities and become reconciled.

bury the *hatchet*, to make peace.

burn one's fingers (*informal*), to suffer from having meddled or interfered.

burn one's *fingers*, to suffer as a result of incautious or meddlesome action.

Such duplication, with diverging definitions in the same book, occurs repeatedly in *Collins: beat* about the *bush, toe* the *line*, a fine *kettle* of *fish, flog* a dead *horse*, etc. But there is nothing of the kind in *Random House*. Some other stemmatological explanation of this fault needs to be found.

I have shown one stemma (Barnhart's *ACD*/Hanks' *EWD*/*Macquarie*) where the relationship of the dictionaries is crudely direct – a second (*Random House/Collins*) in which a relationship exists but is much more of a cross-cousin sort than anything more direct – and a third (*Webster's Third/OED*) where the smaller of the two dictionaries is entirely independent until it reaches the limits of its citational evidence.

Webster's Ninth Collegiate

My final piece of circumstantial evidence from modern times comes from *Webster's Ninth Collegiate* (1983). I quote from the preface: 'Before the first entered sense of each entry for a generic word, the user of this *Collegiate* will find a date that indicates when the earliest example known to us of the use of that sense was written or printed.'

It is instructive to see the thousands of signposted dates throughout the dictionary. They form one of the two main new features of *Webster's Ninth* as compared with *Webster's Eighth* (1973). Our old friends *anus, euphemism*, and *irritable* are unchanged between 1973 and 1983 in all main respects – pronunciation, part of speech, etymology, and the wording of the definitions.[7] But the definition of *anus* is preceded by the date (15c); that of *euphemism* by the date (*c.* 1656); and that of *irritable* by the date (1662) – in other words by the date of the first quotation for each of these words in the *OED*.

I tested *Webster's Ninth* in the range *Kikuyu* to *kiwi fruit*, and the pattern was the same. In every case for words that existed before 1900 the date provided was taken from the *OED*. Thus:

	OED or OEDS 2 (1976)	Webster's Ninth (1983)
Kikuyu	1894	1894
Kilim (carpet)	1881	1881
kill, v.	c1330	14c
kill sb.[2]	1669	1669
kill-joy	1776	1776
kindle, v.	c1200	13c

For words of our own century the earliest examples in their own files normally coincided in date with those of the *OED* and supplementary volumes:

	OEDS 2 (1976)	Webster's Ninth (1983)
kilobyte	1970	1970
kilocurie	1946	1946
kilohertz	1929	1929
kiss of life	1961	1961

But in a few cases *Webster's Ninth's* dates were earlier than ours. In other words they had on file quotations of an earlier date than the earliest in our files:

	OEDS 2 (1976)	Webster's Ninth (1983)
kilobar	1928	1926
kiss of death	1948	1943
kitchen sink (of drama)	1954	1941

These minor discrepancies apart, a main and impressive feature of a new edition of a famous American dictionary is heavily dependent on another dictionary, specifically the dates provided in the volumes of the *OED*.

Precedents

Such direct dependence of one dictionary on another is not restricted to the present century, and it is not part of my argument that it is

reprehensible, except in so far as the dependence is euphemistically concealed by publishing houses by the use of phrases like 'having access to' or concealed by a failure to mention the existence of any antecedents at all. Let me turn back to the eighteenth century. Plagiarism – *'the wrongful appropriation or purloining and publication as one's own, of the ideas, or the expression of the ideas (literary, artistic, musical, mechanical, etc.) of another' (OED)* – is a relatively modern concept. Medieval European authors took it as axiomatic that their main purpose was to 'translate' or adapt the great works of their predecessors. The word *plagiarism* itself is first recorded in 1621, but the association of *plagiarism* with guilt and furtiveness came rather later. In lexicographical terms, lists of 'hard words' steadily increased in size throughout the medieval and Early Modern period as glossators took over earlier lists and amplified them. The first English dictionaries in the seventeenth century had a direct relationship to these lists of hard words (as Jürgen Schäfer has largely demonstrated)[8]. Adoption signified acceptance of and approval of earlier work. Each new dictionary was better than the one that preceded it because the undoubted riches of the exemplar were being added to by the new compiler. The lexicographers were rather like the beneficiaries of a will – 'Look', they seemed to say, 'I have inherited all these gems from my predecessors . . . I have kept them all and here are some more.'

Let me illustrate the point from some eighteenth-century dictionaries. Compare the definitions of *Elysian Fields* in the dictionaries of John Kersey (*Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum*, 1708) and Nathan Bailey (*A Universal Etymological English Dictionary*, 1721) – I have italicized the trivial differences:

> **Kersey** (*1708*). *Elysian Fields*, a certain Paradise of delightful Meadows, into which the Heathens held that the Souls of Just Men pass'd after Death.

> **Bailey** (*1721*). *Elysian Fields*, a certain Paradice of delightful *Groves and* Meadows, into which the Heathens held that the Souls of *good* Men passed after Death.

Comparison of John Ray's *Collection of English Proverbs* (1670) with the same dictionary of Bailey's produces the same broad result, a more than coincidental likeness of phraseology:

> **Ray** (*1670*). As wise as a Man of Gotham (*Nottinghamshire*). It passeth for the Periphrasis of a fool, and an hundred fopperies are feigned on the Towns folk of Gotham, a village in this County.

> **Bailey** (*1721*). As wise as a Man of Gotham. This proverb passes for the Periphrasis of a Fool, and an hundred Fopperies are feigned and father'd on the Townfolk of Gotham, a Village in Nottinghamshire.

These examples are taken from the standard book on the subject, *The English Dictionary from Cawdrey to Johnson 1604–1755* (by D. T. Starnes and G. E. Noyes, 1946). But any comparison of eighteenth-century dictionaries, one with another, shows at once that direct adoption of material from an earlier source was *not* considered a matter for reproach. Dr Johnson's definition of a technical meaning of the word *counter* –

> of a *Horse*, is that part of the horse's forehand that lies between the shoulder and under the neck

– is for all practical purposes the same as that in Nathan Bailey's *Dictionarium Britannicum* (1730) –

> [of a *Horse*] is that part of the fore-hand of a horse, that lies between the shoulder and under the neck.

This definition and also that of *fetlock* are taken in all essentials from a slightly earlier *Farrier's Dictionary*. It would be easy to multiply cases of more or less exact carrying-over of definitions.

But my hypothetical lexicographical genealogist would not always find the going so easy. Other considerations took Samuel Johnson far from Nathan Bailey when it suited him. For example, Bailey took an extremely encyclopaedic view of the word *fever*, and gave it the kind of treatment one would expect to find in a large medical dictionary. He dealt with twenty-one specified kinds of fever (*continual fever, intermitting fever, a hectic fever, putrid fever, a quotidian fever*, and so on) with each one fully defined. Johnson merely defined *fever* as

> a disease in which the body is violently heated, and the pulse quickened, or in which heat and cold prevail by turns. It is sometimes continual, sometimes intermittent.

Similarly, under *God*, Bailey (1730) gives the names of all the Roman gods (Juno, Jupiter, etc.), and then deals with 'deities' of other kinds (*Mens*, the mind; *Honor*, honour; *Pietas*, piety; etc.) with full definitions, the whole entry running to a column-and-a-half of large folio size. Johnson's treatment is much more restrained:

> 1. The Supreme Being. 2. A false god; an Idol. 3. Any person or thing deified or too much honoured.

Exact resemblance of definition is commonplace and seems to have been not regarded as objectionable. But perhaps the more frequent procedure of the time was a recognizable kind of adaptation. A rather vivid example of this is shown by comparing the definitions of the word *Ascarides* in Nathan Bailey (1730), Ephraim Chambers's *Cyclopaedia* (1751), and Samuel Johnson (1755). For those with a tender stomach, the definitions that follow are not very suitable!

> **Bailey** (*1730*). Arse-Worms, a kind of little Worms sometimes found in the Rectum, which tickle it, and are troublesome.
>
> **Chambers** (*1751*). In medicine, a slender sort of worms, found in the intestinum rectum, chiefly of children, and frequently voided with their fæces; sometimes also adhering to the fundament, or even pendent from it. [Followed by two more sentences of encyclopaedic detail.]

Johnson, with these and other definitions before him, chose as usual the shorter style:

> Little worms in the rectum, so called from their continual troublesome motion, causing an intolerable itching.

In such cases the resemblances are oblique and the precise sources need to be ascertained.

In this computerized age a new bibliographical game can now be played. The rules are those of genealogy and very similar to those so laboriously carried out by the 'recensionists' and the 'eclecticists' when considering the relationship of medieval manuscripts. The genealogical relationship of dictionaries – a subject not hitherto easy to approach because copies of *all* the relevant works are seldom to be found in the library that one

happens to work in, even those as great as the Bodleian Library in Oxford, the British Library in London, or the Library of Congress in Washington – can shortly be attempted as a brand-new branch of the humanities.

The relevant dictionaries, including the *OED*, are making their way into microcomputers; and the information within them needs only to be captured in the proper way for it to be possible to demonstrate the relationship of one dictionary to another in a manner that up till now could only be done with great difficulty. If analysis of a much more sophisticated and systematic kind is undertaken than I have attempted here, it will be of interest to discover what effect the results will have on modern dictionary houses as the more intimate relationships – everything that has been furtively copied or covertly concealed – are brought to the surface and shown to us all.

Computer science can achieve some miraculous things. Here is a small area of scholarship that might bring some ancient habits into question; or, alternatively, it might take the word *plagiarism* right out of the subject as an unnecessarily delicate consideration in the provision of information for mankind.

Notes

1. A. L. Reade, *Johnson's Early Life*, 1946, p. 157. The evidence is set out in tabulated form by A. R. Wagner in his *English Genealogy* (1960), Table III.
2. A well-known anti-recensionist scholar in the Vinaver/Greg tradition is a Canadian, Professor George Kane, and his edition of the A-Text of *Piers Plowman*, 1960, is a classic of its kind.
3. *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle*, edited from B. M. Cotton MS. Cleopatra C. VI. pp. ix, xii.
4. '*adj.* 1. Stupefying: producing stupor – *n.* 2. a drug or agent that produces stupor. [L *stupefaciens*, ppr., stupefying].'
5. The omission is evidently due to the Australian lack of interest in '*Amer. Ind. Legend*, the culture hero and trickster of the American Indians of the West (sometimes human, sometimes animal).'
6. Identical except for the substitution of 'Aboriginal' for 'native Australian'.
7. With the minor exception that *Webster's Ninth* inserts 'perh.' in the etymology of *anus*. *Webster's Eighth* said 'akin to OI *äinne* anus', and *Webster's Ninth* 'perh. akin to OIr *äinne* anus'.
8. See his several articles in learned journals, for example 'Chaucer in Shakespeare's Dictionaries: The Beginning' (*The Chaucer Review*, Vol. 17, No. 2).