The Lexicography of Englishes in the Postcolonial World

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James LAMBERT

Fatih University

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APPROVAL PAGE

Student **:** James LAMBERT

Institute **:** Institute of Social Sciences

Department **:** English Language and Literature

Thesis Subject **:** The Lexicography of Englishes in the Postcolonial World

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I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

(Prof. Visam Mansur)
Head of Department

This is to certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

(Assist Prof. Philippe A. Constant Barbe)
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

(Assist Prof. Philippe A. Constant Barbe) …….

(Assist Prof. Visam Mansur) …….

(Assist Prof. Sheenagh Pietrobruno) …….

It is approved that this thesis has been written in compliance with the formatting rules laid down by the Graduate Institute of Social Sciences.

(Assoc. Prof. Gökhan Bacık)
Director

AUTHOR DECLARATIONS

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

2. The advanced study in the English Language and Literature graduate program of which this thesis is part has consisted of:

i) English literature as well as American literature including novel, poetry, and drama studies, a comparative approach to world literatures, and examination of several literary theories as well as critical approaches which have contributed to this thesis in an effective way.

ii) The thesis is composed of main sources: poem, novella and novel extracts, and secondary sources, particularly scholarly articles from a variety of journals and theoretical books.

James LAMBERT

June, 2009

ABSTRACT

James LAMBERT **June 2009**

The Lexicography of Englishes in the Postcolonial World

The global spread of English throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has resulted in the growth of numerous varieties of English, or, World Englishes. The centre/margin binarism that existed in English during the British Colonial era is now beginning to shift. Formerly peripheral Englishes, such as Caribbean English, Singaporean English, Indian English, Australian English, African-American English, Australian Aboriginal English, and many others, have attracting a great deal of academic interest from by linguists, lexicographers and educators.

Postcolonial theory has attacked European/Orientalist production from many angles, literature, philosophy, anthropology/ethnology, cartography and philology, including both insipient and later comparative or scientific philology. However, so far most critiques of lexicography have been restricted to bilingual dictionaries, with scant attention paid to dictionaries of English in colonial and postcolonial situations. Conversely, postcolonial theory has yet to make a substantial impact in the field of lexicography.

This thesis will look at lexicography in relation to postcolonial theory, comparing some signature lexicographic works of the colonial era, firstly against each other and then against current dictionaries, in order to observe the workings of lexicographic and Orientalist bias, much of which lies hidden beneath the surface. This will lead to a discussion of the nature of dictionaries with regard to the important notion of essentialism.

The study will also draw extensively upon postcolonial literatures in assessing the current lexicographical coverage of World Englishes. Finally, the thesis will offer practical ways for lexicography to move forward towards creating dictionaries that respond to the present postcolonial world more rigorously and sympathetically.

Key words:

Lexicography, postcolonial literature, postcolonialism, orientalism, world Englishes, *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Hobson-Jobson*.

KISA ÖZET

James LAMBERT **Haziran 2009**

Sömürgecilik sonrası Dünyada İnglizice Sözlük Yazımı

Ondokuz ve Yirminci yüzyıllarda, İngilizce'nin tüm dünyada yayılışı, farklı tarzlarda İngilizcenin, veya başka bir ifadeyle dünya İngilizceler'inin çıkmasıyla sonuçlanmıştır. İngiliz sömürü döneminde var olan merkez/çevre ikiliği artık değişmeye başlamıştır. Önceleri marjinal olan Karayip, Singapur, Hindistan, Avustralya, Afro-Amerikan, Avustralya Yerlisi ve diğer başka İngilizceler, dillbilimcilerin, leksikografların ve eğitmenlerin akademik manada ilgisini çekmektedir.

Sömürü sonrası teori, Avrupalı/Orientalist yaklaşıma bir çok yönden saldırmıştır; bu taarruz edebiyat, felsefe, antropoloji/etnoloji, kartografi, ilk başta ilkel sonraları ise karşılaştırmalı yahut bilimsel olmak üzere dilbilim açısından gerçekleşmiştir. Ne var ki, bu vakte kadar sözlükçülük eleştirilerinin çoğu sadece iki dilli sözlüklerle sınırlı kalmıştır; sömürü ve sömürü sonrası durumları içine alan İngilizce sözlük ise az sayıda yer almıştır. Buna zıt olarak, sömürü sonrası teorinin sözlükçülük alanına oldukça büyük etkileri olduğu âşikardır.

Bu çalışma, sömürge dönemi sözlükçülük çalışmalarını, ilk olarak birbiriyle, daha sonra ise günümüz sözlükleriyle karşılaştırarak, sözlük bilimini müstemleke sonrası teori bağlamında inceleyecektir; ulaşılmak istenen amaç, sözlük bilimi çalışmalarını ve gizli kalmış oryantalist önyargıyı incelemektir. Bu bizi, sözlüklerin doğasını özcülük (essentialism) bağlamında tartışmaya sevk edecektir.

Ayrıca, bu çalışma müstemleke sonrası edebiyatı, Dünya İngilizceler'inin şu anki sözlükleştirilme oranını değerlendirmede kullanacaktır. Ve son olarak da, bu tez çalışması, şu anki sömürge sonrası dünyaya daha doğru ve uygun bir şekilde hitap eden sözlüklerin hazırlanması amacıyla, sözlükçülüğün gelişmesine fayda sağlayacak kullanışlı yollar sunacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Sözlükçülük, müstemleke sonrası edebiyat, sömürge sonrası, şarkiyatçılık, dünya İngilizceleri, *Oxford English Dictionary, Hobson-Jobson*.

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INTRODUCTION: OVERLAPPING BUT SEPARATED

English-language lexicography and postcolonial theory are two fields of academic concern and endeavour that overlap in terms of subject area, but at the same time seem to exist almost entirely separated from one another in terms of influence or even recognition of the other. Postcolonial theory, while having an abundance to say about philology and language classification, has been largely silent on English language lexicography. Meanwhile, lexicography has drawn little or no inspiration or guidance from postcolonial theory. As a result, and as this paper will demonstrate, English language lexicography has not effectively dealt with the vastness of postcolonial literature.

The nexus between these disciplines is multifaceted. Firstly, dictionaries lay claim to, and are generally believed to record, the meanings of words in an unbiased and dispassionate way: or in other words, the descriptive lexicographical tradition makes a merit of scientific detachment. Using postcolonial criticism it is possible to demonstrate the ways in which colonialist/western bias is encoded in both historic and current dictionaries and thus effectively explode this lexicographical positioning. Secondly, there has indeed been some recognition and attempt to record the lexis found in postcolonial literatures in current lexicographical works. These attempts have arisen partially from linguistic interest in the growth and varieties of English, and partially as a result of the fact that publishers wish to sell into foreign, postcolonial markets. However, for the most part efforts in this direction have been modest at best, and woeful at worst. The review of some signature postcolonial texts undertaken in this paper reveals the astounding extent of this lack, and highlights

some of the difficulties that such Englishes pose for lexicographers. Furthermore, postcolonial theory has critiqued European/Orientalist production from many angles: literature, philosophy, anthropology/ethnology, cartography and philology, including both insipient and later comparative or scientific philology. However, so far most critiques of lexicography have been restricted to bilingual dictionaries, with scant attention paid to dictionaries of English in colonial and postcolonial situations. This deficiency is addressed through a thorough analysis of two British lexicographical works of the colonial era, Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell's classic *Hobson-Jobson*, 1886, and the pinnacle of English-language lexicography, the *New English Dictionary*, 1884–1933. This is followed with further scrutiny of various modern-day dictionaries which claim to cover "world English" or a certain variety of English.

To some extent, the unconnectedness of postcolonial theory and current English language lexicography does not come as a surprise for while the two academic fields treat the same subject area, they do so from quite different perspectives and with quite different goals. Postcolonial theory, grounded in Gramscian thought on hegemony, Foucauldian discourse theory and the Saidean interpretation of Orientalism, is concerned with understanding, elucidating and critiquing the until recently overlooked connection between Western imperialist power structures and Western literature, and how this has effected modern postcolonial literatures. English language lexicography is concerned with defining words of the English language. The overlap is that dictionaries treat, and also 'purport' to treat, the very language that postcolonial theory has as its subject, the language of imperialism, the language of the orientalists, and the language of postcolonial literatures. Historically, dictionaries themselves were part of the grand

imperial and orientalist production, and this legacy continues to the present day. The decentralisation of the traditional literary and critical canon and the concomitant refocusing on formerly marginalised voices brought about by postcolonial theory is an academic and intellectual movement that has little to no effect on modern lexicographical practices.

Situated somewhere between lexicography and literary theory is the field of linguistics. Lexicography is often viewed as a subfield of linguistics, and certainly many linguists have done double duty as lexicographers. The contributions of linguistics to literary theory are amply demonstrated by the influence of Ferdinand de Saussure on poststructuralism. Further, at least to a certain extent, linguistics, especially sociolinguistics, deals with the language of postcolonial societies. However, despite this tripartite connection and overlapping field of interest, there appears to be little synthesis or synergy between the three academic regimes.

While both literary theory and linguistics have an academic audience and so are, in part at least, funded by the global academic machine, the audience of lexicography is, for the most part, the book-buying public and is funded by publishing houses which need to turn a profit in order to survive.

Despite these differences, there is much to be gained on both sides from the other. There is a certain dilemma centred about the divergence between theory (criticism) and practice (publishing). On the one hand, theory views language as indeterminate, multilayered, and historically contingent and highlights the workings of hegemony, essentialism, and other power structures of western literatures, including scientific, linguistic, and, occasionally, lexicographical writings. On the other hand, the lexicographical process is that of simplifying, codifying,

particularising, making generalisations, constrained by size, time and publishing pressures, always performed under the Damoclean sword of economic reality. If the product is not viable, it will not be published. The challenge for Anglophone lexicography is to find new ways of dealing with language in order to respond sensitively and ethically to the realities of both a colonial history and a postcolonial world. I propose in this paper that dictionaries are another site in which the concerns of postcolonial theory and the new perspectives it provides can be further elucidated and more widely disseminated.

The structure of this paper, like that of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, is historical, beginning with the earliest English-language dictionaries, moving to dictionaries of the colonial era, and then finally onto present day lexicographical works. Throughout, constant recourse to colonial and postcolonial discourse theory is made in order to elucidate the ways in which lexicographers have continued to incorporate and perpetuate colonial biases in their various dictionaries over the years. Such a structure necessarily places the discussion of postcolonial literatures towards the end rather than the beginning of the analysis section. Following the analysis the final chapter deals with some possible solutions to the problems and difficulties highlighted in the analysis. A sample diachronic dictionary entry for the word *bheesti* which incorporates the suggestions of the final chapter is to be found as an Appendix.

CHAPTER 1: THE EXPANSION OF ENGLISH

Before discussing either lexicography or postcolonialism, it is necessary to get a clear notion of the global spread of the English language and how it has become dehomogenised into the numerous varieties found throughout the world today. In his 1884 introduction to the *New English Dictionary* (to become later more famously known as the *Oxford English Dictionary*), editor-in-chief James Murray stated that "the circle of the English language has a well-defined centre but no discernible circumference" and that "there is absolutely no defining line in any direction" (*OED Online*). This state Murray, like a typical Victorian imperialist cartographer, mapped out diagrammatically:

Murray noted that "the above diagram will explain itself", but, nonetheless, went on to say that

> [T]he centre is occupied by the 'common' words, in which literary and colloquial usage meet. 'Scientific' and 'foreign' words enter the

> common language mainly through literature; 'slang' words ascend through colloquial use; the 'technical' terms of crafts and processes, and the 'dialect' words, blend with the common language both in speech and literature. Slang also touches on one side the technical terminology of trades and occupations as in 'nautical slang', 'Public School slang', 'the slang of the Stock Exchange', and on another passes into true dialect. Dialects similarly pass into foreign languages. Scientific terminology passes on one side into purely foreign words, on another it blends with the technical vocabulary of art and manufactures. It is not possible to fix the point at which the 'English language' stops, along any of these diverging lines (*OED Online*).

Murray's diagram beautifully presents a classic centre-periphery binarism. However, the linguistic landscape of English today is greatly different. To some extent Murray's basic diagram still holds true: core words exist in that there is a large set of words common in use, spelling, application and meaning to all varieties of English, and certain lexical items that have begun life as slang and technical language do make their way into that core, however, the situation is now much more complex than Murray's Victorian-era schema allows. To begin with, the diverging line that has seen the greatest expansion is the one that in Victorian-age lexicography was still assigned to 'dialectal'. Today this region of Murray's map encompasses two distinct areas of language: regional dialects, that is, regional variations that exist within a large speech community, and what is now labelled 'varietal' English, that is, relating to varieties of English that have diverged from British English. This latter group is now frequently called World Englishes. With the growth of telecommunications and

of public mobility resulting from advances in transportation, regional dialects have shrunk in Britain, but other new varieties of English, such as American English and Australian English, have also produced their own regional variations.

In the late nineteenth century the English language was still primarily the preserve of England, and with the exception of the United States, English was only spoken outside of the United Kingdom in 'the colonies'. Variations of British English that arose in these colonies were noted at the time, but were generally considered negatively as aberrations or "barbarisms" (Zeigler 595) to be avoided or at best only of relevance in those far away places. Occasionally they were viewed more complimentarily as dialects, representing lexical and phonetic variation attributable to regionality: Joseph Wright's comprehensive *English Dialect Dictionary*, published in six volumes from 1898 to 1905, alongside recording countless words, phrases and idioms of the various dialects of the United Kingdom, also recorded a few words of the Australian and American dialects, and Edward E. Morris' *Austral English: A Dictionary of Australasian Words* published in 1898 is an early example of a favourable consideration of varietal emergence.

The modern-day world is something vastly different from that of the Victorian/colonial era in which the sun never set on the British Empire, however, the postcolonial world (at least as far as English-speaking former colonies are concerned) stills sees English positioned as the major global language and this situation will continue as long as English remains the primary language of the economically advantaged population of the world.

Although the shape of the map has changed, current English lexicography has not progressed far beyond Murray's, now century-old, viewpoint. Other peripheral

Englishes, such as Caribbean English, Singaporean English, Indian English, Australian English, African-American English, Australian Aboriginal English, and scores more, have been attracting a great deal of academic interest from linguists, lexicographers and educators alike, and there is much debate about how to handle the growth and metamorphosis of English. Many questions are thrown up by looking at the diagram in a modern context: Is there still a "well-defined centre"? In terms of numbers of speakers, how is the "circle of English" geometrically transformed? Where does the 'core' lie, if anywhere? Two ends of the spectrum can be seen in comparing the titles of David Crystal's *English as a Global Language*, published in 1997, and Tom McArthur's *The English Languages*, published in 1998. Note that in the former *language* is in the singular, foregrounding homogeneity, whereas the latter title uses the plural form of *language*, signifying diversity (Peters). Together these reveal the complexity of the situation and the unsettled nature of the academic response.

Rejecting a simplistic centre-periphery dichotomy with British or English English at the centre, Linguist Braj B. Kachru promulgated a new schema for envisaging the entirety of English as it is spoken around the globe. He describes 'three circles' of Englishes: the 'Inner Circle' refers to the English of Britain and its settler colonies (the United States and Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa); the 'Outer Circle' refers to second-wave English that begun when administrative colonies were set up in Africa and Asia, and where English is still spoken today (India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Singapore, the Philippines, etc.); and the 'Expanding Circle' is those countries in which English was traditionally seen as a foreign language, but is now becoming more common under the influence of the

political and economic power of the USA and Britain (such as, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, etc.) (Bolton and Kachru 3).

This trichotomy has won great favour amongst linguists studying world Englishes, but as with all classifications it has its failings. For instance, it does not take into account English-based pidgins and creoles, which Salikoko S. Mufwene prefers to call 'new Englishes' (55). For instance, Nigerian Pidgin, sadly ill-named as it is no longer technically a pidgin, which is used by over 75 million speakers, a number vastly more than Nigerian Standard English, and greater than nearly every other major variety of English, including British and Australian English (Ihemere 297, 309), is omitted from Kachru's classification. In fact, the precise relevance to dictionary-writers of such classification systems is open to question, for although lexicographers are aware of the Kachruvian recognition of the pluricentricity of English, this knowledge does not seem to have profoundly effected their output. Rather, to the contrary, despite the linguistic interest in the multifarious varieties of English, as a whole they remain either lexicographically unrecognised or well and truly peripheralised. However, even though Kachru's schema may have its flaws, especially in its ability to helpfully classify and delineate all varieties of English, his notion of Inner Circle Englishes can be usefully considered as representing a new type of core when analysing the current state of lexicography. This new concept of core English is quite different to Murray's notion of core English, which was based on those words common to all speakers irrespective of education, occupation and pronunciation. Inner Circle Englishes involve the totality of the privileged varieties of English, including all their idiosyncrasies, dialects, sociolects, pronunciations, usage issues, and slang, regional and technical vocabularies. And significantly it is

this core of Inner Circle Englishes that the vast majority of the output of lexicography serves.

In fact, in terms of the standard synchronic, bilingual and learners' dictionary market, Phil Benson has identified that the core is even more restricted, basically to that of British and American dictionaries. Benson maintains that

> English dictionary-making is structured as an international industry in such a way that dictionaries flow from an Anglo-American linguistic 'center' to a post-colonial and international 'periphery'. ("English Dictionaries" 129)

This current state of play is born of a long lexicographical history going back as far as the seventeenth century and results from a stolid conservatism in dictionary making. Dictionaries are well-known for copying from to another, and this creation of new dictionaries based upon a pervious dictionary, which was in turn based on an earlier dictionary, and so on, has helped to perpetuate not only a certain lexis, and a certain style of writing and layout, but also the traditional core-periphery perspective.

CHAPTER 2. THE PROBLEMS OF LEXICOGRAPHY

Before focusing on specific dictionaries, it is necessary to outline how lexicographical products are more subjective than it is generally believed. A dictionary is a tool to aid understanding, not to fix meaning. This is without a doubt the most misunderstood feature of lexicography. In fact, lexicographical commentator Charlotte Brewer notes that she is continually "struck by the naïve faith with which even sophisticated language users approach dictionaries" (139).

There is a widely-held popular misunderstanding about the form and function of dictionaries. At its most simplest it is the belief that dictionaries record 'real' words, that they are the arbiters of acceptance of words in a language and precisely delineate the 'correct' meaning of words, in short, that "dictionaries regulate English and that words not appearing in them aren't words" (Bailey 604). This conception is in sharp contrast to that held by lexicographers themselves. In lexicographical studies a theoretical distinction is made between *prescriptive* and *descriptive* dictionaries. An ideal prescriptive dictionary, in tune with the common misconception, would be an ultimately authoritative lexicon that prescribes language usage, stating definitively what is right or accepted and what is wrong or unaccepted, in terms of meaning, orthography, pronunciation, and grammar. Embodied in the prescriptive dictionary is the idea of language sharply and infallibly divided into correct and incorrect, good speech and writing contrasted with bad or faulty language, and further that there are language authorities who possess this knowledge. On the other hand, an ideal descriptive dictionary would be the end product of a total scientific analysis of language usage, accepting all variant usages as valid and describing all in detail. It

rejects the notion of correct/incorrect language as insupportable and unscientific value judgement.

Neither of these ideals have been reached, yet over the vast history of dictionary production works have appeared that have tended more towards one extreme than the other. As Benson, Benson and Ilson note "[t]he struggle between prescriptivism and descriptivism has been waged since Johnson's *Dictionary* appeared in 1755" (216). Early English dictionaries were in the 'hard word' tradition, that is, they only included difficult words, not the general words of the language already commonly understood, and thus were intended as instructive tools for scholars, as the title of the very first English-English dictionary (Burchfield 78), Robert Cawdrey's *Table Alphabeticall* of 1604, reveals:

> ***A*** **Table Alphabeticall,** conteyning and teaching the true writing, and vnderstanding of hard vsuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French. &c. With the interpretation thereof by *plaine English words, gathered for the benefit & helpe of Ladies, Gentlewomen, or any other vnskilfull persons.* Whereby they may the more easily and better vnderstand many hard English wordes, which they shall heare or read in Scriptures, Sermons, or elswhere, and also be made able to vse the same aptly themselues.

Here the biases of the dictionary are plainly laid out: it is authoritative, it teaches 'true' spelling and meaning, and it is primarily geared toward better understanding (Christian) religious texts. Definitions taken from early dictionaries also reveal obvious biases, such as the definition of *Moloch* as "The name of an Idoll, in the vally of Ennon, in the tribe of Beniamin, to which the Israelites did abhominably

offer their children, in sacrifice of fire" (Bullokar), or that for *sodomitrie*: "when one man lyeth filthylie with another man" (Cawdrey), or Randall Cotgrave's French-English dictionary's definition for *bougironner* "To bugger; to commit (horrible) Sodomie".

The use of such emotionally and morally charged words as "abominably", "filthily" and "horrible" are not to be met with in modern dictionaries even when defining terms that refer to things which are universally reviled. Consider the *Macquarie Dictionary*'s definition of *child molester*: "a person who sexually assaults a child", or *child bashing*: "physical maltreatment of a child, especially by a parent or guardian". Such definitions represent the other end of the spectrum. Here there is no emotional content and no obvious political or ethical loading to the definitions. They are as unemotional as legal definitions, clinical as a medical report, they are the sort of definition one might expect from a science fictional robot. This descriptive tradition was promoted as far back as 1857 by Richard Chenevix Trench, Dean of Westminster and active member of the Philological Society, in a series of highly-influential lectures that were in part responsible for inspiring the grand undertaking of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Trench maintained that

> [i]t is no task of the [dictionary] maker…to select the *good* words of a language. If he fancies that is so, and begins to pick and choose, to leave this and to take that, he will at once go astray. The business he has undertaken is to collect and arrange all the words, whether good or bad, whether they commend themselves to his judgment or otherwise, which…those writing in the language have employed. He is an historian of [language], not a critic. The *delectus verborum*, on

> which so much, on which nearly everything in style depends, is a matter with which *he* has no concern. (4-5)

In is interesting to see here that while Trench is clearly speaking out against lexicographical bias, he unconsciously is promulgating yet another bias towards the written language – "those writing in the language" – as opposed to the spoken or colloquial, bringing to mind the postcolonial critique of the primacy literature as opposed to orature, which we will return to later. Trench continues on the topic of the dictionary as standard:

> There is a constant confusion here in men's minds. They conceive of a Dictionary as though it had this function, to be a standard of the language; and the pretensions to be this which the French Dictionary of the Academy sets up, may have helped on this confusion. It is nothing of the kind. …I cannot understand how any writer with the smallest confidence in himself…should consent in this matter to let one self-made dictator, or forty, determine for him what words he should use, and what he should forbear from using. (5)

Of course, it would strike a happy chord with his mid-Victorian audience to slight the French Academy as petty dictators and French writers as essentially lacking in confidence, but this comment is more than a light-hearted jibe for it intrinsically links lexicography with nationalism. Georges-Elia Sarfati, in his analysis of the connection between Jewish identity and dictionary definitions notes that dictionaries are subject to "three major criteria of general discourse analysis" (495) in that they "form part of a discourse community whose dynamic relates to the way that they are produced, circulated, and received", they "constitute part of an important network of

intertextual relations [by] applying a firm principle of repetition among entries" and that the "range of physical media (from printed to on-line information) puts the dictionary on an equal footing with other types of discourse" (495). Sarfati details how French dictionaries defined the term Jew politically:

> [I]t is significant that the redefinition of the Jews' political status went hand in hand with confirmation of their perceived identity in terms of religion (more than ever, Judaism was defined as a religion that had emerged from Mosaic monotheism). (501)

This creation of definitionary boundaries for the term *Jew*, has the knock-on effect of assisting to define in opposition other nationalities that are not Jewish, both othering and Othering, a process that plays a part in the creation and maintenance of national identities, revealing lexicographic definitions in the descriptive tradition to be much more than simple apolitical descriptions. In a similar vein, Tony Crowley explains how in the context of early seventeenth-century Ireland "English became the vehicle of a modern form of linguistic imperialism and colonialism" (122). For Crowley, dictionaries are

> published in particular circumstances, with certain resources, and with specific aims and purposes; they are not neutral records or apolitical catalogues of words, but rather interventions in historical struggles over and for language. (139)

Returning to Cawdrey's *Table Alphabeticall*, Sylvia Brown notes that "as well as a dictionary maker, Cawdrey was a Puritan preacher" (136) and published "other pedagogical and evangelical tracts alongside which the dictionary can be read, and from which an informing and reforming ideological program can be inferred" (136).

This ulterior proselytising agenda, Brown convincingly argues, was particularly aimed at women, the *Ladies* and *Gentlewomen* of the dictionary's title, who, "[o]nce converted, …would be in a good position to convert their families" (143).

Of course, publicly, the descriptive tradition makes a merit of scientific detachment, the very foundation stone of a supposed or purported lack of editorial bias. As per Trench, it is not the place of the descriptive lexicographer to pass value judgements on words, how they are used, or, the people who use them. According to the theory, the lexicographer merely records and describes, dispassionately, without bias. This lexicographic attitude was abundantly demonstrated in 1994 when a media storm arose in Australia over the inclusion of some phrases disrespectful to nuns were found by a Catholic school teacher to be included in *The Macquarie Thesaurus*: the response of the lexicographers responsible was phlegmatically resolute:

> A member of the editorial board of the Macquarie Dictionary, Mr David Blair, said that there would be no apology and no removal of the phrases. The offending phrases included 'Dry as a Nun's c---' and 'Dry as a Nun's nasty', and 'Cold as a nun's tits'. (qtd in Lambert, 2005)

Rather than demonstrating a callousness to the sensitivities of deeply religious people, to their mind the lexicographers were displaying their concern for maintaining their academic detachedness and honestly applying the stated rules of their craft. The phrases in question are reasonably well known, and well attested in the lexicographical record in variant forms from at least the 1950s – phrase 'dry as a nun's nasty' appears as early as 1968 (Humphries 71) and 'cold as a nun's cunt' was recorded in a glossary of Australian prison slang dating back to 1955 (Lambert, 2004

71) – and as such are valid entries for a comprehensive dictionary or thesaurus of the Australian idiom, however, the real question should perhaps have been not *whether* the phrases should be included, but rather, *how* and *where* they should be included.

Twentieth century lexicography has very clearly taken up residence in the descriptive camp, backed in no small part by a strong conception of linguistics as a hard science: all major dictionaries currently available are descriptive dictionaries, though perhaps a better term would be non-prescriptive, as it is the blanket eschewal of prescriptiveness that has more motivated the style of lexicographical entries. Perhaps the pinnacle of the lofty goal of non-prescriptiveness was the third edition of *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, which was published in 1961 under the editorial directorship of Philip Babcock Gove (Burchfield 91). This dictionary was attacked for daring to give descriptive lexicographical treatment to so debased a word as *ain't* – a word which can nowadays be found unremarkably in any dictionary of reasonable size.[1] The *New Century Dictionary* of 1927 labelled *ain't* as 'vulgar', and the 1934 *Webster's* listed it 'dial. or illit.' (Bailey 604). Gove waxed uncharacteristically prolix with the pragmatic information for this word, stating that *ain't* was, "though disapproved by many and more common in less educated speech, used orally in most parts of the U.S. by many cultivated speakers". This seemingly tame and presumably accurate description "created a firestorm of criticism" (Bailey 604) at the time, with critics claiming that Webster's had "abandoned its role as supreme authority" and had left "the language to chaos and mob rule" (Faris 836). Such criticisms derive from perspectives that favour written forms of the language over oral forms, which, in fact, Gove's entire dictionary did, with *ain't* being an exception to the norm. However, it should be kept in mind that all dictionaries have

their detractors, and all detractors can find fault at every page. As Dennis Baron so insightfully sums up:

> It looks like lexicographers, even those balancing description with usage advice, just can't manage to please the critics, who seem to find both prescription and description objectionable at any given moment (205).

Here the very crux of the situation is exposed: all dictionaries, no matter what their purported goal or position, must necessarily strike a balance between prescription and description. As erstwhile editor of the *OED*, Robert Burchfield, makes clear, there is "no clear boundary between the doctrines of prescriptivism and those of descriptivism, much more than an attitude of mind (91).

The reasons for this are manifold. The first is that dictionaries are publishing ventures as well as academic constructs. In other words, the publishing houses that invest the enormous origination costs need to make money at the end of the day, and thus they have the final say. All dictionaries, no matter what their size, are restricted in size: limited page extent, typographical issues, binding constraints, single versus multiple volumes, paper availability and price, all of which are once again factored in by publishers when projecting sales figures and bottom lines (Brewer 140). Certain configurations, while lexicographically desirable, are often not financially viable, and lexicographers at the publishing coalface are sensitive to the limitations by which they are bound.

Furthermore, publishers are also aware that the dictionary buying public, and perhaps more importantly dictionary reviewers, are generally more opinionated than discerning: they have their cherished shibboleths and will immediately turn to the

relevant pages to weigh up any new product. The idea of the dictionary as language guardian and authority is an astoundingly persistent notion. The most salient demonstration of kowtowing to public opinion perhaps being the fact that the two principle taboo words in the English language, *fuck* and *cunt*, did not appear in any synchronic, general purpose dictionary from 1795 (Ash) until the heady, permissive 1960s which saw the publishers Penguin boldly reinstate them (Sheidlower). This non-inclusion effectively labelled the two words as bad words, or non-words. Despite Trench's admirable admonitions against making value judgements about good and bad words the *OED* did not cover the English language's premier taboo words, *fuck* and *cunt*, until the 1972 supplement by Burchfield. Similarly, in 1961 Philip Babcock Gove, editor-in-chief of the *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, decided to omit these two words, apparently out of fear that a negative public reaction would have adversely affected sales. Webster's users had to wait until 1976 before they could see these common, everyday terms defined in the oddly titled and largely ignored supplemental *6000 Words: A Supplement to "Webster's Third New International Dictionary"*. Nowadays all English dictionaries for the adult, native-speaker market include these words as a matter of course.

Publishing economics and customer bias aside, there is, more importantly, never a clear dividing line between what is considered variation and what error, even by linguists. Consider the spelling pronunciation /ɛpiˈtoʊm/ for *epitome* (/əˈpɪtəmi/ or /ɪˈpɪtəmi/), which has never graced the pages of any dictionary, or even the common (mis?)pronunciation /ɛn ˈmæs/ for *en masse*, or even the exceedingly prevalent (mis?)spelling *en mass*. A Google search (performed 20 December 2007),[2] restricted to English language websites, reveals *en masse* registering 7,530,000 hits

and *en mass* 174,000 hits. Further, a search on Google Books reveals numerous books published by reputable publishing houses, from the nineteenth century to present, in which the 'incorrect' spelling is used. This means that the supposedly 'illiterate' or 'uneducated' spelling is used roughly 2% of the time, a significant number given the relative frequencies of other spelling variants that dictionaries find acceptable, such as *parrakeet* (*Macquarie Dictionary*) which, according to Google, is used about only 1.5% against the more usual *parakeet*, but is not perceived as erroneous.

Another example of the type of lexical material ignored by dictionaries is the invariant *be*, and the inflected form of the copular/auxiliary, *bes*, both features of the speech of both black and white speakers in certain parts of the United States (Montgomery; Vierack). All of these firmly fall into the category of 'error', at least according to lexicographers, who, despite their lofty ideals of pure descriptivism, still necessarily make what amount to prescriptive value judgements. Although this may be an unwanted inevitability, it is nevertheless inevitable.

In fact, making judgements is what dictionary writing is all about. Lexicography is an evaluative process. Although lexicographers base their entries on research – citation collection, reading programs, corpus analysis – when it comes to writing entries, decisions have to be made at every point. It is not just a question of contentious pronunciations or spellings; lexicographers have to decide where semantic boundaries lie: Is it one definition or two? Should it be a sub-definition? Is it just systematic polysemy? Is it a transparent compound? Another judgement is whether a word is common or important enough to be entered. For example, while the second edition of *Webster's New International Dictionary* contained 600,000

vocabulary items, and the third edition only 450,000, a figure arrived at by excising 250,000 words they considered archaic and adding 100,000 new terms, significantly mostly scientific in nature (Shuy 352). Naturally, such as “processes of inclusion and exclusion, authorization and definition, involve[s] choice” (Crowley 138). Charlotte Brewer complains that there is a “deeply lodged belief … that lexicographers choose their words in a neutral and unfettered way”, but states that “nothing could be further from the truth” (140). Lexicographical decision-making not only requires critical judgement, but also requires judgements to be made on a limited body of research. While it is comforting to suppose that dictionary entries are written based on analysis of enormous data sets, all too often the available citational evidence is scanty, and dictionary editors frequently rely on native-speaker intuition to supplement their research, even when they have redress to electronic corpora as is increasingly the case. It is a “well known problem in defining that many citations do not provide sufficient information for the definer to make a comfortable decision about the semantic subfield that a given quotation belongs in” (Pickett 144). There is an unavoidable give and take between practical concerns – usefulness, economic limitations, time pressures – and academic desirability. A wholly descriptive, or for that matter prescriptive, dictionary of the entirety of what is called the English language is a utopian ideal never to be realised.

CHAPTER 3. THE COLONIAL ERA: *HOBSON-JOBSON* AND THE *NED* AND LEXICOGRAPHICAL BIAS: VISIBLE AND VEILED

So far we have seen that the global spread of English from a British core has resulted in the wide application of a core-periphery perspective. Further, despite claims of objectivity, lexicography is inalienably subjective. When coupled together, these two aspects of lexicography provide a fertile ground for the growth of the type of cultural and hegemonic ideas that are central to the postcolonial critique of literature, and it is no surprise to find imperialist attitudes in colonial dictionary products. Nevertheless, a detailed analysis of such bias is highly instructive, as it provides concrete examples of the ways in which such bias is encoded into dictionaries, ways which are not always explicit or immediately clear. As Edward Said says "[i]t is very important…to understand how patiently the idea of an unencumbered English culture…acquired its authority and its power to impose itself across the seas" (*Culture* 63). The colonial dictionary enterprise laid the groundwork for later lexicography, and thus a Saidean contrapuntal reading of some signature colonial-era dictionaries will reveal "structures of attitude and reference" (61) that underlie the output of the lexicographers.

The two most famous lexicographical products of the nineteenth century globe-encompassing British Empire are the wonderfully named *Hobson-Jobson*,[3] and the world-renowned *Oxford English Dictionary*. *Hobson-Jobson*, subtitled *A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive*, was penned by arch-

Orientalists Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell, and first published in 1886, and finally enlarged in 1903 by William Cooke, which latter edition is still available in reprint.[4] In the words of Andrew Dalby

> It is a historical dictionary of words current in 'Anglo-Indian' and on the Eastern trade routes, from the sixteenth to the end of the nineteenth century. Illustrative quotations, in date order, are drawn from travel narratives and other literature in numerous languages: those in Arabic and other Asian languages are given in translation.

As such this dictionary provides a stellar insight to Britain's colonial world and worldview, particularly concentrating on India but also casting its net over the entirety of Europe's 'Orient' from the very earliest days of contact and trade. In reviewing the work Hindi and Indo-Aryan linguist and scholar Michael C. Shapiro enthusiastically commented that this "treasurehouse of information about British (and, one might add, Portuguese) India" is "a book that anyone who is seriously interested in Indian languages owns, feels guilty about not owning, or ought to own" (474).

Yule and Burnell were not trained lexicographers as there was really no such thing at the time, though they were far from being rank amateurs in their subject area: Yule, a geographer and engineer by trade, had translated Marco Polo and had "an extensive knowledge of Anglo-Indian administrative terminology as well of South Asian material culture" and Burnell was "a trained Sanskritist" (Shapiro). Manfred Görlach notes that "[t]wenty-two earlier glossaries and up to 800 books were unsystematically excerpted and quoted in the ca. 7,400 entries (including proper names)" and that the "editors tried to make the glossary both informative and

entertaining" (151). Nevertheless, *Hobson-Jobson* is a somewhat eclectic selection of material and includes much that would be cast aside by modern dictionary makers.

In contrast, *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, hereafter *NED*, was a vast, multivolume work, involving hundreds of editors and contributors, which comprehensively covers English from 1250 onwards, and was the origin of the now-famous *Oxford English Dictionary*, hereafter *OED*. The original title refers to the first edition, published in fascicles over a 44 year period, beginning in 1884, and proceeding until the final tenth volume in April, 1928. In total the dictionary amounted to a staggering 15,487 three-column pages, treating over 400,000 words, subordinate words, compounds and phrases, based on over 5 million citation slips, of which some 1.8 million were printed (Landau 69). It was, and remains to this day, the greatest single lexicographical work in the English language. In 1933 "a single-volume *Supplement* to the Dictionary was published. Also at this time the original Dictionary was reprinted in twelve volumes and the work was formally given its current title, the *Oxford English Dictionary*" (*OED* website), edited by Charles Onions and Sir William Craigie. A thorough four volumes supplemental update was produced from 1972 to 1986 under the editorship of Robert Burchfield, including much, but significantly, not all, of the 1933 supplement (Ogilvie 41). Thus, *NED* refers to a lexicographical work more closely contemporaneous to the colonial period, and *OED* to its more contemporary, twentieth-century, versions. A so-called Second Edition was released in book and electronic form in 1989; this melded the four volume supplemental material with that of the original *NED* entries. This Second Edition is now available in online format, known simply as *OED Online*, and is the most complete English dictionary currently available and the one with the widest

coverage of English it all its forms. Since 2000 the *OED Online* has been in the process of being updated throughout the alphabet, proceeding alphabetically from the letter M onwards, into what is called the New Edition. As of December 2008, this updating process had reached the beginning of the letter R. Thus the range of entries from M to Q, referred to in this paper as *OED Online*, is representative of the latest in diachronic lexicographical research and publishing of the English language. Entries that have not been update since the 1989 edition are referred to as *OED2*.

Together *Hobson-Jobson* and *NED* span the height and end of the heyday of British empire and are particularly suited to analysis of Western perspectives on India specifically, and 'the Orient' more generally.

3.1. Visible Bias: *Cannibals* and *Savages*

To begin with an obvious example, one only need to go as far as the *NED*'s definition of *cannibal*: "A man (*esp.* a savage) that eats human flesh; a man-eater, an anthropophagite. Originally proper name of the man-eating Caribs of the Antilles" (*OED Online*). While this is a decided improvement on the ludicrous definition of Elisha Coles' *English Dictionary,* 1676, in which cannibals are described as people "that eat their own friends," it still entails the exact same cultural viewpoint. Contrast this to a modern definition from *The Macquarie Dictionary*, 2009, "a human being who eats human flesh" and the differences speak volumes. Significantly, no longer are cannibals equated with savages. A similar picture is presented by juxtaposing the definitions of *savage* from these two dictionaries: "A person living in the lowest state of development or cultivation; an uncivilized, wild person" (*OED Online*) and "a

member of a usually tribal, non-literate society regarded as uncivilised" (*Macquarie*). With the *NED* the savage "is" uncivilised, whereas the *Macquarie* the savage is merely "regarded" as such. One former unquestionably and unquestioningly embodies the dominant perspective while the latter describes that perspective as an inevitable part of the word's semantic makeup, that is, when one uses the word *savage* the notion of civilised versus uncivilised is invoked. Note, however, that although the *Macquarie* has stepped back to a descriptivist position by attempting to avoid a value judgement along the civilised/uncivilised divide, it nevertheless implies that this viewpoint in unacceptable. At the same time, it stops short of labelling the word 'derogatory' or providing any pragmatic information about the word's use.

Such bias is easy to see in words such as *cannibal* and *savage* as these words are heavily loaded with cultural and intercultural significance. As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin note, the *NED's* definition of cannibal demonstrates

> two related features of colonial discourse: the separation of the 'civilized' and the 'savage', the importance of the concept of cannibalism in cementing this distinction. To this day, cannibalism has remained the West's key representation of primitivism[.] (1998, 29)

Neither Said nor colonial discourse theorists were the first to realise and comment on this phenomenon. As early as 1913 historian E.B. Tylor noted that the

> educated world of Europe and America practically settles a standard by simply placing its own nations at one end of the social series and savage tribes at the other, arranging the rest of mankind between these limits according as they correspond more closely to savage or to

cultured life. (26)

What Said did was to introduce this observation into the realm of literary criticism which had previously been largely disinterested in the connection between language and global political power structures both historically and presently, or how literary texts are complicit and implicit in the creation and maintenance of such structures. Said's *Orientalism* instigated "colonial discourse as an area of study" within Western academia (Chrisman and Williams 6), and thus motivated scholars to look into the meaning and impact of such words.

The persistent potency of the words *cannibal* and *savage* has in no small part been fostered by one of the most enduring classics of all English literature, and importantly of children's literature, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, which was not only the best selling book of the eighteenth century but by the end of the nineteenth century had given rise to more editions and translations than any other book in Western literature, with more than 700 alternative versions (Watt 27). Large tracts of *Robinson Crusoe* are devoted to Crusoe's utter revulsion of the cannibals and his unconquerable fear of being eaten by them, amounting to an obsession of no less than two years length (Defoe 163) which involved elaborately fantasised plans for exterminating them. This fear was occasioned by the discovery of nothing more fearsome than a footprint in the sand, and eventually finds its expiation in Crusoe's murder of the cannibals and the rescuing of Man Friday who becomes both servant and Christian convert through the grace of Crusoe's goodwill. The place of *Robinson Crusoe* in English literature should not be underestimated, nor should its long, and not to mention continuing, contribution to colonial discourse, as J. Donald Crowley makes clear by citing this astounding opinion:

> Virginia Woolf, writing in 1919 on the occasion of the bi-centenary of the publication of Robinson Crusoe, noted that the book so 'resembles one of the anonymous productions of the race itself rather than the effect of a single mind' that it seems 'the name of Daniel Defoe has no right to appear on the title-page. (vii)

This of a novel in which the term *savage* is used over 100 times! Woolf's enthusiastic stamping of the book as racially British, is a powerful demonstration of the all-pervasiveness of the uncivilised-civilised dichotomy in the mind of British colonisers and empire-builders, and generations of adults and children alike who avidly devoured the novel. It is from this perspective that the *NED* definitions of *cannibal* and *savage* were written even while consciously trying to be impartial, reminding us of Said's contention that Orientalism was "a set of constraints and limitations of thought" (*Orientalism* 42).

3.2. Veiled Bias: the *Bheesti*

Naturally, it is to be expected that such signature terms of colonial discourse will manifest the prejudices of the age in which they were written. However, in addition to such glaring inscriptions of racial and cultural superiority it is possible to discern more deeply rooted attitudes of lexicographers concealed, as it were, in even seemingly mundane dictionary entries. This is the veiled bias of lexicography. Notions of normality, the status quo, the universal, hidden within the rhetoric of objective description. These are imperceptible to readers and lexicographers alike, who share a common outlook. As Louis Althusser points out, although the ruling

class as the producers of knowledge "determine how society sees itself", it is "not just a case of the powerful imposing ideas on the weak" (Ashcroft, *Key Concepts* 221). "[S]ubjects are 'born into ideology', they find subjectivity within the expectations of their parents and their society, and they endorse it because it provides a sense of identity and security" (Ashcroft, *Key Concepts* 221). I would like to take this a step further and suggest that the ideological endorsement is not only self-serving, motivated by the need for identity and security, but also a direct consequence of the very mental limitations imposed by ideology itself. That is, all subjects including the ruling elite, the hegemonically empowered, are equally born into ideology, and as such are not in a position from which it is possible to critique themselves. This unseen bias is unseen by the lexicographers themselves, it is unconsciously produced even while actively trying to avoid such biases. Lexicographers are as much a product of their society as anyone else, and have always been so. In critiquing the Subaltern Studies Group, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak contends that the subaltern subject cannot be "entirely separate[d] from the dominant discourse that provides the language and the conceptual categories with which the subaltern voice speaks" (Ashcroft, *Key Concepts* 219), and this same inseparability can be rightly applied to all voices both privileged and unprivileged, including lexicographers. Poststructuralist views of subjectivity are valid for all members of a society or culture. Being part of the dominant voice does not automatically confer any separation from it, and this constitutes a fundamental limitation that underlies just what and how dictionaries can mean. A detailed analysis of the entries for the Anglo-Indian term *bheesti* [5] in both *Hobson-Jobson* and *NED* shows both visible and veiled machinations of the dominant discourse and the power

it has to other the native subject.

Hobson-Jobson's entry for *bheesti* with its full set of illustrative quotations, running to 500 words in length, offers a wealth of information that requires careful, close reading:

> BHEESTY, s. The universal word in the Anglo-Indian households of N. India for the domestic (corresponding to the *saḳkā* of Egypt) who supplies the family with water, carrying it in a **mussuck,** (q.v.), or goatskin, slung on his back. The word is P. *bihishtī*, a person of *bihisht* or paradise, though the application appears to be peculiar to Hindustan. We have not been able to trace the history of this term, which does not apparently occur in the *Āīn*, even in the curious account of the way in which water was cooled and supplied in the Court of Akbar (*Blochmann*, tr. i. 55 *seqq.*), or in the old travellers, and is not given in Meninski's lexicon. Vullers gives it only as from Shakespear's Hindustani Dict. [The trade must be of ancient origin in India, as the leather bag is mentioned in the Veda and Manu (*Wilson, Rig Veda*, ii. 28; *Institutes*, ii. 79.) Hence Col. Temple (*Ind. Ant.*, xi. 117) suggests that the word is Indian, and connects it with the Skt. *vish*, 'to sprinkle.'] It is one of the fine titles which Indian servants rejoice to bestow on one another, like *Mehtar, Khalīfa*, &c. The title in this case has some justification. No class of men (as all Anglo-Indians will agree) is so diligent, so faithful, so unobtrusive, and uncomplaining as that of the *bihishtīs.* And often in battle they have shown their courage and fidelity in supplying water to the wounded in

face of much personal danger.

[c.**1660**. – "Even the menials and carriers of water belonging to that nation (the Pathāns) are high-spirited and war-like." – *Bernier*, ed. *Constable*, 207.]

1773. – "**Bheestee**, Waterman" (etc.) – *Fergusson, Dict. of the Hindostan Language*, &c.

1781. – "I have the happiness to inform you of the fall of Bijah Gurh on the 9th inst. with the loss of only 1 sepoy, 1 **beasty**, and a cossy (? **Cossid**) killed . . ." – Letter in *India Gazette* of Nov. 24th.

1782. – (Table of Wages in Calcutta),
Consummah . . . 10 Rs.
Kistmutdar . . . . 6 "
Beasty . . . . . 5 "
India Gazette, Oct. 12.

Five Rupees continued to be the standard wage of a *bihishtī* for full 80 years after the date given.

1810. – ". . . If he carries the water himself in the skin of a goat, prepared for that purpose, he then receives the designation of **Bheesty**." – *Williamson, V.M.* i. 229.

1829. – "Dressing in a hurry, find the drunken **bheesty** . . . has mistaken your boot for the goglet in which you carry your water on the line of march." – *Camp Miseries*, in *John Shipp*, ii. 149. N.B. – We never knew a drunken *bheesty*.

1878. – "Here comes a seal carrying a porpoise on its back. No! it is only our friend the **bheesty**." – *In my Indian Garden*, 79.

[**1898** "Of all them black-faced crew,
The finest man I knew
Was our regimental **bhisti**, Gunga Din."

R. Kipling, Barrack-room Ballads, p. 23.]

The structure of this entry is complex, being highly typographically encoded (for

instance, text enclosed in square brackets is information added by William Cooke in 1903, the rest is from the original Yule and Burnell 1886 edition), containing numerous abbreviations ("s." for substantive, "P." for Persian) and cross-references ("mussuck", "cossid") in bold type, and having discrete types of information, such as citations, etymologies, definition, usage notes and cultural references, either laid out separately or seamlessly interwoven in the large block of discursive text. This is typical of dictionary style and is the result of the need to conserve space while presenting the maximum amount of information possible. As such, the *Hobson-Jobson* entry for *bheesti* is enormously information-rich, and for this paper it will only be possible to analyse a small portion of its content.

The colonial attitude to the colonised is abundantly manifest in this dictionary entry. The bheesti is defined as a 'domestic' of 'the Anglo-Indian household'. The very word *domestic* carries with it the Western class concept of master and servant, and *household* implies a direct parallel to the prevailing nineteenth century British structure of household. To the reader of *Hobson-Jobson*, upper-class educated British back in the home country, the India experience, while alien is also made pleasingly familiar through the use of such verbal correspondences. How faithfully the use of these words represents or overlaps with the situation in Anglo-India is a moot point in *Hobson-Jobson*. A further correspondence is made to the Anglo-Egyptian situation through the aside that draws a correlation between the bheesti and 'the *saḳḳā* of Egypt', well demonstrating Edward Said's contention that Orientalism is "a system of thought [that] approaches a heterogeneous, dynamic and complex human reality from an uncritically essentialist viewpoint" (333), as does the statement that *bheesti* is the "universal word", that is, it is used throughout India regardless of whether or

not Hindustani is known in any particular area. If Yule and Burnell are correct, and *bheesti* is the universally used word, even in the Dravidian south where the Hindustani word would be wholly unknown, then it is indicative of the homogenising authority of the Anglo-Indian English spoken by the Raj imperialists; if Yule and Burnell are incorrect, and it is not the universal word, then their attempt at defining it as such is indicative of the same desire, that all India is reducible to simplistic character and cultural types.

A further instance of colonial/Orientalist attitude is present in the etymological information. Yule and Burnell derive the Anglo-Indian *bheesti* from Persian "*bihishtī*, a person of *bihisht* or paradise", state that "the application appears to be peculiar to Hindustan", that is, in the Persian language the word was not applied to water carriers – a contention supported by both D'Rozario and Steingass (211) – and then go on to say that it "is one of the fine titles which Indian servants rejoice to bestow on one another, like *Mehtar, Khalīfa*, &c." By "fine" they mean lofty or pretentious, and the further examples given are *mehtar* 'a sweeper or scavenger', from the Persian *mihtar* 'a great personage', and *caleefa* 'a tailor or cook', from Arabic *khalīfa* 'caliph, vice-regent' (Yule). Clearly the unifying feature of such terms is the disjunction between the lowly social position and the grand title, however, Yule and Burnell do not seem to consider that such verbal magnification may have been merely jocular, or may have had some other sociolinguistic function in the vernacular languages they were part of. While, it is clear that Yule and Burnell do not approve of the verbal aggrandisement such terminology entails, they do go on to say about *bheesti*:

> The title in this case has some justification. No class of men (as all

> Anglo-Indians will agree) is so diligent, so faithful, so unobtrusive, and uncomplaining as that of the *bihishtīs.* And often in battle they have shown their courage and fidelity in supplying water to the wounded in face of much personal danger.

Here, through celebrating the bheesti, the mehtar and caleefa are characterised in opposition as lazy, unfaithful, obtrusive and complaining. Even the bheesti only holds the favourable aspects to a limited degree, not completely, and is remarkable for going against the norm. The patronising attitude is palpable, and the description of their "courage and fidelity" parallels them to a good hound. A further editorial remark, inserted *inter alia* after the 1829 citation, "N.B. – We never knew a drunken bheesty", whilst complimentarily adding sobriety to the good points of the bheesti, is nonetheless essentialist, simplistically attributing the same set of qualities to a group of disparate people who happen to have the same job. Here the equating of the binary oppositions coloniser-colonised and superior-inferior leaps from the page.

In contrast, the entry in *NED*, published in 1888, is more succinct, with only four quotations. Interestingly, it is substantially derived from the work of Yule and Burnell, and the "(Y.)" following the source information of the first two citations indicates that they were taken directly from Y[ule and Burnell], and not verified in the original documents.

> ‖**bheesty, bheestie** [Urdū *bhīstī,* a. Pers. *bihishtī,* f. *bihisht* paradise; prob. of jocular origin.] In India, the servant who supplies an establishment with water, which he carries in a skin slung on his back.
>
> **1781** *India Gaz.* 24 Nov. (Y.) With the loss of only 1 sepoy, 1 beasty, and a cossy. **1810** T. WILLIAMSON *Vade-Mec.* I. 229

> (Y.) If he carries the water himself in the skin of a goat,..he then receives the designation of Bheesty. **1859** LANG *Wand. Ind.* 63 Jehan, the bheestie's daughter, was a virtuous girl. **1883** W. BAXTER *Winter in Ind.* ii. 22 Bheesties pressing water out of their pigskins to lay the dust.

A cursory glance shows that the obvious negative, patronising and essentialist colonial attitude of the *Hobson-Jobson* entry has been largely removed from the *NED* entry. Gone is the asperity towards the "fine titles", replaced by the suggestion that the name is "prob. of jocular religion". Gone are the references to domestics and households, supplanted by "servant" and "establishment". These terms, while appearing more neutral, also cover greater semantic ground than the former terms. A servant is not only a domestic servant, and establishment has a greatly wider set of referents than household. The two upright parallel bars before the headwords, known as tramlines (Ogilvie 50), indicate that this term, according to the *NED*, has not become fully naturalised into the English language. Decisions regarding the implementation of tramlines were based on whether "its quotational evidence displayed typographical features such as italics, the use of inverted commas, diacritics, or brackets with a gloss" which marked out the word within the otherwise normally typeset text (Ogilvie 29). In other words, speakers using such a word are conscious of the fact that it is a foreign, non-English, word. The two earliest attestations in the *Hobson-Jobson* citational examples are omitted as the first (c.1660) is not from an English source (Yule and Burnell regularly translate non-English source material), and the second (1773) is merely from a Hindustani-English dictionary, and thus does not represent the word in English. Finally, the immediate

source language given in the *NED* is Urdu, which at the time (that is, before Partition) was synonymous with Hindustani, covering the range of Indo-Aryan dialects of the northern, central and north-western Indian subcontinent, originally centred on the Khariboli dialect of Delhi.[6]

The style of the *NED* reflects the then-current notion of the scientific study of languages. The *NED* prided itself on its scientism. For instance, in the etymology of the word *bilk*, the *NED* maintains that "the derivation 'from Mœso-Goth. *bi-laikan* to mock, to deride,' given in some dicts., belongs to a pre-scientific age" and that for *curmudgeon* dismisses another "ingenious specimen of pre-scientific 'etymology'" (*OED Online*).

> Like the explorers of the later nineteenth century – with their botanical or ethnographic samplings – Murray saw his project as one that "collects and exhibits its own materials," where the "entire construction and arrangement follows modern scientific and historical principles." (Lerer 496)

The style is founded in the notion of scientific detachment, of being impartial, of objectively describing of reality or what is 'true', on positivistic beliefs in knowledge. As Michel Foucault points out "'Truth' is centred on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions that produce it" (42).

Indeed, it is the very construction of truth through scientific/objective writing that has continued to feed the perception of dictionaries as authoritative even though they have moved from prescriptivism to descriptivism. However, what must be kept uppermost in mind is that as it impossible for the lexicographer to avoid making value judgements, the appearance of objectivity is always and inevitably an illusion.

To illustrate, consider the choice to introduce the word "servant" with the definite article "the" in the *NED* entry. Here, making a paradigmatic substitution is revealing: why "*the* servant" and not '*a* servant'? Surely, all servants who carry water to an establishment are bheestis, thus requiring the indefinite article. The implication of "the servant" is that "in India" establishments have a water-carrying servant as a rule or as the norm. While this may have been true for the most part, it is hardly creditable that bheestis were universally employed in all households or all establishments, but rather only those wealthy enough to afford them, and thus the *NED* definition entails a definite class bias. This class bias dovetails neatly with the intended audience of the *NED*, as it is an exceedingly expensive book only possible to be owned by people or institutions of a certain wealth, and is written in a highly academic literary style that necessitates a high-level of education. Sidney Landau, writing especially on contemporary dictionaries, not just colonial-era productions, notes that "[a]lthough people who make dictionaries come from various classes, dictionary definitions represent the views and prejudices of the established, well-educated, upper classes, generally speaking" (303). He continues

> It is no conspiracy. No one is in league to distort meaning to keep the poor and uneducated oppressed. The upper-class bias of dictionaries stems partly from tradition: the earliest dictionaries were intended to help the educated classes understand difficult words. … [and although] contemporary dictionaries generally disavow any intention to improve or correct anyone's speech, they are nonetheless powerful sources for the preservation and dissemination of a distinctly cultivated form of expression. They give it such attention both in the choice of entries

> and in the language used in their definitions… [T]here is, however much it may be denied, an element of social judgement in its use. (303–304)

While Landau is concerned about the implication of this language for lower class (that is, less educated) dictionary users, in terms of postcolonial theory the use of such elevated language for writing a dictionary is bound up with the concepts of hegemony and colonial discourse. As recently as 2008, the *OED*'s chief editor John Simpson's explained that his first guideline to definition writers is "[u]se standard modern English vocabulary and idioms – be neutral (if anything slightly conservative) and not colloquial" (127). As Léopold Sédar Senghor pointed out "[s]ince the Renaissance, the values of European civilization [have] rested essentially on discursive reason and facts, on logic and matter" (28). Comte's positivism is immanent in the very language used by lexicographers for writing definitions.

In the *NED* definition of *bheesti*, the concept of servant is taken as a given, as part of the status quo, and how true that situation may, or may not, have been to the Victorian English readership of the *NED* with the ever-increasing rise of the middle classes, it was certainly a real or imagined, but inescapably hegemonically-motivated, given for colonial India of the day. And so it is evident that the *NED* definition of *bheesti*, while avoiding the obvious colonial stance of *Hobson-Jobson*, still embodies the assumptions and Eurocentric thinking characteristic of colonial discourse. The highly-literate diction of the dictionary definitions positions the entire work amongst the aggregate of literary production of the colonising powers, all written in the privileged language of the privileged people, via which knowledge is known, through which positive statements become truth, and to which other forms of language are

inferior and hence lack authority and verity. The position of the dictionary as a concept within the cultural hegemonic structure of a literate society is a powerful one as it ascribes to itself the power to define the very language through which the world is known. Knowledge is power, language structures knowledge, the dictionary defines language and thus the dictionary defines knowledge. Through this incestuous and circular interconnectedness dictionary definitions assume a position of irrefutability. This irrefutability is immanent in the very word *definition* (and its associated terms, *define*, *definitive*) used by lexicographers for their descriptions of what a word means.

CHAPTER 4. MODERN LEXICOGRAPHY: WORLD ENGLISHES AND OTHER ENGLISHES

Having seen how colonial era dictionaries have incorporated and inculcated the dominant discourse, it is interesting to see that moving to present day reveals only that little has changed in the world of lexicography. The following analysis centres on three separate dictionary products that purport to cover World Englishes: *The Encarta World English Dictionary*, the four volume *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary*, and the latest revised edition of *Oxford English Dictionary*.

In August of 1999, *The Encarta World English Dictionary*, the first ever dictionary reputedly covering World English(es), was published. Interestingly, in order to accommodate World Englishes several different versions were published:

> Each variety of English is represented in a special edition targeted to its native audience. British, American, Canadian, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, South African, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Australian and New Zealand English (VOA Wordmaster).

Significantly, this list includes eight Englishes of Kachru's Inner Circle, but lumps all Englishes of the Outer and Expanding Circles under "South Asian" and "Southeast Asian." This lumping is indicative of the low level of interest in the Englishes of postcolonial societies of the *Encarta* editors and publishers. Particularly in the case of the South-east Asian Englishes this is a questionable practice; the relationship between, say, Singaporean and Philippine English, in terms of lexis, pronunciation, usage, etc., is negligible, partly as a result of Singapore's historical ties to Britain as opposed to the Philippine's historical connection with Spain and the

United States. It is clear that the preponderance of lexicographic treatment is given to the privileged Englishes of the Inner Circle, as per traditional lexicographical practice since the mid-twentieth century. Further, looking at the online version of *Encarta*, we see that which in the speech communities of the subcontinent are pronounced with aspirated voiced bilabial plosives, such as *bhai*, *bhaji*, and *bhangra*, are given only the unaspirated pronunciations, equivalent to /ɓaɪ/, /ˈɓadʒi/ and /ˈbæŋgrə/, that speakers of Inner Circles Englishes would use, as opposed to /bʰaɪ/, /ˈbʰadʒi/ and /ˈbʰʌŋgɾʌ/, such speakers of Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi English use, whether in Asia or in the UK speaking Minority Ethnic English, or elsewhere. For Inner Circle speakers /b/ represents both [b] and [bʰ], whereas in Asian Englishes [b] and [bʰ] are realised as separate phonemes. Note further that in the word *bhangra* the two vowels /æ/ and /ə/ would both be replaced by the /ʌ/ vowel, and the /r/ (here, as in normal dictionary pronunciation practice, a phoneme representing both the alveolar trill /r/ and the alveolar approximate /ɹ/) becomes an alveolar tap /ɾ/, common to Indian languages. Add all of this to the complete absence of any treatment of African Englishes and we see that in spite of the grand-sounding title, the *Encarta "World English" Dictionary* hardly made any significant inroads into redressing the typical imbalance found in English-language lexicography.

Another dictionary project that made strong claims about its coverage of varietal Englishes was the four volume *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary* published from 1972 to 1986 under the editorship of Robert Burchfield. An analysis of this work by Sarah Ogilvie has revealed some surprising results. Firstly, Burchfield claimed in his academic articles, public lectures and media interviews that the original Oxford editors, Murray, Bradley, Onions and Craigie, had "neglected

English words from beyond the shores of Britain" (Ogilvie 24). This claim was taken at face value and "spread quickly throughout the scholarly community, prompting praise" from such distinguished journals as *American Speech* and scholars as Manfred Görlach (23). In sync with the burgeoning interesting by linguists in World Englishes witnessed in the 1980s, Burchfield declared that "English everywhere had to be given the same treatment" (qtd in Ogilvie 25). Burchfield used as his base for his supplemental volumes the 1933 *Supplement* prepared by Craigie and Onions. When Ogilvie compared entries for words of World Englishes in the original 1933 *Supplement* against those contained in Burchfield's *Supplement*, she discovered that Burchfield had deleted 17% of those words, "banish[ing] words from around the world that had previously earned a rightful place in the lexicographic canon" (50). Further, Burchfield had added tramlines, typographical vertical bars signifying that the words were not fully naturalised into English, to a number of words from the 1933 *Supplement*, thus giving them "a new alien status" (50). Finally, Ogilvie's paper reveals that both supplements only covered nine varieties of non-British English, with the top five – American, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian and South African Englishes – all from dominant the Inner Circle, making up more than 95% of the contribution. The four other Englishes were Indian, Caribbean, Malaysian and West African, all from the Outer Circle, with the last being a type of catch-all for a number of quite distinct varieties. It is therefore abundantly clear the Burchfield did in no way give "English everywhere…the same treatment" as he so richly boasted, but rather merely perpetuated the standard core-periphery dichotomy. This parallels Burchfield's editing of the volume devoted to World Englishes in the six-volume *Cambridge History of the English Language* (1997), which he divided into two

sections, one devoted to British varieties of English and the other to "Overseas English," the latter which completely omitted West African, East African and South-East Asian Englishes (Ogilvie 49). Kingsley Bolton's review of Burchfield's *Cambridge History* volume criticised the "obvious over-emphasis on the British Isles and its former 'settler' colonies" and was tellingly entitled "World Englishes – the way we were" in reference to its backward-looking stance (Ogilvie 49).

Even though some two decades have passed since Burchfield produced his supplement, things have seemingly not improved much at the lexicographical offices of the Oxford English Dictionary. The current incarnation of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, its New Edition, available via online subscription, and having proceeded from M to the beginning of R,[7] has also decided to "enhance the coverage of varieties of English worldwide" (Simpson). However, the editorial policy retains Murray's original contention of the existence of a core:

> From its base in Britain, the English language has expanded over the centuries to become a world language, in which individual varieties share a common core of words but develop their own individual characteristics. (Simpson)

Yet, for the present at least, the extent of commitment in this area is very restricted in scope, a fact no doubt partly accounted for by the maintenance of Murray's out-of-date core-periphery view.

To begin with, in keeping with the idea of an Anglo-American core, pronunciations are given in both British and American forms, but with rare exception, these forms only. The Australian English words *mallee*, 'a vegetation type', and *Matilda*, 'a swag', are given British, US and Australian pronunciations, but *middy*,

the Australian term for ‘a medium sized glass of beer’, and *mossie*, ‘a diminutive of mosquito’, are only given British and US pronunciations. The reason for such inconsistency is unknown. At any rate, aside from British and US pronunciations the only others provided, albeit sparingly, are for Inner Circle Englishes, such as Australian and South African English. Even words labelled solely as Indian or South Asian English, such as *eve-teasing*, ‘sexual harassment of women’, *mukhiya*, ‘the leader of a panchayat’, and *mugger*, ‘a species of crocodile’, are not given Indian English pronunciations.

In terms of lexis, words of other Englishes are only given space in the *OED* when they deviate from the perceived core or standard English. And even then they are only sparingly covered as the following review of some signature postcolonial novels overwhelmingly demonstrates. Postcolonial writers subjected English “to processes of syntactic and verbal dislocation” and by “adopting local idioms and cultural referents” appropriated and acclimatised English (Boehmer 211). This process has been going on for decades, providing a luxuriant growth from which lexicographers might have gathered much of great lexicographical interest, had there been sufficient will. This lack of interest manifests itself not only in words that are included in dictionaries, but words that are not.

Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane: A Novel*, published in 2003, centres on Bangladeshis living in London, and contains numerous words that are not covered in any edition of the *OED*. A sample of these, include *nengti* (59) ‘a narrow piece of cloth worn around the waist by men’, and *punjabi pyjamas* (6) ‘a loose shirt or kurta’ (the *ACCENT* database, with 25 million words from the *Times of India*, does not have *punjabi pyjamas*, but has 15 tokens of *kurta pyjama* instead, potentially

revealing a difference between Indian English and Bangladeshi or British-Bangladeshi English). Further, etymological derivations, even those newly reworked for the New Edition available at *OED Online*, only give a partial picture of the full complexity of interlanguage intermixing. In Ali we find a reference to *namaz* (50), the Islamic ritual prayer, which the *OED Online* says has come into English partly from Turkish, partly from Urdu and partly from Persian, the ultimate source language of the Turkish and Urdu words. However, in a Bangladeshi context, amongst the Muslim Bengali community in Ali's *Brick Lane* and London's Brick Lane, it surely cannot be through Turkish, nor Persian, nor modern Urdu (the language of the modern state of Pakistan). Rather Ali's *namaz* is a direct transferral from Bangla, where it is no doubt ultimately derived from the Persian etymon, but has been a naturalised word of Bangla since Mogul times.

Moving from England to Africa, award-winning Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe's 1958 novel *Things Fall Apart* also includes numerous lexicographically uncovered lexical items. In the opening chapter Okonkwo's father Unoka is "reclining on a mud bed in his hut playing on the flute" (5). The compound noun *mud bed* is not in the *OED*. While it may be tempting to overlook this as a transparent compound,[8] simply *mud* + *bed*, and not worth dictionary treatment, on closer inspection it does not make literal sense as it would imply resting or sleeping in wet mud, which clearly cannot be the sense intended. Actually, the term *mud bed* has numerous context-dependent meanings: in medicine, it is "a bed in which the mattress consists of semiliquid mud made from special clays, covered with a sheet of plastic material; used to widely distribute the pressure of the body weight over the dependent surface, for patients with burns or large anaesthetic areas" (Online

Medical Dictionary); in geology, it is a landform consisting of an exposed bed of mud (Lai); in Chinese archaeology, it refers to a "kang" or domestic hypocaust (China View). Achebe's mud bed is something altogether different, being a feature of African domestic architecture (Ohaeto), and recorded in English texts since at least 1836 (Rankin), though, not lexicographically.

Mud is generally associated with filth and dirtiness in Western culture: the *OED* definition equates mud to "mire, sludge" and includes a separate definition "something regarded as base, worthless, or polluting" (*OED Online*). English also has the phrases *to sling mud at* and *to drag through the mud*. These Western connotations are inextricably bound to the English word, but are clearly not relevant to the present context, and thus necessitate the inclusion of *mud bed* in any dictionary covering World English(es). Similarly, in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*, 1965, we read: "We might think of mudding the building now that it has rained and there is plenty of water" (66), and "They went around the school admiring the well-mudded building" (92). The transitive verbal sense of *mud* is covered by the *OED*, but the participial adjective *mudded* is not. By concentrating on Inner Circle English texts, a natural paucity of citational evidence for the participial adjective *mudded* will arise as mud is not a primary construction material in Western countries. This paucity instructs the descriptive lexicographer to ignore the form as unimportant, relegating it to a mere run-on form at the end of the entry for **mud**, *verb*, or not covering it at all.

Another example of lexicographically unrecognised African English lexis in Achebe is the word *market* (4) used as a time marker, and the compound *market week* (23). Readers unaware of Nigerian English will have no idea just how many

days this is, and will turn to dictionaries – any dictionary of the English language – without elucidation. Achebe supplies the answer himself: “But even in such cases they set their limit at seven market weeks or twenty eight days” (142); seven fours are twenty-eight, thus a *market week* is four days, quite a significant departure from the usual understanding of the word *week*. In fact, it is most probable that Achebe added this intertextual definition precisely because no dictionary of the English language recorded this sense.

A reader of Achebe’s masterpiece will also have to come to terms with the meaning of *motherland*: although the *OED* supplies a definition “the country of one’s ancestors; the homeland of one’s ethnic group” (*OED Online*), this is still at odds with Achebe’s use (121), in which *motherland*, ‘the land of your mother’s kin’, is opposed directly to *fatherland*, ‘the land of your father’s kin’: “A man belongs to his fatherland and not his motherland” (125). The *OED*’s definition is based wholly upon Western ideas of nation and country, where *motherland* and *fatherland* are equivalent terms. As different languages carve the world up differently, so do different varieties of English.

Similarly, the set of words relating to magic, witches and witchcraft are defined in the English-language dictionaries entirely in terms of the Western tradition: the old crone sporting a hairy nasal wart; Apuleius’ *Golden Ass*; Salem, witch hunts and the *Malleus Maleficarum*; Gerald Gardner and nubile ‘skyclad’ neopagan men and women dancing around fires in open fields; Harry Potter, cauldrons, potions, wands and so on. This wealth of imagery, associations, connections, culture and subculture, has absolutely nothing to do with the concept of the witch in African Englishes and African literature. Take for example, “[T]here was a great witch,

Kamiri, whose witchery bewildered even the white men at Muranga" (Thiong'o, *River* 2), where the word refers to a wholly different notion of religion in which the witch is traditionally accorded an altogether different place in society and has no associations with Satan or Christian concepts of good and evil, let alone warty-nosed hags.

To these examples can be added a host of terms described by Edmund O. Bamiro in his article "Lexical Innovation in Ghanaian English: Some Examples from Recent Fiction," 1999, by Emmanuel Quarcoo in "The English Language as a Modern Ghanaian Artifact", 1994, and those by Kasanga and Kalume in "The Use of Indigenized Forms of English in Ngũgĩ's *Devil on the Cross*: A Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Analysis," all of which give merely a glimmer of the richness and depth of English development and use currently overlooked.

Many of Achebe's neologisms are the result of the African writing strategy known as *transliteration*, defined as

> the act of thinking and conceiving in one's first language but expressing the substance thought or conceived in one's second language such that the second-language expressions used contain some salient linguistic and rhetorical implants from the first language (Onwuemene 1058).

This is an immense source of neologisms expressive of non-core Englishes and cultures waiting to be plumbed by lexicographers. Moreover, this type of literature is valuable in providing contextualisation of all words alternate to those of the Inner Circle. Transliteration is closely akin to code-mixing, in which "English lexical elements [are] modified by a non-English morphology" to create new forms, or vice

versa (Rollason 12).

Braj B. Kachru, in discussing the nature of "contact literature", that is, literature written by the users of English as a second language, has examined what he calls the nativisation of context, in which "cultural presuppositions overload a text and demand serious cultural interpretation" (Merican 112). Through a "refusal to gloss lexical items, songs, [and] proverbs" or to translate non-English words, nativisation of context, as a literary strategy, puts the impetus on the reader "to engage actively with the language and the new cultural vistas it now carries" (Merican 114). This technique is a feature of postcolonial literature, and a fine example is afforded by Denys Johnson-Davies' translation of Tayeb Salih's modern classic *Season of Migration North*:

> Without realizing it I found myself saying out loud, "On his death Mustafa Sa'eed left six acres, three cows, an ox, two donkeys, ten goats, five sheep, thirty date palms, twenty-three acacia, sayal and harraz, trees, twenty-five lemon, and a like number of orange trees, nine ardebs of wheat and nine of maize[.]" (56)

Here the words *sayal* and *harraz*, which refer to two *Acacia* species, respectively *Acacia seyal* ("Natural" 72), and *Acacia albida*[9] (Artin 158), are left untranslated. These unfamiliar denominations are nowhere to be found in English lexicographical works, nor are they easily found in botanical works. However, significantly, there was already an established English word for *Acacia seyal*, as it has long been identified with the *shittim* wood of the Old Testament, which was also the name of the region east of Jordan opposite Jericho where the Israelites encamped before crossing the Jordan, and "committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab" (Num.

25.1; see also Josh. 2.1).

> It was at this place, so called, to the end of their journeyings, that the people of Israel fell into the snares of the daughters of Moab, and committed the grossest idolatry, for which they were visited with a plague which destroyed 24,000 of them. (Eadie)

The fact that Johnson-Davies chose to use the original Arabic name *sayal* rather than the pre-existing English word *shittim* immediately posits the text in the East in a new way, a way that deliberately overturns the usual Western, Christian associations with the Biblical East, decentring a long-established paradigm. This has the effect of re-contextualising the text, of nativising the text by adding new elements to the lexis redolent of a culture either unknown or poorly known to Westerners and English speakers. Rather than having power over the East, here knowledge, and thus power, is placed back into the hands of the original owners. A Sudanese reader will know exactly which trees are being referred to, whereas the Western reader is left to deal with the fact that they do not have complete understanding of this other land, culture, people about which they are reading.

This is a strategy common throughout postcolonial literature and it is one that is not always limited to the device of using new or unfamiliar words. It is not only words left out or meanings left undefined that demonstrate the persistence of the imperialist core-periphery view: context is just as revealing. Let us examine two instances of common English words in new contexts in Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz's *Palace Walk*, written in Arabic in 1956 and translated into English in 1990. The first is the use of the word *curlew*, a well-known wader or shorebird throughout Europe, Asia and the Americas, though the name was originally and is

especially applied to the Eurasian species *Numenius arquata* which winters in and is a passage migrant through Egypt (Svensson 148). In *Palace Walk*, in one of Khadija's verbal attacks on her sister Aisha, she criticises Aisha's singing with the mocking statement "Perhaps she intends to become a professional". The indignant Aisha replies, "Why not! My voice is like a bird's, like a curlew's" (26). In European literature birds conventionally associated with beautiful voices include the nightingale and the canary, but certainly not the curlew. According to a modern ornithological field guide, the call of the curlew is "A far-carrying, fluty, melancholy whistle, 'cour-**lii**'" (Svensson 148), which call is the ultimate origin of the bird's common name. We can suppose that the adjectives "fluty" and "melancholy" are not necessarily negative if applied to the human singing voice, but Aisha was singing in a "sweet voice" (Mahfouz 26). However, modern birdwatchers notwithstanding, in English literary tradition the curlew has not fared even so well as Svensson's description, with one poet writing "loud shrieks the sad curlew" (*Gentlemen's* 320), and another that "There's a wild, wild note in the curlew's shrieking" and following this with the line "There's a whisper of death in the wind's low moan" (*Literary Gazette* 307). In fact, characterising the call of the curlew as a shriek is not at all uncommon (Cobbold 78; Service 66) nor is its association with death: "As, with a pensive sound, the curlew bell Tolls through the solemn air" (*Blackwood's* 611). Readers familiar with American literature may recall Bret Harte's short story "High-Water Mark" which sets the scene with the "sepulchral boom of the bittern, the shriek of the curlew, the scream of passing brent" (263). Actually, the American curlew is a different species, *Numenius americanus*, with a call that is described as "a loud, musical, ascending *cur-lee*" (Dunn and Alderfer 172), but in terms of literary

associations such fine ornithological distinctions are of no relevance. To these Western literary connotations we can add the fact that the British dialect names for the bird are the rather unmelodious sounding Scottish *whaup* (pronounced /hwɔp/) and the North Country *cawdy mawdy* (Swainson 200). As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o points out, one of the aspects of "language as culture is as an image-forming agent in the mind of a child" and thus of people as adults, and that

> our whole conception of ourselves as a people, individually and collectively, is based on those pictures and images which may or may not correctly correspond to the actual reality of the struggles with nature and nurture which produced them in the first place. ("Language" 441)

Thus, in *Palace Walk*, Aisha's associations of curlews with tuneful, melodic, sweet singing brings to the fore a vivid contrast between Eastern and Western conceptions of this bird and the natural world around them.

The other word used by Mahfouz that I want to look at in detail is *Australian*, in its sense of 'the white inhabitants of the modern Commonwealth of Australia,' that is, those generally of Anglo-Celtic descent. *Palace Walk* is set during the British and Allied Forces occupation of Egypt immediately after World War I, and early on in the novel we come across the sentence "Then the Australians appeared on the field, and Yasin had been obliged to forsake his places of amusement to escape their brutality" (72). What makes this usage of the term *Australian* stand out is its connection to the concept of brutality. What makes this connection so powerful is its masterful understatement. Mahfouz does not indulge in gory, blow-by-blow descriptions of the mistreatment of Arabs at the hands of the occupying military

forces and especially so of the Australians, but merely mentions it is passing, as a minor part of an almost insignificant reverie. In doing so, the cruelty mentioned is presented as a plain and simple fact, which it was and is presumedly still remembered to be by Arab peoples, rather than a deliberate and openly polemic anti-Western attack. It also inverts the usual word associations that appertain to the word *Australian*. Although the *OED* currently only has a single citation covering this specific noun sense of the word, the *Australian National Dictionary*, 1988, (hereafter *AND*) also published under the auspices of Oxford University Press, provides 19 citations from Australian printed sources ranging from 1822 to 1979. Amongst these quotations are a number of characterisations of Australians, many of which are predictably complimentary: "The Australian carries, in his tall, light, elegant person, and wild sparkling eye, the noble and independent air of one who cares not a straw for any one on earth" and "You will know Australians by their free athletic gait, their suntanned handsome features, and their unrestrained laughter radiating something of their native sunshine" (qtd in *AND*). However, there are also negative characterisations, such as "You can tell an Australian anywhere. You just look out for a big man who wears a felt hat, calls his best friend a bastard, spells Jesus with a small 'j', and farts at the breakfast table" (qtd in *AND*). Nevertheless, there is nothing in the whole lexicographical corpus of selected literary quotations that makes the least suggestion that Australians are, or could be, cruel or brutal, as *Palace Walk* has it.

Of course, the plainly racist Australian attitude towards the Egyptians of Cairo during the First World War is well-documented in Australian sources. To Australians the Egyptians were nothing more than "thieving wogs" (*Nambour*

Chronicle) and the infamous 1916 “Battle of the Wazzir”, in which Australian troops trashed and burned a great deal of the brothel district of Cairo, the Haret el Wassur, in revenge for perceived injustices, was hush-hushed by military command and at the same time surreptitiously celebrated in poem by no less a leading literary light than C.J. Dennis. The poem was intended for publication by censored by the government and now exists in only a few unrevised proofs (Chisholm 46). In the poem Dennis, in his characteristic ‘illiterate’ Australian working-class English, describes the affair both as a bit of “fun” and a “mishunery effort fer to make the ’eathen good” (129). An amazingly explicit double-standard runs throughout the poem, for although the Australians “found old Pharaoh’s daughters pleasin’ Janes; / An’ they wouldn’t be Australian ’less they give the game a fly,” they were supposedly outraged by the iniquity of the Egyptians: “When they wandered frum the newest an’ the cleanest land on earth, / An’ the filth uv ages met ’em, it wus ‘ard” (130). Apparently, “the Devil uv Australia ’e’s a little woolly sheep / To the devils wot the desert children keep” (129). Notice also that the Egyptians are denominated “children”, an example of the Orientalist staple representative strategy of the Easterner as infantile. That such a superior attitude would result in some, or rather most, of the Australians stationed in Cairo at the time behaving cruelly towards Egyptians is hardly to be questioned. The interesting thing is that in *Palace Walk* the point of view is that of the Egyptian sufferer, not that of the perpetrator. It is not that the meaning of the word *Australian* has been changed, but that its context has. If lexicographers do not take proper account of such alternate perspectives, if they persist in only or largely quoting from the literature of the Inner Circle, from the dominant culture, then they are automatically silencing and invalidating those other voices and their works will

continue to maintain the current core-periphery, privileged-unprivileged power structure that pervades the world of World Englishes.

With regard to this point, but in the Asian context, Phil Benson conducted a survey of four state-of-the-art, mainstream dictionaries: *OED2*, the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, the *Collins English Dictionary* and the *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* ("English Dictionaries" 131). A rough indication of presence of Asian countries in these dictionaries was calculated by tabulating "the number of times that the names of different countries were mentioned in definitions" (131). In *OED2* the country referenced the greatest number of times was China; there were 903 definitions that included the word *China* or *Chinese*. Since *OED2* has 616,500 entries, Benson concluded that "no Asian country can be said to be well-represented in *OED2*" (132). Furthermore, the four Asian countries in which English is most firmly established, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore, were not the first four on the frequency list, thus it is clear that "the number of times that an Asian country is mentioned in *OED2* definitions has no relation to its importance as an English-speaking country" (132). Benson also noted that Asian words were included in these dictionaries in an unsystematic and arbitrary way and that all of these factors "contribute to the construction of Asian English as peripheral to the language as a whole" (134).

Benson's study also revealed other peripheralising strategies, such as using definitions that were "often vague and stereotypical" and by defining objects common in Asian countries, such as various tropical fruits, as "exotic" (136). In another paper Benson cites the 1991 *Collins English Dictionary*'s definition of *durian* which includes the information that the fruit has "an offensive smell but a

pleasant taste". This flouts the principle of lexicographic objectivity and establishes the perspective of the dictionary "by defining a geographical zone in relation to which opinion becomes a matter of commonly known 'fact'" ("Wor(l)d" 143) with Britain "as the knowing subject of the dictionary" and Asia as "its object of knowledge" (143).

According to an *OED* newsletter, "the New Edition online brings us over 30 entries from Australia and New Zealand, Canada, the Caribbean, and South Africa" and that this "is as much a measure of how these Englishes have grown and settled into very distinctive varieties over the last century as it is of the vast increase in resources available to today's editors of the *OED*" (Price). A mere thirty entries to cover five varieties of English? As a "measure" it would indicate that these varieties have hardly grown at all. Further, as Price points out, the effort at the *OED* is being directed at "the major varieties of world English", with other varieties being sidelined as minor, a process of othering that relegates them to, and defines them as, Other English not Mother English.

So from Murray's core-periphery diagram of 1884, through Burchfield's Supplement of the late 1970s and early 1980s, up to the present, we can see a clear picture of the Oxford editorial attitude towards the English language. The concentration on the *Oxford English Dictionary* in this paper should not be seen as a direct attack on that dictionary alone. As the most up-to-date, most renowned and most significant lexicographical record of the English language it is important to treat it in due detail, however, at the same time, the attitudes reflected in the editorial practices of the Oxford are indicative of English-language lexicography as a whole and the issues presented here are valid for all dictionaries covering, and indeed not

covering, regional varieties of English.

Crossing 'the Pond' presents us with a similar picture. The premier dictionary product in the American context is and always has been the *Webster's* (now officially, *Merriam-Webster's*), which has a long and complex publishing history, with numerous editions of one sort or another being published since Noah Webster's first effort in 1806 to the present. An analysis of words of Philippine English in two major editions, 1961 and 1966, showed that the vocabulary represented "an archaic and petrified version of Philippine vocabulary, dating from the 1910s and 1920s" (Bolton and Butler 178). One reason for this that "a major source for Philippine entries" was a 1928 edition of a typically essentialising Orientalist work *Peoples of the Philippines* by Alfred L. Kroeber:

> an unreconstructed study of the 'primitive' natives of the Philippine Islands, with tribes variously classified as 'Christian', 'Mohammedan', 'Pagan' or 'Pagan Negrito'. The photographs in the volume include bare-breasted Negritos, a Bisaya girl (Malayan type), a Tagalog man (Malayan type), etc. (Bolton and Butler 178)

Thus the entries amount to nothing much more than "tokens of the colonial inventory of peoples and places" (179). The Orientalist ancestry of English-language dictionaries has resulted in a long-surviving legacy which seems resistant to eradication. As Bolton and Butler explain:

> Despite the mechanisms of language contact and lexical innovation that characterize the creative, hybrid, and innovative cadences of contemporary Philippine English, major reference dictionaries, particularly the *Merriam-Webster*, have institutionalized a petrified

lexicon of Philippine vocabulary derived from an era of American anthropology concerned with the study and classification of the native population. (175)

CHAPTER 5. PROBLEMS OF SYNTHESISING LEXICOGRAPHY AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

While English-language lexicography and postcolonial theory overlap in terms of subject area, the influence they have had on one another has been negligible. There are a number of reasons for this, some of them to do with the nature or dictionaries versus the nature of postcolonial theory, others with the harsh economic realities of the publishing world.

One area of difficulty is the question of to include or exclude. The lexicographical inclusion of lexical items from the various varieties of English is an activity vexed with many conflicting concerns. Simply overlooking the unique words used in varietal Englishes, as though they do not exist or are unimportant, is clearly silencing those voices and cannot be acceptable. On the other hand, including them, small in number as they are, may serve only to make them stand out as abnormal, which would also be unacceptable. This would be especially so if those words were branded as differing from core English through definition, region labelling, pronunciation, pragmatic description, usage notes, or otherwise. However, to omit such relevant information, especially when it is often given for words of the perceived core English, is to, once again, create an inequality and hence peripheralised and devalue those words. These are seemingly unsolvable paradoxes.

Another difficulty for lexicography inheres in the considerable importance that postcolonial studies places on the notion of essentialism. This jars with the very process of lexicographical as a whole, which is one of simplifying, codifying, particularising, making generalisations. Although the term ‘essentialism’ is used

variously in such fields as philosophy and education, in terms of postcolonial studies, it is "the assumption that groups, categories or classes of objects, have one or several defining features exclusive to all members of that category" (Ashcroft, *Key Concepts* 73). This is not very far from the process of writing traditional definitions in which lexicographers perform a balancing act between specificity and generality (Benson et al. 211), providing a brief but fixed summary of the 'several defining features exclusive to' a certain semantic sense of an ever unwieldy and temporally fluid semantic field. Following Said's lead postcolonial theorists and critics have been highly critical of the process of essentialising in which "imperial narratives such as that of anthropology [with its] project of *naming* and thus *knowing* indigenous groups" have been used to marginalise colonised peoples (Ashcroft, *Reader* 214). Said criticised Orientalists for "disregarding, essentializing, [and] denuding the humanity of another culture, people, or geographical region" (108). Joseph Errington, in his critique of colonial linguists notes that their work "reduced complex situations of language use and variation to unified written representations" (20) and that dictionaries and grammars of languages of colonised peoples "legitimized simple views of enormously complex situations" (20). This over-simplification of the languages of colonised peoples was "bound up with enabling ideologies about hierarchies of languages and peoples on colonial territory and in precolonial pasts" (20) and that, in the end:

> Colonial linguistics needs to be framed … as a nexus of technology (literacy), reason, and faith and as a project of multiple conversion: of pagan to Christian, of speech to writing, and of the alien to the comprehensible. So too missionaries' linguistic work is salient here

> less for its empirical value than for its role in the assertion of spiritual dominion through language. (21)

However, given that writing dictionaries is precisely to engage in the process of 'naming and knowing,' of simplifying, generalising or otherwise essentialising, lexicographers will ask what is the value of attacking essentialism? In other words, is the process of essentialising automatically bad? Does it always have to form the basis of hegemonic structuring? Does any reducing or simplification of language always work towards "enabling ideologies about hierarchies of languages and peoples" (Eddington 20), towards enforcing or reinforcing dominant power imbalances?

Dictionaries are easy targets for claims of essentialism because they are, and I choose my words carefully here, *essentially essentialist.* This works through many levels. Firstly, as Roland Barthes points out, "language is, as it were, that which divides reality…for instance the continuous spectrum of the colours is verbally reduced to a series of discontinuous terms" (64). That is, words and phrases, by their very nature, are essentialist. They cut up and reduce a complex unbounded continuum to discrete, manageable chunks. This is the first layer that lexicographers have to deal with: language is in itself essentialising.

Secondly, traditional dictionary definitions, despite their perceived goal of specificity, actually are in the main generalisations. To encapsulate a meaning of a word, or one sense of a word, into a single, succinct sentence that will be of use to a dictionary user, necessitates concentrating on the core of the inevitably wide semantic field covered by that word. Words do not have definite boundaries, but exist within the "dialectal process" (Barthes 15) that unites language and speech, they are part of an enormously complex and fluid signifying code with multiple users,

Saussure's 'speaking mass', all influencing one another in a continual and ongoing exercise in the maintenance of convention and, at the same time, variation and change (Barthes 13-17). This semiotic viewpoint is the linguistic foundation of the poststructuralist concept of language as "indeterminate, multilayered, and historically contingent" (Boehmer 173). A traditional dictionary definition, on the other hand, under the pressure of space considerations, simply cannot do justice to this situation, but must instead rein in the peripheries of usage, ignoring that which is particular and offering that which is common, all the while fixing it synchronically in print. As noted before, a lexicographical definition, far from being a definitive, authoritative proclamation, is meant only to serve as a guide to the dictionary user, who can apply the information provided there to the context in which the unknown word was encountered. Lexicographers are aware that they are being essentialist when writing definitions, reducing the complex situation of a word's existence and use in a language to a mere unit sentence – dictionary definitions are rarely more than one sentence long – and also know that there is no escape from this situation.

A third layer is the common lexicographical process of labelling: adding restrictive labels to words or definitions. These are typically subject labels, *Physics, Astronomy, Cooking*, etc., regional and dialectal labels, *Brit., US, Sthn*, etc., and pragmatic labels, *colloquial, slang, derogatory, offensive, poetic, obsolete, obsolescent,* etc. Clearly, there is a continuum from formal, literary and poetic language at one end, through colloquial to slang at the other; clearly the boundaries between obsolete, obsolescent, historical, old-fashioned, are muddied and overlapping; obviously words from one field of study can be found in another; necessarily the defining of regional dialects is inalienably a simplification of

complexity itself. To this can be added, finally, the very categorisation of Englishes: for instance, in a complex situation like East Africa where are the lines to be drawn?

Here we return once again to the dilemma noted above. Phil Benson points out that "Asian English words, and by implication Asia itself, are peripheralised by their exclusion from dictionaries" ("Wor(l)d" 142). If dictionaries, as First World, capitalist products, in their very recording of words from traditionally peripheral Englishes automatically essentialise their subject, but on the other hand are implicit in marginalising the same voice by not recording them, then dictionaries and lexicographers are 'damned if they do and damned if they don't.' This is an untenable situation. Some way out of this bind must be found before lexicography will be willing to accept much of what postcolonial discourse has to say about it and to make any accommodations. It is all to easy to be the critic, but harder to recommend the ways forward.

A further major problem area is that dictionaries are on the whole commercial products, constrained by size (page limits), time (deadlines) and publishing pressures (warehouse costs, availability of typesetters and printers, limited marketing resources), always performed under the Damoclean sword of economic reality. Take for example linguist Anna Wierzbicka's conceptually innovative dictionary *English Speech Act Verbs*, published in 1987 which sought to obviate the lexicographical recourse to circularity in definitions. In her introduction Wierzbicka notes that

> the fundamental flaw of all traditional dictionary definitions [is] their circularity. *Ask* is defined in terms of *call on*, but *call on* is defined in terms of *ask*; another meaning of *ask* is defined in terms of *invite*, but *invite* is defined in terms of *ask*. (4-5)

She continues that although “speech acts have attracted an enormous amount of attention from linguists, philosophers, psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists” (7) they still “have never been adequately described” (4). To escape from falling into the trap of definitional circularity Wierzbicka created a wholly new style of defining “free of polysemy and synonymy” (12). Her definition for the common speech act verb *command* was

> I assume that I can cause you to do what I want you to do
>
> I say: I want you to do X
>
> I assume that I can cause you to it by saying it this way
>
> I say this, in this way, because I want to cause you to do it (38-39)

Accompanying this definition are four illustrative quotations taken from a corpus, and around 650 words of dense prose discussion of the pragmatics and syntactics of the word *command*. Wierzbicka has moved further along this path with the construction of what she calls a Natural Semantic Metalanguage made up of some fifty plus linguistic primes or universals with which all words can be defined (Cruse 114; Allan 277). However, while definitions written in this style offer great accuracy and avoid circularity, Wierzbicka’s method of defining has found no favour with lexicographers and neither would one expect this. Dictionary users will not want to, nor have the patience to, wade through such complex webs of logical statements in order to come to an understanding of a word. A dictionary written in this way would, without a doubt, be a commercial failure due to the tremendous burden of comprehension placed upon the user, and the inevitably large book size required to print it. In terms of the economic realities lexicographers face, as recently as 1997 Jonathan Lighter’s magnificent *Random House Historical Dictionary of American*

Slang, quite simply the best diachronic slang dictionary ever published, was unceremonious canned by Random House after the first two volumes, A-G and H-O, were published, as it was found to be commercially unviable to continue it.

The final blocking agent to the melding of the postcolonial critic's viewpoint and lexicography is a combination of two factors: the unquiet in the field of postcolonial studies in general combined with the general conservatism of lexicographers. More than thirty years on from 1978 there is still great debate about Said's position as put forward in his *Orientalism*; there are Saidean and anti-Saidean camps, and to the latter belong such reputed and vociferous scholars as Bernard Lewis, Robert Irwin, and Ibn Warraq. Even those in the Said camp have their points of departure: Dennis Porter sees Said's attempt to connect "post-structuralism, in the shape of Foucault, and Western Marxism, in the shape of Gramsci…[as] fundamentally flawed" (Chrisman and Williams 6). At its worst, Said's conception of Orientalism is seen as mere polemical positioning, as UCLA historian Nikki Keddie writes:

> I think that there has been a tendency in the Middle East field to adopt the word "orientalism" as a generalized swear-word essentially referring to people who take the "wrong" position on the Arab-Israeli dispute or to people who are judged too "conservative". It has nothing to do with whether they are good or not good in their disciplines. So "orientalism" for many people is a word that substitutes for thought and enables people to dismiss certain scholars and their works. I think that is too bad. It may not have been what Edward Said meant at all, but the term has become a kind of slogan. (144)

Indeed, Said himself, in his 1995 Afterword, expressed great regret that his book had been abusedly misconstrued as being supportive of "Islamism" and "Muslim fundamentalism" (331). Certainly, Keddie is correct: the term Orientalism has virtually become a bad word, so much so that the New Edition of the *OED* labels the adjectival form 'orientalist' as "frequently pejorative" and many departments of 'Oriental' studies world-wide are considering, or have made, name changes to remove the offending term (Fragnito; Beard). Another debatable issue of postcolonial studies is the position of the subaltern; Chrisman and Williams raise the intriguing possibility that the role of the subaltern may have been "constitutive rather than … reflective" (16):

> Rather than being that other onto which the coloniser projects a previously constituted subjectivity and knowledge, native presences, locations, and political resistance need to be further theorised as having a determining or primary role in colonial discourses, and in the adjacent domestic versions of those discourses. (16)

Still other scholars have begun to criticise the assumed "homogeneity of colonial elites" and the treatment of "Europeans and colonizers as synonymous categories" (Caplan 743).

To these conflicting voices might be added the fact that there is often a note of overzealousness amongst some postcolonial critics, a certain willingness to mete out a common blanket criticism to all writings of Orientalists from an assumed position of certainty. Fro example, while Errington's point about the connection between imperialistic and missionary evangelistic goals is valid, the notion that dictionaries and grammars "legitimized simple views of enormously complex

situations" raises the question of how, or to what extent, Errington himself knows that the colonial linguists simplified the reality. His paper reveals no actual research into the state or variety of the languages of colonised populations prior to, or beyond, his appraisal of colonialist linguistics. In fact, it is merely an assumption. Such criticism derives from, and derives its legitimacy from, Said's position, explicitly stated in *Orientalism*, that he

> deals principally, not with a correspondence between Orientalism and the Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient (the East as career) despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a "real" Orient. (5)

Such a position calls for some deeper consideration. Surely a significant part of "the internal consistency of Orientalism" may have actually resulted from "a correspondence between Orientalism and the Orient," given that the Orientalists were not merely making everything up in a conspiracy of invention. In fact, Occam's razor would place an actual correspondence as the simplest explanation. This is not to deny that a great deal of Orientalist work did indeed inform, and was informed by, the colonial discourse that served to create the idea of inferiority of the colonial subject and the superiority of the coloniser's culture, however, internal consistency of the discourse alone is not enough to prove this point. Obviously if you want to prove "internal consistency" from a vast, literally uncountable, set of texts, all you need to do is choose those texts which support your position. The larger the set, the easier it is. Any text which does not incorporate a supporting point can be left out of the discussion without seeming to diminish the argument it by its absence. If the array of positives is sufficiently large it appears as though the evidence is overwhelming, and

no amount of negatives would be able to supply a satisfactory rebuttal. However, a comparison of the hefty weight of texts analysed by Said, and perhaps even by the whole school of inquiry he instigated, still pales in woeful comparison to the phenomenal scale of texts that can be called Orientalist, texts that deal with Asia in any way whatsoever. Do they all really embody the prejudices and imaginative fictions of Said's notion of Orientalism? Are they really all part of an "internally consistent" whole? Part of the problem is that discourse analysis, and hence Said's critique, focuses entirely on literature, actually, specifically Western literature, to the exclusion of the real world. So while it is true that knowledge is power and the dominant discourse shapes consent, this is not to say that the only meaning that texts have is to exert domination. However, for Said and many of his followers this is primarily their focus, ignoring the possibilities of counter-dominant discourse within the dominant discourse.

As Dennis Porter insightfully points out in his article "*Orientalism* and its Problems," Said "denies the idea of any knowledge pure of political positions," but at the same time, when discussing representation "implies the existence of a place of truth, of the possibility of emergence from hegemonic discourse into a true knowledge" (151). Indeed, this self-contradicting double positioning is abundantly demonstrated in Said's seminal text *Orientalism*. For example, when Said criticises Orientalists for approaching "a heterogeneous, dynamic and complex human reality from an uncritically essentialist viewpoint" (Afterword 333) he is stating explicitly that there is a reality and it is "heterogeneous, dynamic and complex." When Said refers to the Orient, it is real and explicable, susceptible to definitive and aggrandising adjectives, on the other hand, when Orientalists refer to the Orient, it is

a representation. Malcolm Kerr sees that "[i]n charging the entire tradition of European and American Oriental studies with the sins of reductionism and caricature, [Said] commits precisely the same error" (544), and Michael Richardson maintains that Said is guilty of "exactly the power relation that he accuses Orientalists of constructing in relation to the Orient" (210). Contra Said, Porter demonstrates that literary works within the Orientalist canon do have "the capacity for internal ideological distanciation" through exposition of "directly counter-hegemonic writing" (153) in no less a work of Empire and Orientalism than T.E. Lawrence's *The Seven Pillars of Reason*, and Abdul R. JanMohamed sees in Kipling's *Kim* "a positive, detailed and nonstereotypic portrait of the colonized that is unique in colonialist literature" (78). Finally, the fact that Orientalists, such as the seventeenth-century traveller Sir Paul Rycaut, could write such complimentary words as "a People, as Turks are, men of the same composition with us, cannot be so savage and rude as they are generally described" (qtd in Kurtböke 54), is not encompassed within Said's absolutist stance.

Said has had many critics and there is no need to rehearse the entire substance of his army of detractors, some of which, to be fair, are decidedly reactionary, or, as Said claims "politically motivated" (Afterword 337). However, the limited objections outlined above are pertinent to this paper's search for a way to combine Said's central thesis and modern lexicographical practices. The point of drawing attention to alternative readings and argumentation about Said's project and its theoretical offspring is to reveal the level of contention and disaccord still pertaining to the field of studies. This is important for, as a rule, dictionaries have traditionally been slow to take on board social and intellectual changes. A case in point is the field of feminism.

Feminist studies and the feminist critique of the male-dominant paradigm have a long history in Western thought and academia, but it was not until as late as the 1980s, which saw the wide-spread acceptance of feminist ideology in society in general, that lexicographers actually started to try and redress the imbalance in their dictionaries, such as the generalised use of the male personal pronouns “he/him/his” and the word “man” in definitions that pertained to either sex. The academic critique, acknowledgement and explication of the sexual politics behind such male-oriented writing was available to lexicographers decades before, but the general rule of dictionaries is to be conservative, to follow rather than lead. This caution is again a question of economics, that is, it is born of a desire not to upset the buyer, which for most dictionaries is the general public. Polemically positioned dictionaries that run contrary to the views of the status quo run the risk of financial disaster. Hence, while the spectre of academic dissent and contentious debate continues to hang so heavily over Orientalist criticism and postcolonial studies, it is unlikely that lexicographers will be willing to go out on such a tenuous academic limb. Having said that, this traditional conservatism only serves in maintaining the dominant paradigm, and I would like to argue that it is time for lexicographers to take a stance.

These questions are not at all moot as dictionary publishers have already identified varietal English as a possible source of income and further work is already underway. The Macquarie Library publishing company, which publishes dictionaries of Australian English, has been publishing dictionaries for the South-East Asian and Pacific markets since the 1990s, covering Singaporean English, Malaysian English, Hong Kong English, Philippines English, Bruneian English, Indian English, Fijian English and New Zealand English. What needs to be considered now is how to best

meld lexicography and the valid concerns of postcolonial theory.

CHAPTER 6. SOME POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

In *Orientalism* Said wrote "[p]erhaps the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary alternative to Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a nonrepressive and nonmanipulative, perspective," while at the same time admitting that such a task was "left embarrassingly incomplete" in his book (24). As Dennis Porter has pointed out,

> one important reason why Said apparently cannot suggest the form of alternatives to Orientalism might take in the present is that his use of discourse theory prevents him from seeing any evidence of such alternatives in the past. (152)

Be that as it may, Said threw down the gauntlet, a challenge to future scholars to find ways in which to overcome, sidestep, or otherwise evade the Manichean dichotomy of West-East, coloniser-colonised, superior-inferior. In terms of English language lexicography there are numerous potential ways forward.

A first step to solving some of the dilemmas outlined above would be a recognition that making generalisations, or essentialising, is not the heinous activity that much postcolonial criticism seems intent on highlighting. It is all too easy to take a one-sided view, as Edward Said, and concentrate on the negative side of the equation, without trying to see the positive outcomes of contact between West and East. Eddington, after fifteen pages of densely compact and determinedly negative critique, in the very last lines of his article, throws a conciliatory bone: "the production of linguistic knowledge cannot always and everywhere be dissolved into the reproduction of colonial interest" (34) and suggests how colonial linguistic work,

if "[r]ead in critically relativized ways, … can be more meaningful than their authors knew" (34). Here he makes a wonderfully valid point, even if seemingly unable to perform that which he suggests. Only recognition of both the positive and negative effects, only a synthesis of the dictionary form and the theoretical positions of postcolonial theorists can lead to any progress. Occident/Orient contact, for better or worse, is a historical fact, and continuing contact a present and future reality, and while much can be gained from deconstructing the power structures of the past, far better to look forward to how dictionaries can adequately break out of the dilemma they currently face. How to accept essentialisation as inevitable and make it work for the good, how to incorporate non-Western-dominant biases, how to shift the traditional core-periphery vision.

It is well known that Samuel Johnson wittily defined *lexicographer* as "a harmless drudge" (Boswell 127; Fulford 85; Hartman 80), and to some extent this is an accurate definition since one fundamental aspect that lexicographers are aware of is the basic powerlessness of their products to have any real impact on the use and metamorphosis of language. Paradoxically, while dictionaries are widely perceived to have great power and importance, history reveals that they have little effect on actual language use: Gove's tacit acceptance of *ain't* did not see a surge in the use or acceptance of the word; the influential Dr Johnson's selection, approval or disparagement of words failed to seal their fate; the *NED*'s disapproving comment that the word *bog* referring to defecation was a "low word, scarcely found in literature, however common in coarse colloquial language" (*OED Online*) did not stop that word from continuing to be used unto the present day (Mann 189; Ramsey 14), nor did the phonemic inscription of the entire *NED* in the perceived superior

Received Pronunciation have any effect in normalising all British dialects to the Queen's or King's English. The continual use of Received Pronunciation in British dictionaries, all British dictionaries, has also had no impact on the rise of Minority Ethic English, that dialect spoken by principally by migrants and their offspring from the West Indies and the Subcontinent, in the UK.

True, dictionaries are a part of language and play a part in constructing the linguistic and political hegemony of the dominant power structures, but they are only a small player in the great game. Fadillah Merican, writing about Malaysian fiction in English, points out that while "nativisations illustrate the distinctive characteristics of Malaysian English…novels and short stories play a role in stabilising these very characteristics" (108); that is, primacy is with the spoken language (orature) and literature plays a supporting role. Dictionaries? They run at best a distant third place. As discussed above, dictionaries are generally followers, not leaders, taking their cue from the great mass of language use, literary and colloquial, which exists on its own largely beyond the reach of lexicographical input, too unwieldy a giant to be touched in any significant way by such a piddling pretender to magnitude. It is the daily language of the people, of the media, of literature, that embodies, shapes and fixes the language, to the extent that any language is fixed, in a circularity of simultaneously producing and being produced, a synchronically stable yet diachronically varying endless feedback loop.

Having said that, it is well to remember that dictionaries are cultural products, and if their power to shape language, change language perceptions, or overthrow long-standing inequitable power structures is limited, it is still within the power of the lexicographer to make a very different and important contribution to the cultural

discourse of the postcolonial world, a contribution other than that which has up until now been the case.

A second step would be for lexicographers to more fully recognise their own foibles and biases and consider the contribution their products make to the overall position of the various varieties of English in the postcolonial world. This can be effected by further debate of, and academic interest in, the present-day connections between lexicography and postcolonial theory and society. At the same time, more consideration has to be given to the recognition that the idea of scientific detachment incorporated in the descriptivist mode is a mere mythology. Doing this will confer greater freedom upon lexicographers to say exactly what they mean. A case in point is *The Macquarie Book of Slang*, 1996, which labelled terms of racial vilification such as *boong, chow, dago, nigger* and *wog* plainly and directly as "Racist" (Lambert). Here the author's opinion is unmistakeable. No other dictionary of the English language has been so bold as to make this assertion, contenting themselves with mealy-mouthed descriptions such as "disparaging" or "usu. contemptuous" as found in *OED2*, and the uniform application of "derogatory" found throughout *The Macquarie Dictionary*, 2009. In *The Macquarie Australian Slang Dictionary*, 2004, an even stronger editorial position was taken in explicitly stating anti-racist attitudes: *Abo*, a colloquial Australian English abbreviation of 'Aboriginal,' is defined as "a racist term for an Australian Aboriginal" and *nigger-lover* is defined as "a term of contempt used by racists for non-racists" (Lambert). Although the latter term is substantially a US usage, it has some currency in Australian slang (Eric Lambert 43; English 45) as a disparaging insult for anyone showing sympathy or friendship towards Australian Aboriginals. Such labels are value judgements to be sure, but at

least they are not concealed beneath a veneer of objective scientism or supposed ethical detachment.

To demonstrate what can be done when the lexicographer is willing, the treatment of the word *nigger* in the *OED* is illuminating. In 1989, the *OED2* provided quite an amount of pragmatic information about the word *nigger*: "Except in Black English vernacular, where it remains common, now virtually restricted to contexts of deliberate and contemptuous ethnic abuse." The recent New Edition online has greatly expanded on this with a veritable wealth of information in response to the recent dramatic increase in the word's taboo status:

> This term is strongly racially offensive when used by a white person in reference to a black person. In written Black English and written representations of spoken Black English, however, there are usually not the same negative connotations. Recently the term has been reclaimed by some black speakers and used with positive connotations in various senses (esp. in the form *nigga*…). However, even among black speakers, use of the word is problematic because of its potential to give offence, as is clear from the following, from a black speaker: **1995** *N.Y. Times* 14 Jan. I. 7 The prosecutor, his voice trembling, added that the 'N-word' was so vile that he would not utter it. 'It's the filthiest, dirtiest, nastiest word in the English language,' Mr. Darden said. (*OED Online*)

In fact, the current entry for the word *nigger* in the New Edition of the *OED* is one of the most thorough, comprehensive, and indeed most sensitive entries therein, and the only one in which citational evidence is separated along both white/black and

positive/negative usage. However, this is one of the few words given such detailed treatment. Other terms of ethnic vilification as *Mick*: an Irish person; *monkey*: a US slang term for a non-white; *munt*, South African English for a black person; *Paki*, British slang indiscriminately applied to Pakistanis, Indians, etc.; *raghead*, a derogatory term for any person wearing a turban, headscarf or other traditional head covering, and the like, are merely supplied with minimal labelling of no more extent than "derogatory and offensive" or "usu. derogatory and offensive" (*OED Online*).

As Landau points out "[l]abelling of insult…is essentially political and moral. The lexicographer is taking a stand on the side of those who deplore racial and ethnic bigotry" (188). This is true no matter which label is used, or if no label is used at all; the absence of labelling is a tacit acceptance of any bigotry the word entails. Despite this, lexicographers are on the whole extremely reluctant to take a stance beyond the what they deem to be politically correct, a condition that plagues postcolonial theory and criticism as well, as Ato Quayson points out:

> At every turn in the field of postcolonial studies there seems to be an undecidability between an activist engagement with contradictions with in the real world and a more distanced participation via analyses of texts, images and discourses. Furthermore, there is a constant reluctance to take radical ethical standpoints. This is perhaps due to a widespread postmodernist nervousness about predictable accusations of totalization or the explicit or implicit disregard for the perspectives of others. (7-8)

He continues to point out that while "social referents in the postcolonial world call for urgent and clear solutions" these solutions are wanting

> because speaking positions in a postmodernist world are thought to be always already immanently contaminated by being part of a compromised world, [and thus] postcolonial critics often resort to a sophisticated form of rhetoric whose main aim seems to be to rivet attention permanently on the warps and loops of discourse. (8)

As this relates to the practice of lexicography, we must insist on the primacy of practical/economic concerns and the concomitant requirements of understandability and clarity. Dictionaries as tools of comprehension must needs of themselves offer immediate comprehension. Further, for better or worse, by their very nature they will continue to be seen as purveyors of a certain robust authoritativeness, and as such provide no space for postmodern "existential tentativeness" (Quayson 8). On the contrary, I propose here that dictionaries are another site in which the concerns of postcolonial theory and the new perspectives it provides can be further elucidated and more widely disseminated. If dictionaries are inalienably subjective, why not use that very subjectiveness to the purpose?

A third measure is, plainly and simply, more lexicographical work in untrodden linguistic fields. Yet, as Phil Benson in his discussion of the Asian dictionary market has pointed out, "it will not be enough simply to add more Asian words to existing dictionaries. Asian words are functional in constituting the center-periphery metaphor" (139). Something more needs to be done. In 1997 reviewer Conrad Brann wrote:

> It is hoped that Ayo Banjo will publish the *Dictionary of Nigerian English,* which he announced some years back, since an inventory of accepted (and acceptable) Nigerian words and phrases would go a

> long way to satisfy both national and international requirements. (Brann 781)

Ignoring Brann's prescriptivist desire for "accepted (and acceptable)" words, it is interesting that he sees such a dictionary as satisfying "both national and international requirements". A good exemplum of a national dictionary project that is worth powerful consideration is *The Macquarie Dictionary*, first published in 1981. It was the first synchronic dictionary of Australian English. Previous attempts, such as the *Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, 1976, were nothing more than British dictionaries, with British pronunciations and definitions, to which a few hundred items of local terms, largely flora and fauna, were added. In contrast, the *Macquarie* was "aggressively Australian" (Butler, "Research Report" 533). It paid particular care to Australian lexis, and uniquely for its day, it contained only Australian English pronunciations. Definitions were written from an Australian perspective. For example, the *OED* defines *Waler* as "*Anglo-Indian*. A horse imported from Australia, esp. from New South Wales" (*OED Online*), whereas the *Macquarie* defines it as "a horse bred in New South Wales, originally for the British Indian Army in the 19th century", that is, an export rather than an import. Most significantly, those terms, phrases, and other usages that were uniquely Australian were <u>not</u> labelled as such, in fact, they were not labelled at all, whereas words and usages that were particular to Britain, American or New Zealand, <u>were</u> labelled. This had the effect of positing Australian English as the norm and other varieties as different, centring Australian English and decentring all other varieties. The dictionary was an immediate popular and commercial success, spawning a family of educational, pocket and budget editions to fill every market niche, and going into its fifth major edition in 2009. In

his foreword to that edition prominent Australian author Thomas Keneally waxes lyrical:

> I remember the joy and outright enthusiasm with which the *Macquarie Dictionary* was greeted when it first appeared in 1981. Here was a dictionary of English as it was used on this great, eccentric continent, a continent located at a huge distance from the Northern European sources of the language. Because we were just starting to congratulate ourselves, perhaps a little too loudly, on our escape from post-colonial cultural ignominy, we tended to see the emergence of the dictionary as a great nationalist monument, a visible sign of our maturity as a society, a validation of the normal coinage of Australian idiom. It bespoke the particular people that Australia, so drastically alien in so many aspects from the environments where English had its birth, had made us. In our view then, it defined and validated the English we spoke at home and work and school, and to have that language defined and taken seriously was something we just weren't used to. I remember the novelty of looking up the word *mullygrubber*, and there it was, and so was *skite*, a common insult employed by my generation of schoolchildren. I, and many others, relished the novelty of seeing such words in august print. The *Macquarie* paid the antipodean tongue the great compliment of taking it seriously. (qtd in Butler "Macquarie")

The valorisation of a regional variety of English, and its attendant effect on national pride, is one potential positive outcome of the lexicographical process. The

Macquarie Dictionary's method of othering other Englishes effectively shifted the centre of Murray's original diagram and redefined the core.

While producing national dictionaries such as the *Macquarie* is one possible way to legitimise a variety of English, it requires a market sufficiently large and sufficiently nationally-motivated to sustain the project economically. Before publishers and lexicographers embark such an enterprise appropriate groundwork must be laid down, otherwise commercial failure is to be expected. Although Australian English was actually a descendant of the speech of the colonisers, not a language thrust upon the colonised in the way that many other varieties of English came into being, it was nonetheless generally held in contempt for many decades after its development not only by British speakers, but Australians also, the result of a "feeling of inferiority, dubbed *cultural cringe*" (Algeo, "Aussie" 159), which arose with the adoption of Received Pronunciation as a standard in England (Moore 130), but also bound up with ideas of Empire and the superiority of Home over the colonies (Algeo, "English" 421). The valorising of Australian English had begun at a popular level as far back as the late nineteenth century, with the publication of five lexicographical works, the pinnacle of which was E.E. Morris's *Austral English: A Dictionary of Australasian Words, Phrases and Usages* of 1898, a full scholarly treatment of the regional variety based on historical principles in the manner and style of the *NED* (Moore 103). These dictionaries were written in the milieu of strong nationalist and republican sentiment. Although the Australian states did not opt to become a republic, the period immediately following the adoption of Federation in 1901 saw the first novels written entirely in Australian English (Leitner 99). The 1940s saw journalist and amateur lexicographer Sidney J. Baker championing

Australian slang and informal speech, culminating in his well-received tome *The Australian Language* in 1945, which subsequently went into a second edition in 1966. Serious academic treatment of the Australian accent began in the 1940s with the publication of A.G. Mitchell's *The Pronunciation of English in Australia* in 1946, which was followed by works from G.W. Turner, Arthur Delbridge, John Bernard and others, who to greater or lesser extents struggled against intense opposition, mainly by journalists as self-appointed guardians of the mother tongue, British English, who argued that Australian English was merely an aberration (Moore 135-139). In fact, Mitchell "deliberately provoked an argument in the press about the Australian accent," and published such articles as "Australian Speech is Here to Stay" and "There is Nothing Wrong with Australian speech" (Butler, "Research Report" 534). Eventually Mitchell's perspective won out. It was only after this long period of social, cultural, political and academic preparation had taken place that the *Macquarie Dictionary* was able to succeed, though as a publishing venture it was a decided gamble as a negative reaction by the public was still a very real potential with "the possibility that the community as a whole was not ready to accept its own dictionary" (536). The Macquarie Library's first foray into the New Zealand English market, the *Tasman Dictionary*, 1985, was a commercial failure.

Nevertheless, there is nothing to gain from not being bold. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o writes in his important book *Decolonising the Mind*:

> We African writers are bound by our calling to do for our languages what Spencer, Milton and Shakespeare did for English; what Pushkin and Tolstoy did for Russian; indeed what all writers in world history have done for their languages by meeting the challenge of creating a

> literature in them, which process later opens the languages for philosophy, science, technology and all the other areas of human creative endeavours. (29)

Similarly, lexicographers should be able to do for any variety of English what Samuel Johnson and James Murray did for British English, what Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm with their *Deutsches Wörterbuch* did for German, and what *The Macquarie Dictionary* did for Australian English.

Of course, nationalism, like nativism, has its problems, with national mythologies tending to "consolidate the interests of the dominant power groups within any national formation" (Ashcroft, *Key Concepts* 150) and often realising the latent potential to "abandon history for essentializations that have the power to turn human beings against each other" (Said, *Culture* 276). Indeed, the *Macquarie Dictionary,* despite its many editions over more than two decades, has only recently given voice to Australian Aboriginal English, and then only in a limited way, and has still yet to treat any of the various Migrant Englishes or ethnolects that exist outside the mainstream of Australian national culture.

In the case of diachronic dictionaries, or dictionaries on historical principles, the possibilities are wide open and a first essay at creating such a dictionary entry can be found in the Appendix to this paper.

Firstly, it is possible to group citational evidence into works of colonial versus postcolonial periods. This is a fundamental step in contextualising citations. Secondly, cultural and literary information could be applied to the bibliographic information presented. A case in point being *Hobson-Jobson*'s 1898 citation for *bheesti* from Kipling's famous poem 'Gunga Din', to which could be added

exceedingly useful notes about the place this poem has in the traditional literary canon and references (which could even be hyperlinked in an electronic version) to scholarly articles on this poem. Current practice is to let the citations speak for themselves, but to some extent this is merely a rationalisation of the fact that lexicographers have traditionally been oppressed by space considerations and have not had sufficient room to add such material. The move from printed to electronic forms has effectively done away with this problem, a fact apparently unnoticed by lexicographers who still produce dictionaries with the same curtailed and abbreviated style as their former print versions. The Third Edition of the *OED* persists with listing sources such as "*Sci. Monthly*" ("mud") – is it *Science Monthly* or *Scientific Monthly* or *The Science Monthly*? – and V. Seth ("namaz"), as though spelling out Vikram in full would somehow waste page or database space. This lack of space has meant in the past that users wishing to find out about the background of quoted works or writers, important information for understanding the citation itself, must needs do their own further research, rather than being able to find all the relevant information in the one place. With the advent of computerised dictionaries this unwanted situation can be alleviated.

Another improvement now permitted by the freedom of computerised lexicography is that citations can be provided *in extensio*, rather than trimmed back to the smallest possible full clause or broken up by ellipsis points. This would give the user greater context with which to obtain a feeling for the socio-cultural, literary and emotive milieu in which the terms in question were used, the voice of and interaction between speakers, the interplay of character, the grammatical and syntactic landscape, and so on. In fact, as computerisation of texts increases brief

key-word-in-context citations will eventually be able to be directly hyperlinked to entire texts and electronic literary corpora. Also, citations need no longer be restricted to a select few, but rather may easily be supplied in abundance. And, finally, the growth of scanned, OCR'd and electronically-searchable texts means for greater access to colonial and postcolonial documentation, vastly increasing the area where lexicographers can cast their net. Just with the word bheesti a search on Google Books produces a very interesting citation from Robert Percival's *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*, 1803:

> A certain number of negroes, appointed for the purpose, carry on their shoulders small leathern bags with pipes attached to them, called beasties. With these they run along the line, giving water to every soldier who stands in need of it; and as soon as the bags are empty, replenish them at the first spring or river they meet with. (103)

This further piece of evidence is a significant addition to the history of the word *bheesti* in colonial English, showing as it does that the term was transplanted by the colonisers as far south as Sri Lanka (where Hindustani was not spoken), but involving a transferral in sense from the 'water-carrier' to the 'leather water-bag'. In order to contrast the colonial past with the present a search on the *ACCENT* database finds only one solitary example of our word, from the *Times of India* 30 Sept 2001: "Adjoining Bhishtipara brings forth images of *bhishtis* (water carriers) with their leather water bags and gas lights illuminating the streets in the evening." Here the italicisation and parenthetic translation make it obvious that this is not a token of the English word but instead a transliteration of Hindi. Furthermore, the context conjures a historical image revealing that this leather-bag carrying bheesti is an occupation of

the past no longer part of the modern Indian setting. Another contemporary citation is from Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel*, in which, again in a historical setting, a bombastic Raj Resident ludicrously misunderstands the Hindustani, not English, term *bhisti* to mean an earthenware water pot or vessel, not a person who carries water (36), recalls the Percival citation above and raises the possibility of it being the result of a misapprehension. In fact, the preponderance of attestations of this term in English language contexts, even in Kipling's *Kim* (20), have the word simultaneously occurring with the explanation 'water carrier' or 'water bearer' alongside it, suggesting that it was never as 'universally' known as Yule and Burnell maintained.

For orthographic variants and pronunciation greater depth of coverage is also necessary. To return to our example of *bheesti*, the eighteenth and early nineteenth century variant spelling *beasty* represents the pronunciation /ˈbɪsti/ as opposed to /ˈbʰɪsti/. This is a product of the inability of colonial speakers to pronounce and even detect the more fully aspirated *bh-*, /bʰ-/, of Indian languages as that consonant does not exist as a contrastive phoneme in English. However, is this really an inability? Actually, it is not. It is perfectly possible for native English speakers to pronounce this speech sound, even though it is unfamiliar to them. All that is required is sufficient effort and will to learn how to listen for it and how to pronounce it. However, it is difficult, and so generally the *bh-* is de-aspirated for ease of pronunciation. This de-aspiration is the norm for all borrowings into English with aspirated consonants, for example, *dharma*, *ghat*, *ghee* and *khaki*, and is part of the process of Anglicisation of the borrowed words. Sometimes this de-aspiration is represented orthographically, as with *beasty*. At other times the aspirated consonant

has been subject to spelling pronunciation, as is the case with the word *thug* from Hindi ठग. This is pronounced /t^{h}ʌg/ in Hindi, and thus was transliterated *thag* or *thug*, which has given rise to the English, fully Anglicised, pronunciation /θʌg/, as the *th-* was read as denoting the voiceless dental fricative /θ/, rather than the aspirated voiceless postalveolar plosive /t^{h}/. This process of phonetic adaptation happens in reverse with English words involving *th*, either voiceless dental fricative /θ/ or voiced dental fricative /ð/, when spoken in Indian English, thus *thief* in Inner Circle Englishes is /θif/, but in Indian English is /t^{h}if/. There is nothing wrong with this process, nor anything aberrant about the resulting forms or pronunciations; it is a natural linguistic process. However, the point is that in the context of World Englishes and World English lexicography, all of this information is relevant to the histories and current status of the words in question, all of this information is part of descriptive linguistics but is not all of it is part of descriptive lexicography where the bias clearly still falls to the Inner Circle varieties, especially British and American English.

In etymologies, rather than relying on some diacritically complicated transliteration to render the source word, such as *bhiśtī* (what phonemes do *ś* and *ī* actually refer to?), far better to use the traditional script, भिश्ती. This allows informed users, or anyone who so wishes to make themselves acquainted with Devanagari, the ability to pronounce the source word as native-speakers do. Following this may be added either a transliteration or IPA transcription, or both, effectively relegating the Western orthographic conventions to secondary status, a process of re-centring the peripheral. This process is also important for many scripts, such as Thai, which not

only has no standardised transliteration, but actually cannot be effectively transliterated with the Roman alphabet.

By adding these additional citations to those already reproduced in *Hobson-Jobson* and the *OED* and by examining these in detail, a whole new picture of the term *bheesti* (*beasty*, *bhishti*, *bhisti*) emerges, one in which it is evident that the word is no longer part of English, and that even during the colonial period it was only partially assimilated to English, and was apparently a word that the colonisers had difficulty in both pronouncing and understanding. Such an analysis speaks volumes about the relationship of coloniser to colonised, revealing in an explicit manner the ways in which colonisers devalued the language of their colonised subjects even while attempting to appropriate it, upsetting the dominant paradigm of Western superiority through exposing their dismissive attitude and their concomitant inabilities.

We can thus imagine a possible new dictionary entry, one inspired by the new perspectives of West-East relations brought to light via colonial discourse theory and the wider body of postcolonial studies, which carefully and explicitly delineates all these important points about the word *bheesti*. Such an entry cannot follow the traditional lexicographic conventions wherein the information is presented in a dry, concise, erudite, typographically encrypted fashion, wherein the citations are left to speak for themselves, wherein the dominant historical hegemony is conjured by the standard defining style and its air of detached scientism, but instead would, in plain and clear words, elucidate how this word forms a nexus between East and West which reveals the salient issues underlying the unbalanced power play of generations of colonial and postcolonial relations.

This chapter is entitled “Some Possible Solutions” for the very reason that it still leaves uncovered many of the problems that beset future lexicographers wishing to take part in the project of presenting the various World Englishes in a more fair and equitable way. For example, how will any projected dictionaries of World English, or dictionaries covering an area where multiple varieties exist, such as South-East Asia or West Africa, best present their material so that it obviates the creation of an obvious core-periphery structure? If using “standard English” – that is, Inner Circle non-colloquial, academic English – for defining authorises a varietal bias and automatically others other Englishes, then what definitional language can be used in its place? Far beyond the suggestions discussed above future lexicographers will indeed have to find new ways, modes, methods, and means to collect, describe and present their material in order to move towards a better, more sympathetic and more egalitarian description of current English(es).

CONCLUSION

Postcolonial theory represents an opening of the eyes for Western scholarship, but, as this paper has demonstrated, this is an ongoing process and the body of thought and research has yet to make a substantial impact in the field of lexicography, which has so far only begun to take its first tentative steps towards covering English as it is used around the world. As demonstrated in this paper, both past and current dictionaries manifest a conceptualisation of English as having a core that is occupied largely by British and American Englishes, and to a lesser extent the Englishes of Kachru's Inner Circle, and despite the claims of some dictionaries to cover World Englishes, considerably less coverage, detail and importance are accorded to the great variety of other forms of English that exist throughout the world. The entries for *bheesti* in both *Hobson-Jobson* and the *NED* display this same core-periphery view that is born of and simultaneously nurtures the imperial hegemonic division of West and East. Turning to more modern dictionaries reveals the same attitude of mind. This attitude is promoted by the style of language used to write dictionaries, and the prevalent conception of dictionaries as sites of dispassionate and impartial lexical recording, an idea cherished both by dictionary users and writers. That such impartiality is a myth is something that is easily demonstrable, and while it is admitted in the literature of linguistics and lexicography, at the same time it has been an accepted fact of the traditional dictionary writing style which has remained until this present day.

The changes suggested here, if taken up, will create a dictionary more openly opinionated as *Hobson-Jobson* and less like the *NED,* the *OED* or the host of other

conventional dictionaries available today which conceal political, cultural and power biases behind a purportedly detached objectivity. As Landau writes

> Every established dictionary reflects, however it may strive to be impartial, the prevailing biases of its times, because the biases often inhere in the very manner of expression used in its definitions. They inhere in the choice of terms to be included and in the fullness with which they are treated. (309)

Greater acceptance of these facts by lexicographers should be enabling, liberative, allowing them to avoid some of the pitfalls they have been led into by past attempts at objectivity. Why should the term *child-molester* be neutrally described? Why should the word *nigger* be labelled as derogatory but not racist? Why should the dominant paradigms and power structures be bolstered by dictionaries? Why should certain varieties of English be given precedence over others? The significant differences between traditional dictionaries and the type of dictionaries advocated in this paper are, firstly, that instead of a colonial bias there would be what we could call a postcolonial theory bias, and secondly, that such a bias would be plainly visible to the reader, as opposed to hidden behind a veil of impartiality or neutrality. If texts can be usefully and revealing read in "critically relativised" ways, then surely dictionaries can be written in the same "critically relativised" ways. As awful as this might sound to some literary theorists who would wish to maintain some noncommittal speaking position, endlessly theorising, or to others who seem bent on nothing more than repeating Said's work of exposing the machinations of imperialism via discourse analysis, no matter how impractical such efforts may or may not be, the juggernaut of lexicographical production will continue to roll

steadily on and only by taking a clearly positioned stance can the important issues raised by postcolonial studies be made to serve some practical purpose. The removal the masculinist bias from dictionaries in the 1980s was a great step forward, and was easily and seamlessly achieved once sufficient will developed. In a like manner, the field of study engendered by Edward Said has the potential to enlighten lexicographers to how their products are implicit in still yet further biases, how dictionaries encode inequalities that marginalise a vast number of the wonderful multiplicity of Englishes existing in our globalised, postcolonial world.

ENDNOTES

[1] Amazingly Gove's dictionary seemed to have escaped widespread criticism for including the word *of* as a verb, a non-standard variant of *have* – as in, "I could of done it" – which, as far as I am aware, is not to be found or sanctioned in any other dictionary of the English language (other than the historical treatment in the *OED* which labelled it as "erroneous in Received Standard" in 1989, but reduced this to simply "nonstandard" in the 2009 New Edition update). Presumably this variant is deemed to be so outlandishly erroneous, egregious and illiterate that critics combing *Webster's Third* for entries to assail did not think to look for it.

[2] For a good analysis of some of the pitfalls of using the Google search engine as a corpus tool, see Kilgariff, and Warschauer.

[3] As explained by Yule in the preface to the first edition "A valued friend of the present writer many years ago published a book, of great acumen and considerable originality, which he called *Three Essays*, with no Author's name; and the resulting amount of circulation was such as might have been expected. It was remarked at the time by another friend that if the volume had been entitled *A Book, by a Chap*, it would have found a much larger body of readers. It seemed to me that *A Glossary* or *A Vocabulary* would be equally unattractive, and that it ought to have an alternative title at least a little more characteristic. If the reader will turn to *Hobson-Jobson* in the Glossary itself, he will find that phrase, though now rare and moribund, to be a typical and delightful example of that class of Anglo-Indian *argot* which consists of Oriental words highly assimilated, perhaps by vulgar lips, to the English vernacular; whilst it is the more fitted to our book, conveying, as it may, a veiled intimation of dual authorship. At any rate, there it is; and at this

period my feeling has come to be that such is the book's name, nor could it well have been anything else."

[4] For the purposes of this paper I have used the exceedingly faithful, almost letter perfect, scanned and OCR'd HTML online version of the second enlarged edition available from the University of Chicago *Digital Dictionaries of South Asia* website: <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/hobsonjobson/>.

[5] In this paper I will normalise the spelling of this orthologically variable term to *bheesti*, plural *bheestis*, for simplicity sake (except when quoting original sources), following the *Macquarie Dictionary*, while remaining fully aware that this spelling is neither synchronically nor diachronically any more justifiable than other variants.

[6] Modern Hindi and Urdu are considered a diasystem, that is, a single genetic language which has two or more standard forms, and only arose after Partition in 1947. The term *Hindustani* was originally the Mogul denomination of the Khariboli dialect, which became influenced by Persian and Arabic and formed a lingua franca across north India. According to Yule and Burnell, writing in the late nineteenth century, "it was for a long time a kind of Mahommedan *lingua franca* over all India, and still possesses that character over a large part of the country, and among certain classes." The name *Urdu* is elliptical for *zabān-i-urdū* 'language of the camp', that is "the mixt language which grew up in the court and camp" of the Mogul conquerors (Yule; Oxford).

[7] The latest additions and revisions were published online March 2009.

[8] A transparent compound is one where knowledge of the two terms is enough to understand the meaning, or has no special cultural significance, thus requiring no special lexicographical treatment. For example, contrast the transparent compounds

car door, car window, car wheel, car engine, with *car pool, car bomb, car wash*. As a rule transparent compounds are excluded from dictionaries as they would make up the bulk of entries and are not required by the dictionary user. Nevertheless, categorisation of compounds as transparent or not is open to interpretation.

[9] Now scientifically reclassified as *Faidherbia albida* (Hopkins 245).

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APPENDIX

Sample Dictionary Entry for *bheesti*

The following sample entry incorporates a postcolonial perspective and the suggestions discussed in Chapter 6. The definition is prolix, giving information about the occupation and how it was perceived by colonialists; the pronunciation gives precedence to the non-Anglo-American form; the orthographical information highlights how colonial attitudes were generative; the etymological section offers a critique of *Hobson-Jobson* and the *NED* (and hence *OED*), thus finally dislodging the power of those long-time "authorities". The citational evidence is divided into Colonial and Postcolonial eras, and the extensive quotations supply a wealth of contextual material that speaks volumes about the situation in which the word was taken into English, the extent to which it was naturalised, and the attitudes of the colonial masters who used it.

bheesti

Definition: During the Raj, in British possessions in the Subcontinent and Sri Lanka, a man, usually a Muslim, employed to carry and distribute water and to perform other tasks associated with water usage, such as running baths or dousing the tatties of doors and palanquins (see citations 1816, 1824, 1836, 1882).

Considered a servant by colonialists, such men supplied households or other establishments with water, and were water porters on expeditions and for soldiers; they were also street water vendors. Water was transported in a sheepskin or goatskin mussock slung across the back.

The abundance of instances in which the term is paraphrased or defined, or printed italicised, reveals that, contra Yule and Burnell, it was never fully naturalised into English. Rudyard Kipling's famous poem "Gunga Din", 1898, offers insight into the attitude towards and treatment of bheestis by British soldiers. Typical of Orientalist essentialisation, both Burton (1885) and Yule and Burnell (1886) equate the Indian bheesti with the Arabic *sakka*.

The profession has diminished with the widespread use of other water transportation technology. Bheestis are now classified by the Indian government as Dalits, and since Partition the word only appears in English in this context or in historical texts.

Pronunciation. Hindustani and Indian English /ˈbʰɪsti/; most other Englishes /ˈbisti/. Typical features of Anglicisation are the reduction of the fully aspirated /bʰ-/ to /b-/ and the elongation of the initial vowel from /ɪ/ to /i/.

Spellings: Never attaining settled orthography, bheesti has been spelled as variously according to the whim of the writer. Frequently italicised to indicate that it is not an English word and occasionally with diacritic on the final vowel (**í** or **ī**) to indicate long /i/. Plural forms in *–ies* are ambiguous, potentially referring to singular forms that in end in *–ie* or *–y*, though also potentially, but inconsistently, *-i*. There are six major forms: (1)

representing unaspirated pronunciation: **beasty** or **beastie** (plural **beasties**), **beestie**; (2) representing long /i/ in first syllable: **bheesty** or **bheestie** (plural **bheesties**), **bheesti**, **bheestee**; (3) representing short /ɪ/ in first syllable: (plural **bhisties**), **bhisti**, **bhistí**; (4) representing /ˈbʰɪʃti/: **bhishti**, **bhishtí**; (5) recalling the Persian original: **bihishti**; (6) with initial vowel altered to /ɛ/: **bhestee**, **bhesti**. The commonest forms being (2), (3) and (4). The eighteenth and early nineteenth century variant spellings **beasty**, etc. (citations 1781, 1782, 1803, 1820, 1824) represents the pronunciation /ˈbisti/, a product of the inability of colonial speakers to pronounce or even detect the more fully aspirated *bh-* /bʰ-/ of Indian languages as that consonant does not exist as a contrastive phoneme in English. Postcolonial texts favour **bhisti** and **bhishti**.

Origin: A borrowing from 18th and 19th century Hindustani भिश्ती (/ˈbʰɪsti/, *bhistī*), an adaptation of Persian بهشتی (*bihishtī*) ‘a person of paradise,’ noun use of adjective ‘heavenly, paradisical’ (D’Rozario; Steingass 211), from بهشت (*bihisht*) ‘paradise’ + ی- (*-ī*), a suffix of appurtenance. Singh suggests that the name was “given to them on account of the relief which their [*sc.* the bheestis’] ancestors provided to thirsty soldiers” (336), which accords with the origins of Hindustani as a language of the army, and Phillott’s observation that “to quench another’s thirst is a heavenly act” (138).

Yule and Burnell note that this use of the Persian word “appears to be peculiar to Hindustan” and that they were unable

> to trace the history of this term, which does not apparently occur in the *Āīn*,

> even in the curious account of the way in which water was cooled and supplied in the Court of Akbar (*Blochmann*, tr. i. 55 *seqq.*), or in the old travellers, and is not given in Meninski's lexicon. Vullers gives it only as from Shakespear's Hindustani Dict.

With typical imperialist attitude they go on to suggest, without supplying any foundation for their belief, that the word was coined by the lower class of servants themselves:

> It is one of the fine titles which Indian servants rejoice to bestow on one another, like *Mehtar*, *Khalīfa*, &c. The title in this case has some justification. No class of men (as all Anglo-Indians will agree) is so diligent, so faithful, so unobtrusive, and uncomplaining as that of the *bihishtīs*. And often in battle they have shown their courage and fidelity in supplying water to the wounded in face of much personal danger.

It is plain from these comments that the use of strongly positive terms for menial occupations was somehow offensive. The *NED* suggested that this term was "probably of jocular origin," though there is no definite reason to suppose this beyond the potentially humorous juxtaposition of high and low. William Crooke, in the 1903 edition of *Hobson-Jobson*, details a conjectured etymology from Sanskrit, stating that the

> trade must be of ancient origin in India, as the leather bag is mentioned in the Veda and Manu (*Wilson, Rig Veda*, ii. 28; *Institutes*, ii. 79.) Hence Col. Temple (*Ind. Ant.*, xi. 117) suggests that the word is Indian, and connects it with the Skt. *vish*, 'to sprinkle.'

However, the close conformity to the Persian word and the other Hindustani

words for similarly menial professions with similar semantic design (*mehtar*, *khalifa*), make the Sanskrit derivation extremely unlikely.

Citations: The 38 colonial era citations, as opposed to only 11 postcolonial citations, reveal the extent to which the term waned in usage following Partition.

I. Colonial Citations

1781 *The India Gazette* 24 Nov. I have the happiness to inform you of the fall of Bijah Gurh on the 9th inst. with the loss of only 1 sepoy, 1 beasty, and a cossy killed.

1782 *The India Gazette* 12 Oct. [Table of Wages in Calcutta]

Consummah . . . 10 Rs.

Kistmutdar . . . . 6 "

Beasty . . . . . 5 "

1803 ROBERT PERCIVAL *An Account of the Island of Ceylon* 103 A certain number of negroes, appointed for the purpose, carry on their shoulders small leathern bags with pipes attached to them, called beasties. With these they run along the line, giving water to every soldier who stands in need of it; and as soon as the bags are empty, replenish them at the first spring or river they meet with.

1810 THOMAS WILLIAMSON *The East India Vade-Mecum* I. 229 In such a climate, water is, during four months, at least, the main spring of existence, both in the animal, and the vegetable, kingdom; consequently, its supply becomes a profession, giving bread to thousands. The person officiating in this capacity, if provided with a bullock for the purpose of

conveying two large leather bags, each containing about twenty gallons, is called a *Puckaully*; but if he carries the water himself in the skin of a goat, prepared for that purpose, he then receives the designation of *Bheesty*.

1810 THOMAS WILLIAMSON *The East India Vade-Mecum* I. 230 Bheesties are, with few exceptions, Mussulmans; it being contrary to the Hindu code to touch either the carcases, or the skins, of animals killed in any way.

1810 THOMAS WILLIAMSON *The East India Vade-Mecum* I. 233 Water, when dashed out from the end of a mussock, or bheesty-bag, would be apt to penetrate into the interior of a palanquin[.]

1811 E. SAMUEL *The Asiatic Annual Register, or a View of the History of Hindustan, and of the Politics, Commerce, and Literature of Asia* xi. 30 Killed, 3 naicks, 10 sepoys. – Wounded, 1 subadar, 1 jemadar, 2 halvidars, 3 naicks, 2 bheesties, and 53 sepoys.

1815 JAMES JOHNSON *The Influence of Tropical Climates, more especially the Climate of India, on European Constitutions* 461 The *tatties*, which are affixed to the doors and other apertures, in the hot season, and kept constantly wet by *bheesties*, or water-carriers, whereby the breeze is cooled by evaporation, in its passage through the humid grass, of which the tatty is constructed, prove a very salutary and grateful defence against the hot land-winds; since this simple expedient makes a difference of twenty or thirty degrees, between the *bheesty's* and the *European's* side of the *tatty*!

1816 *Annual Register* 144/2 [W]ater was then thrown by bheestees upon the alligator and the dog, and the latter liberated from the mouth of the monster; when, to our very great surprise and pleasure, up rose the dog, and ran off[.]

1819 *The Literary Panorama, and National Register* viii. 1507/1 Owing in the first instance to an insufficiency of men to drag them, they did not reach the place, till other exertions purely adventitious, had subdued the danger; and then, the benefit which their presence should have yielded, seemed paralysed from want of Bhisties to fill them, although the river was hardly 50 yards from the spot where the fire was to have been extinguished.

1820 *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and its Dependencies* Sept 252/1 We found ourselves obliged to submit to the custom of the country, in keeping up the following establishment: a Duwan, or porter, at the gate; a Sircar and two assistants for the ship; a Bobagee, or cook, and his assistant; a Beastie, or water carrier; a Mater, or linkboy, and a sweeper, for the house; a set of bearers for one palanquin, seven.

1824 JOHN E. HALL *The Port-Folio* 49 My kitmagear and a couple of coolies, or rather beasties, who have attended me to England, will look after them and keep them clean. The fact that one of the adjutants is a cock, is satisfactory, and I am not without hope of securing a breed of them to this country.

1829 JOHN SHIPP *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Military Career of John*

Shipp, Late a Lieutenant in His Majesty's 87th Regiment ii. 149 Dressing in a hurry, find the drunken bheesty . . . has mistaken your boot for the goglet in which you carry your water on the line of march.

1830 in JAMES PEGGS *India's Cries to British Humanity, Relative to the Suttee, Infanticide, British Connection with Idolatry, Ghaut Murders, Suttee, Slavery, and Colonization in India; to which are added Humane Hints for the Melioration of the State of Society in British India* (1832) 203 The Native Hospital is at the Chandnee-choke, in the European part of the town, and its arrangements prevent men of cast and respectability, from availing themselves of it; its benefits are therefore confined to bheestees (water carriers) and muscalchees (flambeau carriers) of Gentlemen and to those who are brought thither by the police.

1834 *The Calcutta Christian Observer* Dec. 606 [in a list of expenses for running a school for non-British boys] A bearer, sweeper, bhisti and harkára, at 4 rs. each, per mensem, 16 0 Rs.

1835 EMMA ROBERTS *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society* 221 Attempts are made to cool the palanquins by means of tattees, and expedient which materially heightens the expense of travelling, as (bheestees must be engaged to supply water) and which frequently fails in the desired object.

1836 *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* III. 391 *Tattie.* – A thin bamboo frame-work nicely fitted into door-ways of houses or tents, and inclosing the dried root of a fragrant grass, thinly distributed all over it, in a parallel and vertical order, so as to

allow the trickling down of fresh water, which is thrown upon it from time to time, by a *bhistí*, or water-carrier, in order to cool the interior of the habitation.

1837 *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British and Foreign India, China and Australasia* xxiii. 15/2 And soon after this is in the hands of our readers, will the streets be alive with the rattle of keranchies, the tinkle-tinkle of the bhisties, the ‘dhoie’ of the man of curds and whey, and the ‘meethaie chaych’ of the itinerant bhoom-wallah; and our muslin-cinctured baboo will make his appearance, bending low, the back of his right hand first respectfully placed at out august feet, and then carried reverentially to the forehead, as if to show the mental superiority of the Englishman. Sly rogue!

1837 *Parliamentary Papers: House of Commons: Estimates; Army; Navy; Ordnance, &c.: Session 31 Jan–17 July 1837* 20 Naiques, drummers, fifers, privates, bhestees, puckalies and lascars.

1837 *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* VI. ii. 826 The garden of the luck bhesti boasts the most favorite spot for pic nics in all *Oujein*.

1838 *The Calcutta Monthly Journal and General Register of Occurrences throughout the British Dominions in the East forming an Epitome of the Indian Press* 234 The deponent finding the water near him very muddy, asked Mr. Pattle’s bheesti where he, the deponent should fill his bag from[.]

1838 *Parbury’s Oriental Herald and Colonial Intelligencer: Containing a Faithful Digest of such Information as must be Considered Generally*

Interesting from the British Indian Presidencies and the Eastern Nations II. 140 If (says a correspondent of the *Englishman*) bathing of lewd women, with their no less dirty cloths worn about their bodies, coupled with bhisties and others dipping their dusty legs, the former for the convenience of filling their *mussocks*, be not sufficiently abominable, and to require the authority of the magistrates to be put down, I do not know upon what else they can exert it better.

1839 HOWARD MALCOLM in *The New York Review* V. 380 [B]heesties, with leather water-sacks slung dripping on their backs, carry their precious burden to the rich man's yard, or hawk it along the street, announcing their approach by drumming on their brass measure.

1843 *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* VII. 47 Bhishtí (Water-carrier) … Breadth across the knuckle joint. In. 3.37

1850 HENRY MOSES *Sketches of India: With Notes on the Seasons, Scenery, and Society of Bombay, Elephanta, and Salsette* 228 The *bheestie*, or *pawney-wallah*, supplies your bungalow every morning with fresh water. He brings it in the skin of a sheep sewed up, with one leg left for a spout; the whole being secured by a leathern cord slung over the shoulder. He is a gentleman who stands upon very little ceremony with you, and hurries from one room to another, to fill the bath, chatties, and jugs, whether the apartments be occupied or not. His visits are paid *very* early in the morning, so that you may have the water as cool as possible; and he troubles not at all as to whether you are in bed or out of it –

married or single. In he rushes, dripping wet, and leaving behind him a stream of the precious fluid; for his skins are always bad ones, and out gushes the water into your vessels, and away he hurries to the next room. Sometimes, indeed, you meet with a polite *pawney-wallah*; one who will give you a *grunt* outside your door, as a sort of warning to you to be prepared for him; but this is so rare, that you soon become accustomed to the intrusion; I have seen persons newly arrived in this country furiously enraged with these unceremonious water-purveyors, on such occasions; but it is a folly, as they can never understand a word you say; but strangers, who do not know the language, always appear to forget this.

1854 HELEN MACKENZIE *Life in the Mission, the Camp and the Zenáná; or, Six years in India* 298 A poor Bhistí, or water-carrier, got leave to visit his mother, who was very ill, over stayed his leave, and did not come back until after muster – a heinous offence[.]

1861 JOHN LANG *Wanderings in India: And other Sketches of Life in Hindostan* 63 Jehan, the bheestie's daughter, was a virtuous girl, and Francis Gay had never approached her with a view to under mining her virtue.

1867 *The Alpine Journal: A Record of Mountain Adventure and Scientific Observation* 139 It was almost dark before the tired Lahoulis made their appearance with the baggage, the wiry old *bhishti* with the inevitable pipe at his lips marshalling the way, as fresh, to all appearance, as at the hour of starting.

1878 PHIL ROBINSON *In my Indian Garden* 79 Here comes a seal carrying a porpoise on its back. No! it is only our friend the bheesty.

1882 W. E. BAXTER *A Winter in India* ii. 22 [B]heesties pressing water out of their pigskins to lay the dust[.]

1885 Richard Burton. *The Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night: A Plain and Literal Translation of the Arabian Nights Entertainments* IV. 42 [footnote] Arab. “Sakká,” the Indian “Bihishti” (man from Heaven): Each party in a caravan has more than one.

1886 HENRY YULE and A. C. BURNELL *Hobson-Jobson* BHEESTY, s. The universal word in the Anglo-Indian households of N. India for the domestic (corresponding to the *saḳḳā* of Egypt) who supplies the family with water, carrying it in a **mussuck,** (q.v.), or goatskin, slung on his back.

1886 WALTER RALEIGH in *The Letters of Sir Walter Raleigh 1879 to 1922* (2005) I. 50 We did this because our bhishti or beestie refused to roll [the tennis lawn]; he has half an hour’s work a day pulling up water for baths and drinks.

1890 *Selections from the Records of the Government of India Public Works Department* cclxvii. 8 A pump and filter were fitted up in the bed, and a cistern was made to hold the filtered water, so that the poorest residents of the bazaar, who could not afford to pay the price demanded by the bhisties, thus obtained a gratuitous supply as often as they needed it.

1897 FRANK NORRIS ‘The ‘Ricksha That Happened’ in *The Apprenticeship Writings of Frank Norris: 1896-1899* 216 As the Major and I heard the

ticking of the eight-day clock, it is no lie to say that the *bhisti mussick* turned *shikary* in our *khitmagar*. [Norris is being satirical of Kipling's practice of loading of his texts with Indian words]

1898 RUDYARD KIPLING *Barrack-room Ballads* 17

Now in Injia's sunny clime,
Where I used to spend my time
A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,
Of all them black-faced crew
The finest man I knew
Was our regimental bhisti, Gunga Din.

It was "Din! Din! Din!
You limping lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!
Hi! slippy *hitherao*!
Water, get it! *Panee lao*!
You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din!"

The uniform 'e wore
Was nothin' much before,
An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,
For a twisty piece o' rag
An' a goatskin water-bag
Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.
When the sweatin' troop-train lay
In a sidin' through the day,

Where the ’eat would make your bloomin’ eyebrows crawl,

We shouted “Harry By!”

Till our throats were bricky-dry,

Then we wopped ’im ’cause ’e couldn’t serve us all.

It was “Din! Din! Din!

You ’eathen, where the mischief ’ave you been?

You put some *juldee* in it,

Or I’ll *marrow* you this minute,

If you don’t fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!”

1901 RUDYARD KIPLING *Kim* (1993) 20 “Eat now and – I will eat with thee. Ohé, *bhisti*!” he called to the water-carrier, sluicing the crotons by the museum. “Give water here. We men are thirsty.” “We men!” said the *bhisti*, laughing. “Is one skinful enough for such a pair?”

1904 MARGARET ELIZABETH NOBLE *The Web of Indian Life* (2008) 105 The familiar sight of the Mohammedan bhisti, holding his goat-skin below the hydrant mouth for water, and the Hindu water-carrier with his earthen pot coming in his turn, is an instance of the contrast as it now exists.

1907 John Campbell Oman *The Brahmans, Theists and Muslims of India: Studies of Goddess-Worship in Bengal, Caste, Brahmaism and Social Reform, with Descriptive Sketches of Curious Festivals, Ceremonies, and Faquirs* 306 Bihishtis (water-carriers) with full leather begs were in attendance, and I noticed that some women who were no the scene

handed pice to them – a meritorious contribution, no doubt, towards the good work.

1934 W. TAYLOR "Surra in the Punjab" *The Indian Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry* IV. i. 30 [F]or it must be borne in mind that the staff at the District Veterinary hospitals consists normally of a Veterinary Assistant, a compounder, a *bhisti* and sweeper, and sometimes the latter are part-time men.

II. Postcolonial Citations

1988 HASTINGS DONNAN *Marriage among Muslims: preference and choice in Northern Pakistan* 57 A poor Abbasi can even be a *Bhishtī*.

1988 HUBERT EVANS *Looking Back on India* 150 Threading a passage through this patient acre of humanity went the bhishti, 'the man of paradise', bring water to the thirsty, the insistent sweet-meat vendor with his tray, the beggar proffering his bowl and plangently proclaiming his right to alms.

1989 OFELIA GARCÍA and RICARDO OTHEGUY ed. *English Across Cultures, Cultures Across English: A Reader in Cross-cultural Communication* 434 Kipling's poem "Gunga Din" achieves remarkable success in presenting the typically Indian image of the regimental Bhishti (water-carrier) supplying water with his goatskin waterbag.

1989 SHASHI THAROOR *The Great Indian Novel* 36 "And you tell me he cleans his own toilet, instead of letting his damn *bhisti* do it." "*Jamadar*, Sir Richard," the aide, a thin young man with a white pinched face, said, coughing politely. "A *bhisti* is only a water-carrier." "Really?" The

Resident seemed surprised. “Thought those were called *lotas*.” “They are, sir.” The equerry coughed even more loudly this time. “*Lotas* are those little pots you carry water in, I mean *they* carry water in, Sir Richard, whereas…” “A *bhisti* is the kind they have to balance on their heads, I suppose,” Sir Richard said. “Damn complicated language, this Hindustani. Different words for everything.” “Yes, sir…I mean no, sir,” began the equerry, doubly unhappy about his own choice of words. He wanted to explain that a *bhisti* was a person, not a container.

1994 QURRATULAIN HYDER *The Sound Of Falling Leaves: Award-Winning Urdu Short Stories* 6 But if the Tommies gave her money (and I saw no reason why the should), why didn’t her poor papa engage a *bhishti*?

1996 PAUL ASBURY SEAMAN *Far Above the Plain: Private Profiles and Admissable Evidence from the First Forty Years of Murree Christian School, Pakistan, 1956-1996* 79 On bath days, once a week, five small tin tubs were hauled into her room and the *bhishti* filled them with buckets of hot water.

1998 PAUL SCOTT *A Division of Spoils* 243 The drill was, once you were inside, to unlock the back door in the bath-house and then shout for your bearer or bhishti.

2001 *Times of India* 30 Sept Adjoining Bhishtipara brings forth images of *bhishtis* (water carriers) with their leather water bags and gas lights illuminating the streets in the evening.

2003 M.L. MATHUR *Encyclopaedia of Backward Castes* 180 List of Other Backward Classes Recommended by the First Backward Classes

Commission (Kalelkar) … Abbasi, Bhishti, Sakka (Delhi).

2004 K.S. SINGH *People of India: Maharashtra* 336 The Bhisti are non-vegetarians. … The Bhisti have no social divisions. They are not aware of the *varna* system. The Bhisti are an endogamous group.

2007 Yvonne Yaz Ezdani *Songs of the Survivors* 173 There was no running water, the *pani-wallah* (water bearer) drew well water and brought that in his leather bag (*bhisti*), which could be slung over the shoulder, to fill buckets and the stone tub.