

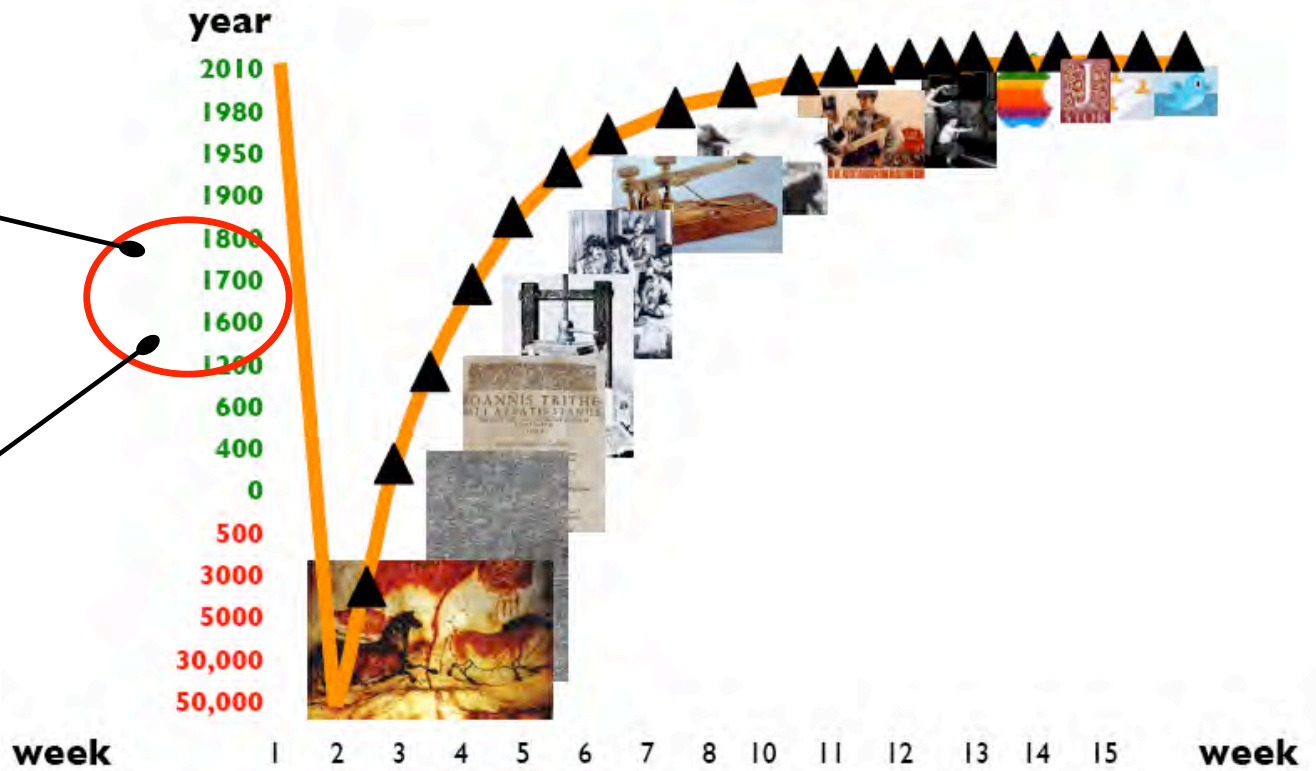
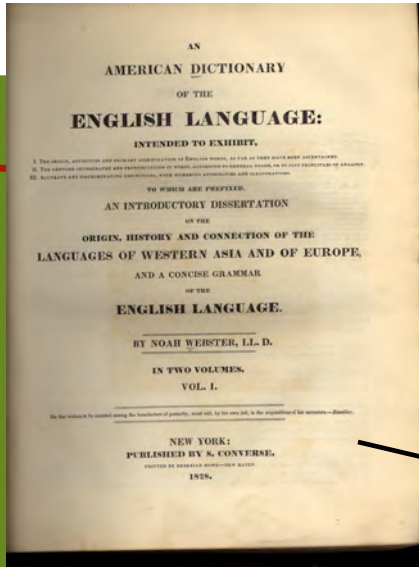
Language and the Dictionary



Geoff Nunberg
History of Information
Feb 23, 2012



Where We Are





Itinerary: 2/23

Rise of the vernacular

The creation of the modern dictionary

The circles of knowledge



The stirrings of English

English diglossia/triglossia in the Middle English period

English the spoken vernacular

French used by nobility, in courts.

Latin used for religion, scholarship.



The creolization of English

Whan that **Aprill** with his shoures soote
The droghte of march hath **Perced** to the roote,
And bathed every **veyne** in swich **licour**
Of which **vertu** engendred is the **flour**;
Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
Tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the ram his halve **cours** yronne,
And smale foweles maken **melodye**,
That slepen al the nyght with open ye
(so priketh hem **nature** in hir **corages**);
Thanne longen folk to goon on **pilgrimages**...



The creolization of English

When in the **Course** of **human events** it becomes **necessary** for one **people** to **dissolve** the **political** bands which have **connected** them with another and to **assume** among the **powers** of the earth, the **separate** and **equal station** to which the **Laws** of **Nature** and of **Nature's** God **entitle** them, a **decent respect** to the **opinions** of mankind **requires** that they should **declare** the **causes** which **impel** them to the **separation**.

Anglo-Saxon

French

Latin



Out of the shadow of Latin

Emergence of standard dialects
(London English, Parisian French, Tuscan Italian)

Printing & Literacy

The Reformation

Proto-nationalism



The Emergence of the Vernacular



The decline of Latin

1661 Boyle publishes *New Experiments Physico-Mechanical*, followed by *The Sceptical Chymist* in 1661

later arranges for Latin translations of works to counter piracy



Pct of Latin titles in
German-speaking world:

1650: 67%

1700: 38%

1750: 28%

1800 4%



Out of the shadow of Latin

196 An Old World and a New World

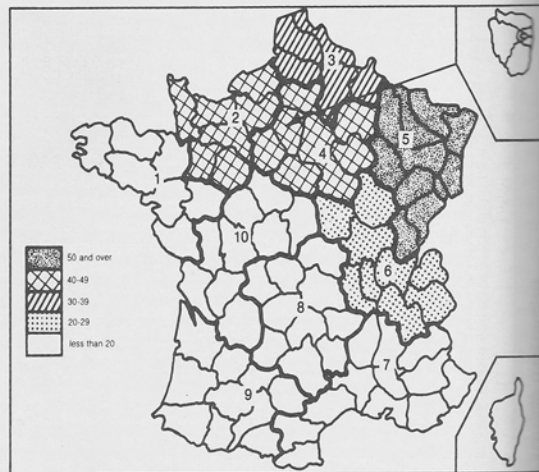


Figure 6.2. Proportion of Signatures on Marriage Registers (Men and Women), 1740-1789
Source: Houdaille, "Les signatures," p. 69.

Rise of the commercial class/Growth of cities

Growth from 1500-1600:

Paris 100m-200m

London 60m-200m

Growth of literacy & schooling

French literacy rates

	men	women
1680	29%	14%
1780 :	47%	27%

"une France double"



The Emergence of the Vernacular

Concerns that the vernacular (i.e., ordinary spoken) language is not an adequate vehicle for philosophy, history, etc.

Besyde Latyne, our langage is imperfite,
Quhilk in sum part, is the cause and the wyte [fault],
Quhy that Virgillis vers, the ornate bewte
In till our toung, may not obseruit be
For that bene Latyne wordes, mony ane
That in our leid ganand [suitable language], translation has
nane....

Gawin Douglas, 1553

Shall English be so poore, and rudely-base
As not be able (through mere penury)
To tell what French hath said with gallant grace,
And most tongues else of less facunditie?

John Davies, 1618



Refining the Vernacular



"Inkhorn words" -- learned words coined from Greek or Latin: *absurdity*, *dismiss*, *celebrate*, *encyclopedia*, *habitual*, *ingenious* (but also *eximious*, "excellent"; *obstetate*, "bear witness"; *adnichilate*, "reduce to nothing")

Among all other lessons this should first be learned, that wee never affect any straunge ynkehorne termes, but to speake as is commonly received: neither seeking to be over fine or yet living over-carelesse, using our speeche as most men doe, and ordering our wittes as the fewest have done. Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetorique*, 1553



The Creation of the Modern Dictionary



Early Wordbooks

Early dictionaries are usually bilingual (e.g., Latin-Cornish), organized thematically.

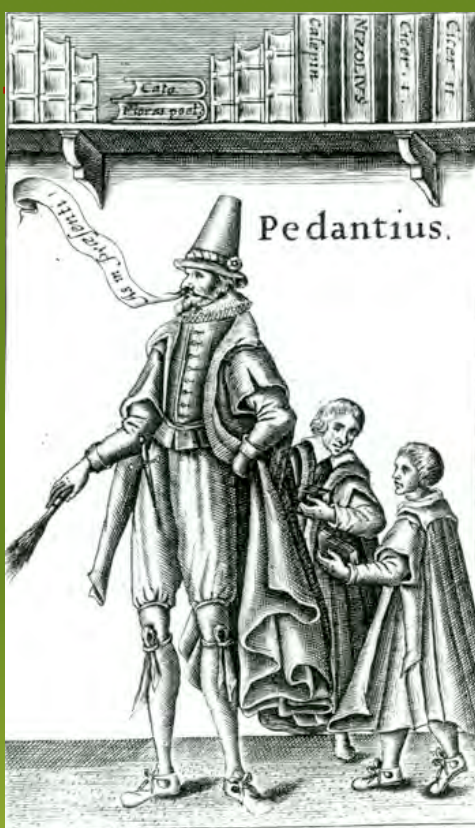
A
 Table Alphabeticall, con-
 teyning and teaching the true
 vriting, and vnderstanding of hard
 vsuall English wordes, borrowed from
 the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine,
 or French. &c.
 With the interpretation thereof by
 plaine English words, gathered for the benefit &
 helpe of Ladies, Gentlewomen, or any other
 unskillfull persons.
 Whereby they may the more easilie
 and better vnderstand many hard English
 wordes, which they shall heare or read in
 Scriptures, Sermons, or elsewhere, and also
 be made able to vse the same aptly
 themselves.
Legere, et non intelligere, negligere est.
 As good not read, as not to vnderstand.
 AT LONDON,
 Printed by I. R. for Edmund Wea-
 uer, & are to be sold at his shop at the great
 North doore of Paules Church.
 1604.
 Robert Cawdrey's Table Alphabeticall of 1604, the first English dictionary to explain its
 etymology to the "unskillfull"

of hard English words.
 extinguish, put out, or quench.
 extinct, put out.
 extirpate, to pull by by the rootes.
 extoll, advance, or praise highly, to lift up.
 extort, to wring out, to wrest from by vio-
 lence.
 extract, draw out.
 extravaгант, wandring out of order.
 extraordinarie, besides, or more then com-
 mon custome.
 exuberancy, plenty.
 exult, bragge, triumph, or leape for joy.
 exulcerate, to make soze, or corrupt.
 F
 Fabricate, make, fashion.
 Fabulous, fained, counterfained, much tal-
 ked of.
 facere, merry conceited.
 factiōe, fact.
 facillie, easines.
 faction, division of people into sundry parts
 and opinions.
 factious, that maketh division, contentious.
 factor, one that doth business for another.
 facultie, licencie, power, aptnesse, abilitie.
 fallacie,

First monolingual dictionaries appear in early c. 17. with Robert Cawdrey's *Table Alphabeticall of Hard Usual English Words*, 1604 ("for the benefit and helpe of Ladies, Gentlewomen, or other unskillful persons")



Refining & Codifying the Language



Advertisement to

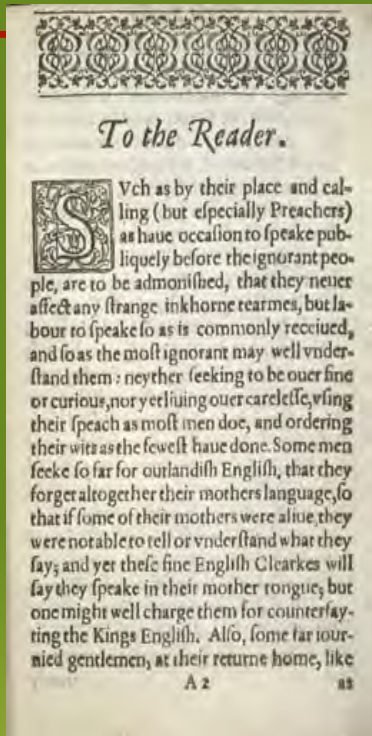
Frontispiece from
Pedantius, 1581,
comedey written by
Edward Forsett
satirizing scholarly
fops

Robert Cawdrey, Table Alphabeticall, 1604:

Some men seek so far for outlandish English, that they forget altogether their mothers language, so that if some of their mothers were alive, they were not able to tell, or understand what they say, and yet these fine English Clearks, will say they speak in their mother tongue... Also, some far journied gentlemen, at their returne home, like as they love to go in forraine apparrell, so they will poudere their talke with over-sea language....



Alphabetical Order



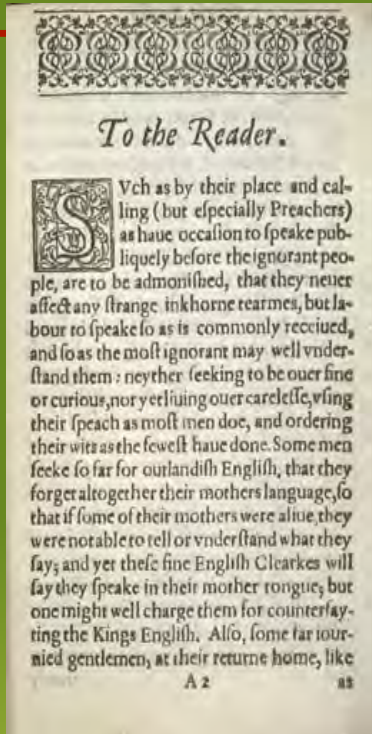
Advertisement to
Cawdrey's Table
Alphabeticall

If thou be desirous (gentle Reader) rightly and readily to vnderstand, and to profit by this Table, and such like, then thou must learne the Alphabet, to wit, the order of the Letters as they stand, perfectly without booke, and where euery Letter standeth: as (b) neere the beginning, (n) about the midst, and (t) toward the end. Nowe if the word, which thou art desirous to finde, begin with (a) then looke in the beginning of this Table, but if with (v) looke towards the end. Againe, if thy word beginne with (ca) looke in the beginning of the letter (c) but if with (cu) then looke toward the end of that letter. And so of all the rest. &c.

Rob't Cawdrey, *A table alphabeticall conteyning and teaching the true writing, and vnderstanding of hard usuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French, &c* 1604



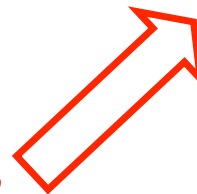
Alphabetical Order



Advertisement to
Cawdrey's Table
Alphabeticall

If thou be desirous (gentle Reader) rightly and readily to vnderstand, and to profit by this Table, and such like, then thou must learne the Alphabet, to wit, the order of the Letters as they stand, perfectly without booke, and where euery Letter standeth: as (b) neere the beginning, (n) about the midst, and (t) toward the end. Nowe if the word, which thou art desirous to finde, begin with (a) then looke in the beginning of this Table, but if with (v) looke towards the end. Againe, if thy word beginne with (ca) looke in the beginning of the letter (c) but if with (cu) then looke toward the end of that letter. *And so of all the rest. &c.*

What is this?





The desire for "illustration" in France

1530: Founding of Collège de France, with French admitted as language of higher education

1539: Ordonnances de Villers-Cotteret (1539) establish use of French in law courts

Percentage of book titles published in Paris in French:

1501	10%
1528	14%
1549	21%
1575	55%

Would to God that some noble heart could employ himself in setting out rules for our French language... If it is not given rules, we will find that every fifty years the French language will have been changed and perverted in very large measure. G. Tory, 1529

Formation of the Académie Française



L'habit vert
et l'épée.

Modeled on the accademia della Crusca, Florence (1583), which published 1st dict. In 1612

Formed in 1635 by Cardinal Richelieu; 40 members ("les immortels")

1st ed. of dictionary appears in 1694 (6 or 7 others since then).

Model for other language academies in Sweden, Spain, Romania, Portugal, Russia, etc.





The "Reading Revolution"

Book titles published in Britain:

1500-1509: 400

1630's: 6000

1710's: 21,000

1790's: 56,000

Growth of newspapers & periodicals, lending libraries,
reading clubs



The "Reading Revolution"

"Sixty years ago the only people who bought books were scholars, but today there is hardly a woman with some claim to education who does not read. Readers are to be found in every class, both in the towns and the country, even the common soldiers... take out books from the lending libraries." *Deutsches Museum*, 1780

"I cannot help observing that the sale of books in general has increase prodigiously within the last twenty years. The poorer sort of farmers who before that period spent their winter evenings in relating stories of witches, ghosts, hobgoblins, etc. now shorten the winter nights by hearing their sons and daughters read tales, romances, etc. and on entering their homes you may see Tom Jones, Roderick Random, and other entertaining books stuck up on their bacon-racks." James Lackington, 1783



Print, the Public, and Linguistic Anxiety



[Britain] has become a nation of readers. --Samuel Johnson, 1781

The problem of the public sphere:

How to coordinate public opinion via an impersonal print discourse between people who are anonymous to one another, in the absence of context...



The Growing Sense of Crisis



John Dryden (1693): "we have yet no prosodia, not so much as a tolerable dictionary, or a grammar, so that our language is in a manner barbarous.



William Warburton (1747): the English language is "destitute of a Test or Standard to apply to, in cases of doubt or difficulty.... For we have neither Grammar nor Dictionary, neither Chart nor Compass, to guide us through this wide sea of Words."



The Growing Sense of Crisis

Continuing desire to fix ("ascertain") the language:



"Suffer not our Shakespear, and our Milton, to become two or three centuries hence what Chaucer is at present, the study only of a few poring antiquarians, and in an age or two more the victims of bookworms." Thomas Sheridan



Short is the date, alas! of modern rhymes,
And 'tis but just to let them live betimes.
No longer now that Golden Age appears,
When patriarch wits survived a thousand years:
Now length of fame (our second life) is lost,
And bare threescore is all ev'n that can boast:
Our sons their fathers' failing language see,
And such as Chaucer is shall Dryden be.

Cf Alexander Pope, "Essay on Criticism"



An academy to "ascertain" the language?



1712: Swift writes "A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue in a Letter to Lord Harley

My Lord; I do here in the Name of all the Learned and Polite Persons of the Nation, complain to your Lordship, as First Minister, that our Language is extremely imperfect; that its daily Improvements are by no means in proportion to its daily Corruptions; and the Pretenders to polish and refine it, have chiefly multiplied Abuses and Absurdities; and, that in many Instances, it offends against every Part of Grammar. ...



The Rejection of an Academy

If an academy should be established for the cultivation of our stile, which I, who can never wish to see dependance multiplied, hope the spirit of English liberty will hinder or destroy...

Johnson, Preface to the *Dictionary*

As to a publick academy... I think it not only unsuitable to the genius of a *free nation*, but in itself ill calculated to reform and fix a language. We need make no doubt but that the best forms of speech will, in time, establish themselves by their own superior excellence...

Joseph Priestly, *Rudiments of Grammar*, 1761



Contrast the role of the state in French....

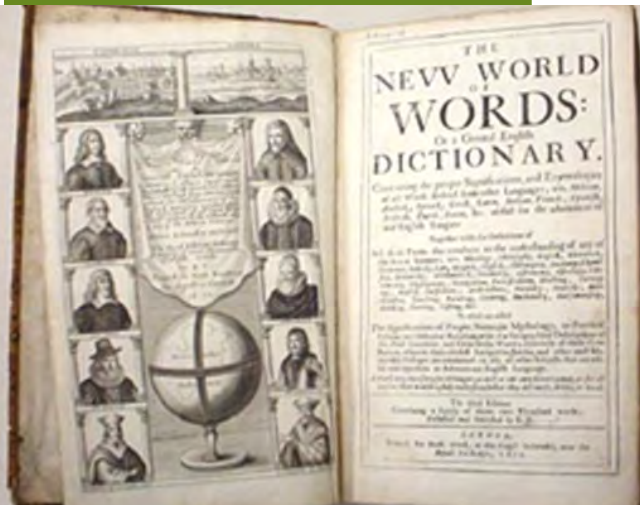


"Dictionaries propagate by inbreeding"

DICTIONARIUM BRITANNICUM:
Or more COMPLETE
UNIVERSAL ETYMOLOGICAL
ENGLISH DICTIONARY
Than any EXTANT.
CONTAINING
Not only the Words, and their Explanation; but their Etymologies from the *Ancient*
English, Teutonic, Low and High Dutch, Saxon, Danish, Norman and Modern French,
Italian, Spanish, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldei, &c. each in its proper Character.

Bailey, 1730

....for the Entertainment of the Curious, as the Information of the Ignorant, and for the Benefit of young Students, Artificers, Tradesmen and Foreigners, who are desirous thorowly to understand what they Speak, Read, or Write.



Phillips, New World of Words, 1658



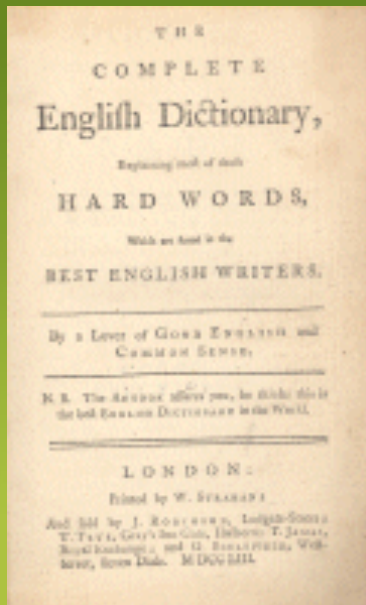
Wesley's Dictionary



The COMPLETE English Dictionary, explaining most of the HARD WORDS which are found in the BEST ENGLISH WRITERS.

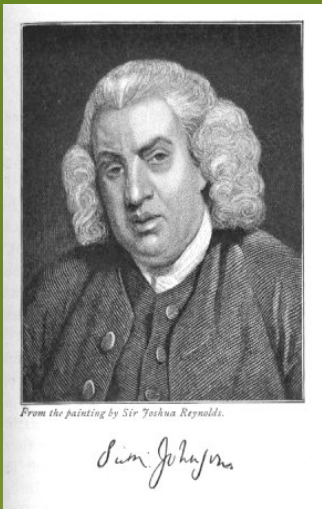
By a Lover of Good English and Common Sense.

N. B. The AUTHOR assures you, he thinks this is the best English DICTIONARY in the world.





Johnson to the Rescue!



1746: J. approached by "conger" of booksellers to make dict. for 1500 guineas

Johnson installs himself and his amanusenses in Gough Square to begin work on the Dictionary

1747: The "Plan of an English Dictionary" appears

Hodge

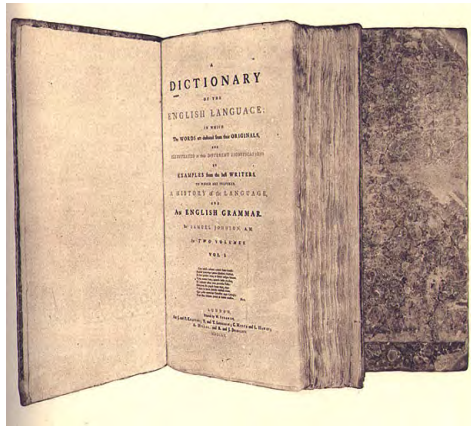


Johnson to the Rescue



ADV
 He had received advertisement for the party, which was first for his adulation London, had received some truth in former letters, which would not have been so. *Cicero.*
 The form and manner by which *George* stands, show for many kind of successions, in a variety of ways: the bulk does to give a large flow, and in fact shows, with brevity, the appearance of a man, without a child, time of time for the best of a day, or a month.
ADV
 1. Names of any thing published in paper of intelligence.
 2. The paper in which advertisements are inserted.
ADV
 1. To give intelligence, or to give notice.
 2. To give notice of any thing.
 3. To give notice of any thing.
 4. To give notice of any thing.
 5. To give notice of any thing.
 6. To give notice of any thing.
 7. To give notice of any thing.
 8. To give notice of any thing.
 9. To give notice of any thing.
 10. To give notice of any thing.
 11. To give notice of any thing.
 12. To give notice of any thing.
 13. To give notice of any thing.
 14. To give notice of any thing.
 15. To give notice of any thing.
 16. To give notice of any thing.
 17. To give notice of any thing.
 18. To give notice of any thing.
 19. To give notice of any thing.
 20. To give notice of any thing.
 21. To give notice of any thing.
 22. To give notice of any thing.
 23. To give notice of any thing.
 24. To give notice of any thing.
 25. To give notice of any thing.
 26. To give notice of any thing.
 27. To give notice of any thing.
 28. To give notice of any thing.
 29. To give notice of any thing.
 30. To give notice of any thing.
 31. To give notice of any thing.
 32. To give notice of any thing.
 33. To give notice of any thing.
 34. To give notice of any thing.
 35. To give notice of any thing.
 36. To give notice of any thing.
 37. To give notice of any thing.
 38. To give notice of any thing.
 39. To give notice of any thing.
 40. To give notice of any thing.
 41. To give notice of any thing.
 42. To give notice of any thing.
 43. To give notice of any thing.
 44. To give notice of any thing.
 45. To give notice of any thing.
 46. To give notice of any thing.
 47. To give notice of any thing.
 48. To give notice of any thing.
 49. To give notice of any thing.
 50. To give notice of any thing.
 51. To give notice of any thing.
 52. To give notice of any thing.
 53. To give notice of any thing.
 54. To give notice of any thing.
 55. To give notice of any thing.
 56. To give notice of any thing.
 57. To give notice of any thing.
 58. To give notice of any thing.
 59. To give notice of any thing.
 60. To give notice of any thing.
 61. To give notice of any thing.
 62. To give notice of any thing.
 63. To give notice of any thing.
 64. To give notice of any thing.
 65. To give notice of any thing.
 66. To give notice of any thing.
 67. To give notice of any thing.
 68. To give notice of any thing.
 69. To give notice of any thing.
 70. To give notice of any thing.
 71. To give notice of any thing.
 72. To give notice of any thing.
 73. To give notice of any thing.
 74. To give notice of any thing.
 75. To give notice of any thing.
 76. To give notice of any thing.
 77. To give notice of any thing.
 78. To give notice of any thing.
 79. To give notice of any thing.
 80. To give notice of any thing.
 81. To give notice of any thing.
 82. To give notice of any thing.
 83. To give notice of any thing.
 84. To give notice of any thing.
 85. To give notice of any thing.
 86. To give notice of any thing.
 87. To give notice of any thing.
 88. To give notice of any thing.
 89. To give notice of any thing.
 90. To give notice of any thing.
 91. To give notice of any thing.
 92. To give notice of any thing.
 93. To give notice of any thing.
 94. To give notice of any thing.
 95. To give notice of any thing.
 96. To give notice of any thing.
 97. To give notice of any thing.
 98. To give notice of any thing.
 99. To give notice of any thing.
 100. To give notice of any thing.

1755 appearance of Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language.



He adulterers still: his thoughts lye with a whore. *B. Johns.*
ADULTERANT. *n. f.* [*adulterans*, Lat.] The person or thing which adulterates.

To ADULTERATE. *v. a.* [*adulterer*, Fr. *adultero*, Lat.]
 1. To commit adultery.

But fortune, oh!
Adulterates hourly with thine uncle John;
 And with her golden hand hath pluckt on France.
Shakesp. King John.

2. To corrupt by some foreign admixture; to contaminate.
 Common pot-ashes, bought of them that sell it in shops, who are not so foolishly knavish, as to *adulterate* them with salt-petre, which is much dearer than pot-ashes. *Boyle.*
 Could a man be composed to such an advantage of constitution,



Some Johnsonian Definitions

Excise: A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid.



Some Johnsonian Definitions

Excise: A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid.

Lexicographer: A writer of dictionaries; a harmless drudge that busies himself in tracing the original, and detailing the signification of words.



Some Johnsonian Definitions

Excise: A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid.

Lexicographer: A writer of dictionaries; a harmless drudge that busies himself in tracing the original, and detailing the signification of words.

Oats: A grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland appears to support the people.



The Success of the *Dictionary*



Talk of war with a Briton, he'll boldly advance,
That one English soldier will beat ten of France,
Would we alter the boast from the sword to the pen,
Our odds are still greater, still greater our men . . .
First Shakspeare and Milton, like Gods in the fight,
Have put their whole drama and epick to flight...
And Johnson, well-arm'd like a hero of yore,
Has beat forty French, and will beat forty more!"

David Garrick



The Success of the *Dictionary*



The Dictionary being now at length published... the world contemplated with wonder so stupendous a work atchieved by one man, while other countries had thought such undertakings fit only for whole academies. James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*

The English Dictionary appeared; and, as the weight of truth and reason is irresistible, its authority has nearly fixed the external form of our language; and from its decisions few appeals have yet been made. Robert Nares, 1782

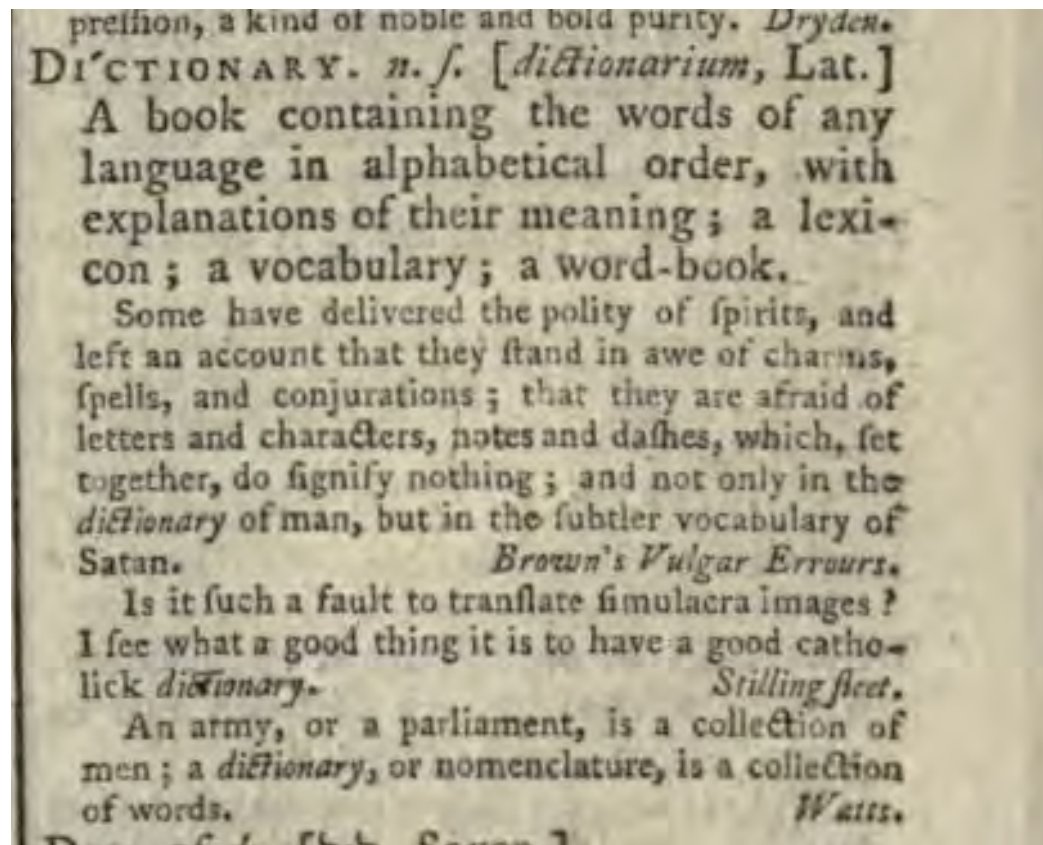
Did the Dictionary really fix the language?

Johnson condemns words like *bully*, *coax*, and *job*.



Features of Johnson's Dictionary

Meanings illustrated by citations from English writers:
"The book written by books"





Assignment

Read the descriptions of the procedures Johnson followed in compiling his dictionary in Macarthur and in Johnson's *Preface*. How might the procedures have been different if he had had modern technologies at his disposal—a networked computer, substantial corpora of online literature and texts, and so forth. Can the entire procedure of lexicography be crowd-sourced, à la the Urban Dictionary? Do you think we still require professional lexicographers?



June Kim

With modern technologies at Johnson's disposal, his procedure would have been not only exponentially faster, but also more comprehensive... instead of purchasing books or visiting a library, Johnson could merely access a database of catalogued books. ...he could use the "find" function to look up specific words and the instances in which they were used. ...his definitions would also be even more accurate because he would actually be able to see online pictures of the objects he was defining. The rate at which he digested, alphabetized, and corrected information would go up exponentially with software such as Microsoft Word or Notepad.



Dow-Yi Kou

...With the incredible number of online literature and texts, Johnson would neither be able to nor need to exempt certain words from his dictionary. For example, Johnson states, “That many terms of art and manufacture are omitted, must be frankly acknowledged...I could not visit caverns to learn the miner's language, nor take a voyage to perfect my skill in the dialect of navigation...” (12). Had Johnson had the incredible body of knowledge available from the online world, he would have easily been able to look up information concerning the miner's language, navigator's language, etc. Therefore, his dictionary would have been much more complete.



Nicole Murphy

.. if Johnson had had modern technologies at his disposal, his dictionary would have been much more expansive and accurate. [The internet permits one] to connect with virtually everybody and anybody linked in-thereby allowing for debate and contributions by many academics all at once. Modern technology allows for a democratization of information; where instead of one strained scholar compiling all of his backbreaking research with the help of a few people close to him, the dictionary could be compiled in a mass networked team. Today, the entire procedure of lexicography can be crowd-sourced as an efficient way to integrate all people (who wish and are capable of contributing) in the process of documenting the knowledge available during any given era, instead of leaving it solely to the work of professional lexicographers.



Michael Ball

I think technology would aid in the making of a dictionary but would not change the process of deciding how words are used. For instance, there are about 2,930* unique words in preface of about 10,000 total, which is quite a lot and a fair bit more than most people use in normal speech. It ... the tasks of finding all the words, and then paring that down based on words which have obvious primitives or compounds could easily be found and grouped together, however, the tasks of explanation and 'sense' of words is something that would still need to be done manually. If however, we were to build a new dictionary but not from scratch and could rely on NLP techniques then pretty much every task could be simplified via programs, but again, all the heavy decisions would still need to be verified by humans.

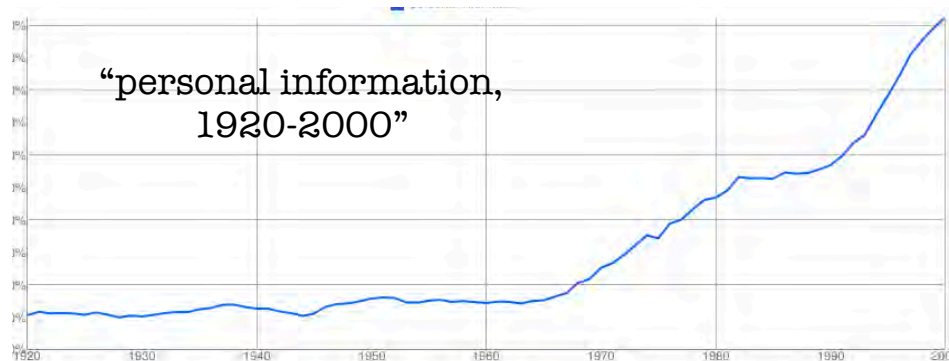


Corpus Lexicography

Concordance for 'matrix' from the Brit. Nat Corpus

largely free of the enclosing **matrix**, and look now much as they would
poetry from the whole social **matrix** and milieu in which such a subj
h ward. The result was a data **matrix** giving pixel counts for five l
vision by a matrix, when the **matrix** happens to be zero. what does
are summarized in the Payoff **matrix** in Figure A. Now, why the
shing on its own, green is a **matrix** in which to set other colours l
erent crystal structure. The **matrix** is a yellow limestone common in
t eight. The team competency **matrix**. it's upside down. There it
archy to a flat hierarchy, a **matrix** model or a team-based structur
, and are acquainted with the **matrices** of Derrida 's thought in Heg
e a substance is in the lipid **matrix** of olfactory cells, the more i
cultural text, which is the **matrix** or master code that the literar
are well-preserved in a clay **matrix**, some of which adheres to one
ar tissue, connective tissue **matrix**. Which particular technique di

Cf also spoken corpora, sense- and POS-tagging, freq. counts...





The Didactic Uselessness of Definitions

Weakness of genus-differential definitions

disappointed MW: defeated in expectation or hope



The Didactic Uselessness of Definitions

Weakness of genus-differentia definitions

disappointed MW: defeated in expectation or hope

disappointment is when you expect something to happen



The Didactic Uselessness of Definitions

Weakness of genus-differentia definitions

disappointedMW: defeated in expectation or hope

disappointment is when you expect something to happen

And you want it to happen



The Didactic Uselessness of Definitions

Weakness of genus-differentia definitions

Disappointed MW: defeated in expectation or hope

disappointment is when you expect something to happen

And you want it to happen

And when the time comes for it to happen



The Didactic Uselessness of Definitions

Weakness of genus-differentia definitions

disappointedMW: defeated in expectation or hope

disappointment is when you expect something to happen

And you want it to happen

And when the time comes for it to happen

It doesn't happen



The Didactic Uselessness of Definitions

Weakness of genus-differentia definitions

Disappointed MW: defeated in expectation or hope

disappointment is when you expect something to happen

And you want it to happen

And when the time comes for it to happen

It doesn't happen

And you feel bad



The Methodology of Lexicography

Method for isolation & circumscription of relevant precedents (identification of “the language” in terms of public discourse)

Method for isolating and abstracting contributions of individual words to interpretation, independent of both linguistic and extralinguistic contexts

Method of reducing use of word to a "mechanical" rule that determines correct application of word.



The Symbolic Function of the Dictionary

LexisNexis(TM) Academic - Document List - Netscape

http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/doclist?_m=4b565948c6ab272708a32cc2df1a97f3&wchp=

Home Sources How Do I? Site Map What's New Help

Search Terms: **according to webster's FOCUS™** Search Within Results Edit Search

Jump to Documents 1-25 Print Email

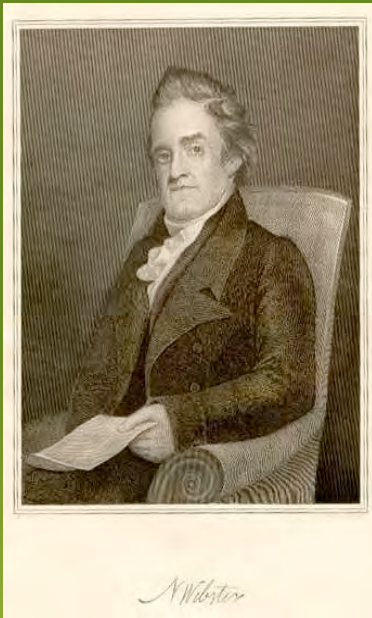
Document List Expanded List KWIC Full Documents 1 - 25 of 599 next

Tag for delivery Sorted by Date Clear Sort by: Relevance

1. [St. Petersburg Times](#), March 3, 2003 Monday, CITRUS TIMES; Pg. 2, 1344 words, Board's sudden opposition to toll road reveals favoritism
2. [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#), February 9, 2003 Sunday, TWO STAR EDITION, Pg.B-7, 800 words, TOP OF THE CHARTS; TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OF CONSISTENT ADVICE FOR WRITERS



The Americanization of the Dictionary



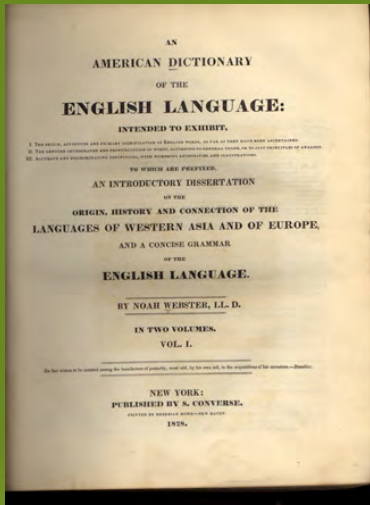
Noah Webster

You have corrected the dangerous doctrines of European powers, correct now the languages you have imported... The American language will thus be as distinct as the government, free from all the follies of unphilosophical fashion, and resting upon truth as its only regulator. William Thornton, 1793.

From the changes in civil policy, manners, arts of life, and other circumstances attending the settlement of English colonies in America, most of the language of heraldry, hawking, hunting, and especially that of the old feudal and hierarchical establishments of England will become utterly extinct in this country; much of it already forms part of the neglected rubbish of antiquity. Noah Webster, 1806



The Americanization of the Dictionary



Cf Webster's Spelling reforms: *honor, theater*, etc., but also *tung, iz*...

"A capital advantage of this [spelling] reform in these States would be, that it would make a difference between the English orthography and the American.... I am confident that such an event is an object of vast political consequence."



Development of the Dictionary

1857-1928: Preparation of the OED; historical record of the entire language...



OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Abbreviate (ăbrĭvĭ,ĕt), *v.*, also 5-7 **abbreviate**. [f. ABBREVIATE *ppl. a.*; or on the analogy of *vbs.* so formed; see -ATE. A direct representative of L. *abbreviāre*; as ABRIDGE, and the obs. ABBREVI, represent it indirectly, through OFr. *abregier* and mid. Fr. *abrĕvier*. Like the latter, *abbreviate*, was often spelt *a-breviate* in 5-7.] To make shorter, shorten, cut short in any way.

1530 PALSGR., *Iabrevyate*: I make a thyng shorte, *Ieabrega*. 1625 BACON *Essays* xxiv. 99 (1862) But it is one Thing to Abbreviate by Contracting, Another by Cutting off.

† 1. *trans.* To make a discourse shorter by omitting details and preserving the substance; to abridge, condense. *Obs.*

a 1450 *Chester PL* I. 2 (Sh. Soc.) This matter he abbreviated into playes twenty-foure. 1592 GREENE *Conny catching* III. 16 The queane abreviated her discourse. 1637 RALEIGH *Mahomet* 24 Abreviated out of two Arabique writers translated into Spanish. 1672 MANLEY *Interpreter* pref., I have omitted several Matters . . . contracted and abbreviated Others.

† b. To make an abstract or brief of, to epitomize. *Obs.*

c 1450 TREVISA *Higden's Polychr.* I. 21 (Rolls Ser.) Trogus Pompeius, in hys xl^{iv} iiii. bookes, allemoste of alle the storyes of the worlde, whom Iustinus his disciple did abreviate. 1603 FLORIO *Montaigne* (1634) 627 To reade, to note, and to abbreviate Polibius. 1648-9 *The Kingdome Weekly Intelligencer* Jan. 16 to 23 The high court of Justice did this day sit again concerning the triall of the King. The charge was brought in and abbreviated.

† c. *Math.* To reduce (a fraction) to lower terms. *Obs.*

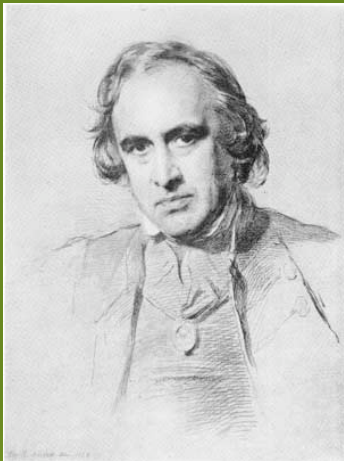
1796 *Mathem. Dict.* I. 2 To abbreviate fractions in arithmetic and algebra, is to lessen proportionally their terms, or the numerator and denominator.



James Murray



Political Significance of the OED

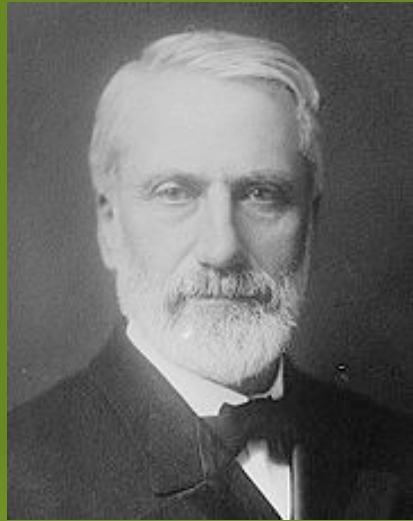


We could scarcely have a lesson on the growth of our English tongue, we could scarcely follow upon one of its significant words, without having unawares a lesson in English history as well, without not merely falling upon some curious fact illustrative of our national life, but learning also how the great heart which is beating at the centre of that life, was being gradually shaped and moulded.

Richard Chevenix Trench



The Popular Dictionary



Isaac Funk

[The dictionary] is the national key to human knowledge.... It behooves all those who are concerned in the education of the young to place this book on the same plane as the churchmen of old placed the English Bible. The dictionary should be placed on a lectern in every school throughout the land. Frank Vizetelly, 1898



Defining "The Language"

Why include 'all the words'? Why bother to define simple words?

Cf defs in Nathan Bailey's dict., 1721:

cat: "a creature well known"

black: "a colour"

strawberry: "a well known fruit"

Are there "undefinable" words? (left, heartburn...)



Defining the Compass of the Language

Let any man of correct taste cast his eye on such words as *denominable*, *opionatry*, *ariolation*, *assation*, *clancular*, and *comminuible*, and let him say whether a dictionary which gives *thousands* of such items, as *authorized English words*, is a safe standard of writing. Noah Webster on Johnson's *Dictionary*

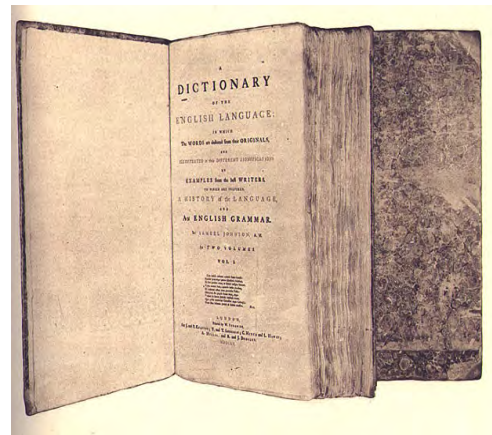
Words have been admitted in the language that are not only disreputable in origin, not only offensive in all their associations, not only vulgar in essence, but unfit at all points for survival. The *New York Herald* (1890) on Funk & Wagnall's inclusion of *chesty* "bold"

"...that most monstrous of non-words." *Life Magazine* on Webster's *Third International's* inclusion of *irregardless*



Symbolism of the dictionary's form

There is in [Johnson's *Dictionary*] a kind of architectural nobleness; it stands there like a great solid square-built edifice; you judge that a true builder did it." (Thos. Carlyle)

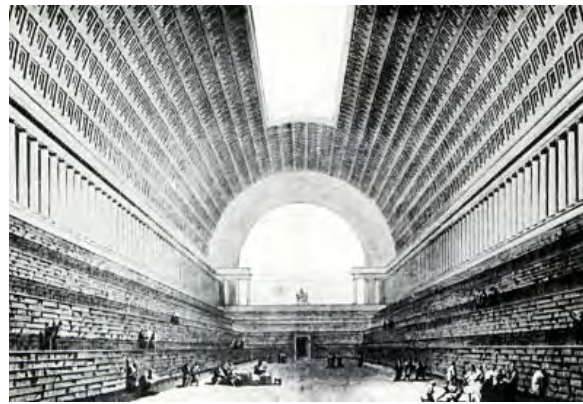




The Form of Collections, 1



Library of the
Escorial, 1543



E-L. Boulée, plan for the
Bibliothèque du Roi,
1785

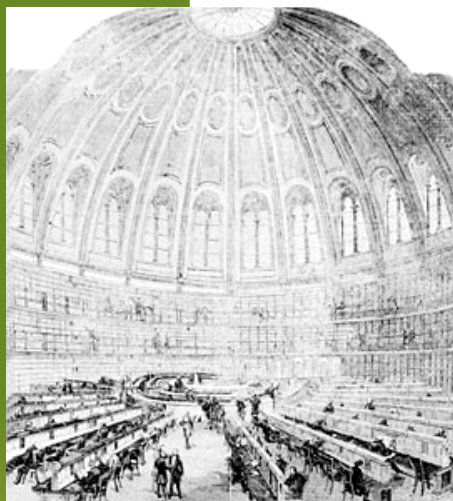


Labrouste, Bibliothèque
Ste. Geneviève, 1851



The Form of Collections, 2: The classical version

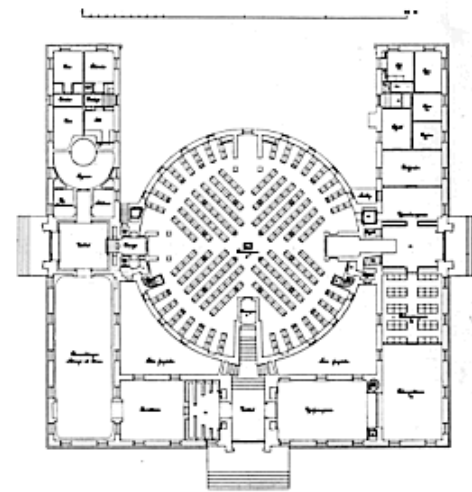
Smirke,
British Museum
Reading
Room, 1851



Pelz/Casey Reading
Room, LOC, ca 1898



Labrouste, Bibliothèque
Nationale 1868



Asplund, Stockholm City
Library, 1928



Circumscription of Knowledge: Modern Interpretations



D. Perrault, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 1994



Assignment for 2/28

In “The American Instructor,” George Fisher suggests that the technology of accounting can help his readers control their lives, while his essay on time and work-discipline, Thompson suggests that the technology of time led to people having their lives controlled. Whose argument is more convincing and what implications might the argument you favor have for today.