and online. This phenomenon in itself
University Press in the last century, in print
English dictionaries published by Oxford
monly to refer to any of the dozen or more
English Dictionary Online
Oxford American Dictionary

of the (apparently confounding) exhaustiveness
Oxford English Dictionary

Oxford Dictionary of English
English Dictionary

the language', in terms rooted in the

As Lexicographer', but in 'Johnson as Critic

it transcends the specificity of its own authori-
tative statements.

Eliot did not write an essay called 'Johnson
as Lexicographer', but in 'Johnson as Critic
and Poet' (1944) he set out the 'responsibility
of our poets and critics, for the preservation of
the language', in terms rooted in the philological:

amongst the varieties of chaos in which we
find ourselves immersed to-day, one is a
chaos of language... and an increasing in-
difference to etymology and the history of
the use of words.

Though this might suggest a kind of dusty
linguistic conservatism (would not some other
'differences of chaos' prevalent in that year
perhaps be more pressing?), really it is a
pedagogical conservatism, combined with a
perfectly modern view of linguistic develop-
mum to return to 'Can “Education” be
Defined?', the essay in which he pays most
attention to dictionaries, words, and defi-
nitions, Eliot there approves of the 'wobbliness
of words', saying that 'it is their changes in
meaning that... indicate that a language is
alive'. It is a view clearly informed by the
same philological principles that guided the
OED project. Discussing the attractive
Americanisms grifter and shill, Eliot writes
that, should they succeed in American writing,
'They will find their way into the English vo-
cabulary as well, and eventually into a supple-
ment to the great Oxford dictionary... and
so their dictionary status in Britain will be
assured.'

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T. S. ELIOT IN THE OXFORD ENGLISH
DICTIONARY

THE second Supplement to the Oxford English
Dictionary, edited by Robert Burchfield between
1957 and 1986, more than doubled the number
of literary eponyms in the dictionary, to 167.1
The first edition of 1933 (OED1), including the
first Supplement, had Aristophanic (first attested
1827) and Sophoclean (1649) but not Æschylean
(1844) or Euripidean (1821); Ossianesque (1874)
but not Omaresque (1892); Coleridgean (1834)
but not Southeyan (1817); and so on. In addition

1 Quantitative evidence is based on analysis of the
pseudo-SGML text of the Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd
edn (1989), encoded in the late 1980s at the University of
Waterloo as part of the digitization process, and the TriStar
1st edn (1928). Information from the first Supplement (1933)
has been gleaned manually. Compiled results are available
from the author. All OED data is published by Oxford
University Press.
to these missing nineteenth-century terms, the second Supplement—and subsequently the integrated second edition of 1989 (OED2)—also added a number of newer ones, such as Joycean (1927), Poundian (1939), Woolfian (1936), and Yeatsian (1928). However, although there are headwords in OED2 as recent as Durrellian, Gravesian, and Greeneian (all 1961), and as expendable, arguably, as Lylian, Runyonesque, and Pinerotic, there is no Eliotian, Eliotesque, or Eliotic to be found in any edition—including, as of early 2016, the current OED Online (OED3), which is in the midst of a complete revision. This despite the appearance in print of these terms (with reference to the style of T. S. Eliot—earlier occurrences refer to earlier Eliots) as early as 1926 and 1928.3

The omission of adjectives derived from the name of such a consequential literary figure becomes more curious when one takes note of the ‘reverence’ (Burchfield’s own term) otherwise shown by Burchfield towards Eliot’s writings. When Valerie Eliot enquired by letter in February of 1977 as to why the second volume of the second Supplement had overlooked her husband’s earliest use of mug’s game in The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism (1933), though it had quoted him for the same phrase in The Elder Statesman (1959), Burchfield wrote back to say that ‘In practice we would almost certainly have given both examples if we had had them to hand, simply because they were from his works.’5

Perhaps this was a diplomatic bit of flattery, but Burchfield’s Supplement does show a degree of piety to Eliot. In terms of lexicographical evidence drawn from his work, Eliot is represented by more evidence quotations (556) than any of the influential contemporaries mentioned above, except Joyce (1,825—Ulysses alone supplies 1,323). These illustrate 394 main senses or sub-senses, and 145 attributive and combined formations. Fifteen times OED2 does what Burchfield told Mrs Eliot would be an expected practice given the availability of evidence, quoting Eliot more than once for the same sense. Three quotations are reprinted for culture (n.), definition 5a. (‘The training, development, and refinement of mind, tastes, and manners… the intellectual side of civilization’), all from Notes Towards the Definition of Culture (1948). Another multiple citation affects the dictionary’s definition even more directly: the second sense of groaner not only quotes Eliot’s ‘The heaving groaner | Rounded homewards’, from The Dry Salvages (1941),6 but also his parenthetical gloss in the prefatory note to that poem—’Groaner: a whistling buoy’—which appears both as quotation evidence, and again verbatim within the OED definition: ‘b. A whistling buoy. local U.S.’

Like most frequently-quoted literary sources, Eliot supplies evidence for a mix of unusual lexis (acridian, azyme, autarky, etc.), common words used in ordinary ways (alibi, amateur, bike), and words both ordinary and extraordinary which he used in such ways as to have made a mark on the reading culture. In OED2, words for which Eliot is cited and which might recall particular passages of his verse to the familiar reader include: agonistes, anfractuous, Baedeker, barbituric, behovely, burnt-out, chthonic, coffee spoon, demob, demotic, door-yard, gramophone, groaner, grimpen, gutter (v.), hyacinth, inoperancy, juvescence, Kosmosol, laquearia, maculate, miasmal, mug’s game, muttering (ppl. a.), née, piacular, pneumatic, polyphiloprogenitive, prayable, sawdust, semblable, shanti, smokefall, tereu, towelled, twit, and unprayable.

When Charles Monteith, Eliot’s latter-day colleague at Faber and Faber, wrote to the

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2 As with many first citations in OED2, these all can be antateded. The earliest I have found are, respectively: ‘Joycean ellipsis’ in The Dial, lxix, (1925), 173; ‘Poundian canons’ in This Quarter, i (1925), 315; ‘Woolfian novel’ in The Bookman, lx, (1924), 193; and several instances of ‘Yeatsian’ from 1913, including ‘a more Yeatsian reason’ in The Living Age, clxxvi (Jan.–Mar., 1913), 488.

cplacence’ in The London Aphrodite, i–vi (1928), 316.

4 In his preface to Unlocking the English Language (London, 1989), which prints his T. S. Eliot Memorial Lectures, Burchfield mentions his frequent references to Eliot and his works (the index gives sixteen topics under ‘Eliot, T. S.’, covering fourteen pages), saying ‘It hardly needs to be said that in this case reference means reverence’ (n.p.).

5 OUP Archives: OED/ML/26.

London Review of Books to defend a poet’s right to esoteric vocabulary, he recalled his first encounter with some of these words (and one or two others): ‘when I was a schoolboy, I was very puzzled by “anfractuous”, “pistillate”, “stamate”, “sutler”, above all by “polyphiloprogenitive”…’. I looked them up in a dictionary. If this is true, the young Monteith would have been only partially unpuzzled by the dictionaries available to him, since Burchfield’s Supplement vol. 3 (O–Sd) was the first to record the final and most puzzling of these terms, in 1982. Looking up anfractuous would only have puzzled him further, since the definition available in OED1 (‘winding, sinuous’) is not what Eliot means by ‘Paint me the bold anfractuous rocks’, in ‘Sweeney Erect’ (1920). He means something more like the current French sense of anfractueux—‘rugged, craggy’—which is how OED2 defines a new sense of the term, based on Eliot’s usage alone.

Of the remaining terms on the list given above, agonistes, inoperancy, juvescence, Komsomol, laquearia, and piaculative are the other words for which Eliot is the first recorded user. As with anfractuous, for pneumatic, towelled, prayable, and unprayable, his is the first recorded use of a new sense or sub-sense (there are sixteen such semantic extensions recorded in all, not counting combinations). Literary usage, including even nonce usages and hapaxes, has always had a place in OED entries—James Murray himself coined the term ‘nonce-word’, self-reflexively, to describe terms coined for a particular purpose within a set context (i.e. employed only ‘for the nonce’). Murray had wished to include the usages of ‘all the great English writers of all ages’, a predilection shared by his successor Burchfield: ‘I love poetry and poetical use has been poured into the Supplement’.

As with Joyce’s neologisms and nonce usages, however, some of the evidence from Eliot’s works substantiates dictionary entries of dubious lexicographical value. The putative word opherion, for example, which appears in The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts (1971), is given as a new headword, with the explanation that Eliot likely meant orphanion, but no other instances of this (mis)spelling are listed. It is not unheard of for OED to record one-time misspellings or transcription errors—Shakespeare’s cyme, pannell, prenzie, solidare, and wragged, for instance—but these are exceedingly rare, especially for literary sources (many are from glossaries and lexicons), and even more so for texts written after the advent of spelling standardization. Eliot’s opherion is the only twentieth-century example in OED2 of an erroneous headword with only one citation.

Charlotte Brewer has given one account of how Burchfield manoeuvred on behalf of an Eliotic coinage that had been called into question by his colleagues:

his inclusion of T. S. Eliot’s loam feet… was disapproved of both by some of the consulted scholars and by his ‘publishing overlords within OUP’…. Nevertheless, Burchfield decided to retain this quotation, together with one he has also included from a poem by Donald Davie… which he thought might have been influenced by Eliot’s use. Davie’s usage, after Eliot, in Brides of Reason (1955), may be scant corroboration of the term’s broader currency, but it does mark down in the lexicographical record the suggestion that the term has made an impression on the tradition of English poetic diction. Similarly, Eliot’s juvescence, described by Burchfield as a mis-formation of juvenesence, is included in the dictionary along with a second quotation, by Stephen Spender (1948). As if to acknowledge

8 First recorded uses not on this list are from Eliot’s prose or from drafts: counter-rhythm, en principe, on-stage, rature, salonnière. One might also wish to include bullshit, which has an anterior attribution buried within the first quotation: ‘c 1915 Wyndham Lewis Let. (1963) 66 Eliot has sent me Bullshit and the Ballad for Big Louise. They are excellent bits of scholarly ribaldry.’
10 Ibid., v.
12 In a 2004 revision, OED3 added a second citation from 1991.
13 Brewer, Treasure House, 185.
14 Burchfield, Unlocking, 68.
the questionable validity of such entries on purely lexicographical criteria, Burchfield comments wryly that documenting such Eliotic echoes in *OED* would, ‘At the very least... obviate the need for such a note in some future issue of *Notes & Queries*’ (the other Oxford publication of which he was Editor).\(^{15}\)

*OED* quotation evidence can often tell a story of literary influence in this way. Davie’s and Spender’s usages are almost certainly influenced by Eliot; they may even represent an allusion or reference to the works in which he coined them. One may also reverse the angle of view, to discern Eliot’s own sources: as Burchfield notes, before Eliot uses it allusively in ‘Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar’ (1920), *defunctive* is only attested in Shakespeare; *concitation*, used in ‘Gerontion’ (1920), is absent from the record after 1656.\(^{16}\) One could add to Burchfield’s examples Eliot’s title, ‘Sweeney Agonistes’ (1932), the first recorded use of the postpositive epithet since Milton’s *Samson Agonistes* (1671), and *grimpen*, which does not appear between Arthur Conan Doyle’s *Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902) and *East Coker* (1940). Even more complex stories of influence can be read in(to) such entries. Burchfield, for example, speculates that William Faulkner and Thomas Wolfe use *defunctive* under the influence of Eliot, rather than of Shakespeare.\(^{17}\)

However, one must also be on one’s guard: of the word *beholvely* in *Little Gidding* (1942)—‘Sin is Beholvely, but | All shall be well’—Burchfield says, ‘Eliot almost certainly encountered it in Chaucer’s *Parson’s Tale*.\(^{18}\) The implication (not quite an assertion) of debt is certainly wrong, though one can see how Chaucer’s ‘it is beholvenly thing to telle whiche ben dedly synnes’, which *OED1* records, might suggest itself as a source. Neither *OED1* nor Burchfield was acquainted with Eliot’s actual source, Julian of Norwich’s *Revelations of Divine Love* (1395), which he is quoting directly (albeit without quotation marks).

In some cases the association of the term with its originator is so strong that it must enter into the definition, as with the headword *objective correlative* (‘Term applied by T. S. Eliot to...’ etc.), and the inclusion s.v. *sensibility* of the combination *dissociation of sensibility* (‘T. S. Eliot’s term for...’ etc.). coinages that Burchfield described as ‘towering over’ Eliot’s ‘poetical experimentation with words’.\(^{19}\) Two other *OED2* definitions make a judgement of Eliot’s literary influence explicitly. In the entry for *wasteland*, the Supplement added three new sub-senses, the last recognizing not only the appearance of a literary work of cultural significance, but also the lexical extension of the headword by the allusion-generating force of that text (which does not in fact contain the headword—arguably not even in the title): ‘1.d *transf.* and *fig.*, sometimes with allusion to T. S. Eliot’s poem *The Waste Land* (1922).’ In the same vein, *OED2* supposes that in writing ‘not with a bang but a whimper’\(^{20}\) in ‘The Hollow Men’ (1925), Eliot had extended *bang* (n.\(^1\)) into a new allusive sub-sense, recording three subsequent variations on that phrase. One cannot overstate how rare such explicitly allusive sub-senses are in *OED2*. The dictionary has 1,874 occurrences of ‘allusion to’ or the equivalent (‘used allusively’, ‘in allusive use’, etc.) in its definitions, of which about 575 are ‘to’ texts (the rest being non-textual types of allusion, e.g. ‘allusion to sense 1’, ‘allusion to the convict’s task of breaking stones’, etc.), or 0.07 per cent of all the definitions in the dictionary. Of those, 230 are alluding to passages of the Bible and 177 to Classical mythology or other cultural commonplaces, such as proverbs, sayings, fables, and legends. Of literary texts attributable to a particular author (169), half (87) are based on proper names (e.g. Dickens’s *Scrooge*), or other invented names for things (e.g. Wyndham’s *triffid*) and neologisms (e.g. Carroll’s *slithy*), rather than on extant words used memorably (e.g. Milton’s ‘drop serene’). In this last and smallest category, only five sources appear more than once, headed by Shakespeare with twenty-five allusive

\(^{15}\) *Ibid.*, 12.

\(^{16}\) In 1960 Eliot fretted over what exactly he had meant by this word, pleading that it was ‘only in recent years that I have formed the habit of looking up in the dictionary every important word that appears in my verse!’ See the note to lines 52–53 in *Poems*, I, 480.\(^{17}\)

\(^{17}\) Burchfield, *Unlocking*, 68. I would guess from the context that Wolfe’s primary debt is to Faulkner rather than to Eliot, however, whereas the fifth and final quotation, from *The Listener* (1961) unambiguously alludes to Eliot’s Shakespearean usage.\(^{18}\)

\(^{18}\) *Ibid.*, 76.

\(^{19}\) *Ibid.*, 70.

definitions. Next come Milton with five, Swift and Virgil with three, and Eliot and Kipling with two.

When collocations such as loam feet are recorded as lexemes, the usual practice is to include them in a separate section within the main entry. Over 8,000 OED2 entries have such a section, listing over 145,000 words formed with affixes (e.g. non-Christian, unaffrayed) and attributive combinations both transparent (e.g. weather report, sandwich papers) and opaque (e.g. loam feet, water fruit, Sunday face). For the literary historian and critic these are either the most or the least interesting of the lexemes recorded in the dictionary. Though they cite him as the first compiler of fifty-four such forms, for instance, it is unlikely that OED2 lexicographers thought Eliot was the first to use pre-Renaissance together, or to write about a poker game.21 Neither is his employment of these terms (in ‘Dante’ (1929) and in ‘Sweeney Agonistes’, respectively) particularly memorable or remarkable. On the other hand, he might reasonably be supposed to have come up with dream-crossed or sandsmoke on his own, and perhaps a few others.22

Although the OED’s practice for documenting attributive and affixal forms was not as exhaustive as with main senses and sub-senses, as a corollary this involved more discretion in determining what could be included as a combination, and what evidence would substantiate these. From the first edition onwards, which and which types of formations to record had been a matter of some controversy, as Burchfield described in a paper given to the Philological Society in 1971.23 Because of this, however, combinations provide a way to judge an author’s esteem with the historical dictionary maker which headwords do not, since the policies for including these are comparatively rigid.

Eliot is the only cited source in OED2 for thirty combinations, including batflight, blue-nailed, dreamcrossed, dream kingdom, proud-necked, sandsmoke, Sea-girls, smokefall, time-kept, and time-ridden. Dame Helen Gardner wrote to Burchfield in 1983 to ponder a definition for one of these, which she had been discussing with friends at a party. Burchfield published her suggestion verbatim in the dictionary, with attribution, s.v. smoke:

smokefall [after nightfall] rare−1, ‘the moment when the wind drops and smoke that had ascended descends’ (Dame Helen Gardner)

Though it would be mean to object tout court to the inclusion of this (lovely) compound, one might quibble that Gardner’s gloss partakes less of ‘scientific definition’ than ‘philosophic interpretation’, as Eliot once complained of Friedrich Max Müller.24 And, further, that if smokefall should be included in the dictionary, on what grounds could it then ignore Gerard Manley Hopkins’s bloomfall (‘The Bugler’s First Communion’, 1918 [1878]), or Cecil Day-Lewis’s ghostfall (‘The Way In’, 1965)?

For all these liberal inclusions of Eliot’s poetical usages, two memorable Eliotic words are conspicuous by their absence. Neither the first nor the second Supplement thought phthisic (n. and a.) required revision. And (perhaps more surprisingly), as Burchfield notes, ‘there is no record in [the Supplement] of Eliot’s famous use of the word etherised…because this nineteenth century word was also covered by the OED, with illustrative examples beginning in 1800’.25 Burchfield is, again, not quite correct about this, however. Eliot’s immortal line employing etherized (with a ‘z’ in 1915/17) is, in fact, in Burchfield’s Supplement, only not where one might expect to find it. It has a prominent place in the entry for table (n.), quoted as the first recorded use of sub-sense I.5.d: ‘A surgeon’s operating table…’. In the same vein, ‘A

Brewer, Treasure House, 180–4, for a fuller discussion of editorial policies regarding combinations.

21 Indeed, OED3 antedates pre-Renaissance by some 57 years (and has removed the Eliot quotation), and poker game by 75.

22 A number of Eliot’s seemingly ‘opaque’ compounds, such as rain land and time-ridden, have also been antedated in OED3’s revised entries.

23 Reprinted in Burchfield, Unlocking, 83–108. It is fascinating that Burchfield could say, ‘In practice the great majority [of combinations] that are admitted are in fact from literary sources’ (Burchfield, Unlocking, 107, n.16), since this is not at all the case. Although it appears that, at least for the twentieth-century sources Burchfield was handling, literary works may be slightly over-represented in combinations as compared with main senses, periodicals and newspapers are by far the most common types of source. The Times, Nature, and The Westminster Gazette contribute the most twentieth-century quotations for combinations (none of the top ten sources are an individual author’s corpus). See also

24 Eliot, Prose, I, 106.

25 Burchfield, Unlocking, 75.
meagre, blue-nailed, phthisic hand’, as it turns out, also appears in OED2, not s.v. phthisic, but s.v. blue (a.). One might conjecture that, having recorded these lines on slips intended for the extraordinary (but deemed unneeded) usage, they were still found useful by lexicographers working on other entries. At least in the case of etherize, however, the famous quotation would pass into the dictionary unnoticed by its Eliot-revering editor.

_A postscript:_ in a March 2014 revision, OED3 did update etherize with Eliot’s line, just as an earlier (2006) revision had done for phthisic.

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**A PORTRAIT OF JAMES JOYCE IN SAMUEL BECKETT’S _MURPHY_**

In a recent article on Echo’s Bones in the _New York Review of Books_, Fintan O’Toole offered a convincing account of Samuel Beckett’s freeing himself from the influence of James Joyce.⁵ I would like to suggest that two years after writing Echo’s Bones, Beckett may, in _Murphy_, have deliberately finalized his independence from Joyce—even to having created in this novel a grotesque portrait of Joyce by concealing his identity behind one of his personages.⁶

_Murphy_ of course is a very personal book for Beckett and he will refer to the Murphy character several times in his future novels. Passive, intellectual Murphy has Beckett’s own character. Peggy Guggenheim called him ‘Oblomov’, referring to the eponymous hero of Goncharov’s Russian classic. She writes: ‘I made him [Beckett] read the book and of course he immediately saw the resemblance between himself and the strange inactive hero who finally did not even have the will power to get out of bed.’⁷ Beckett even once signed a wire to her ‘Oblomov’.⁸ But in addition to the autobiographical likeness, the novel has another depiction of a living man, Beckett’s literary idol with whom he had a close personal but not always amiable relationship.

Beckett gives not one description of the appearance of any of his characters: not Murphy’s, not Celia’s (only that she has ‘yellow hair’), nor of any of the others, with the exception of one very detailed portrait, extending to the inner nature of the man, that of Dr Angus Killiecrankie. He is described as ‘…large, bony, stooping, ruddy man, bluff but morose, with antiquary’s cowl whiskers, mottled market-gardener’s hands thickly overlaid with pink lanugo, and eyes red with straining from degenerative changes’.⁹ Surely this is a portrait of Joyce. One need only compare this description with others. In Richard Ellmann’s _James Joyce_, he is said to be a ‘…tall, thin, myopic, languid man’, who wears ‘…large powerful spectacles, and a small gingerbread beard…’ and in ‘…his long face red as an Indian’s in the reflection [sic] of the fire, there is a look of cruelty…. Not that he is not gentle at times, for he can be kind….’ and Joyce himself said: ‘Paul Léon tells me that when I stand bent over at a street corner, I look like a question mark.’¹⁰

Apart from the name, Killiecrankie—to kill crank—and the ‘antiquary’s whiskers’—whiskers of a devotee of antiquity—there is a trace of some of Beckett’s former irritation with the authoritarian character of Joyce. ‘Dr. Killiecrankie…had some experience of the schizoid voice.’¹¹ This is probably a little tactless, since Joyce’s daughter, Lucia, was schizophrenic. But when he failed to reciprocate her feelings for him, Beckett drew Joyce’s ire on himself, and Joyce ‘informed him that he was no longer welcome. The interdict was to last for a year.’¹² In another reference, we find ‘Dr. Angus Killiecrankie, the Outer Hebridean R.M.S., an eminescent [sic] home county authority and devout Mottist.’¹³ ‘Outer Hebridean’ in all likelihood hints at Ireland’s situation out beyond

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² References are keyed to Samuel Beckett, _Murphy_ (New York, 1957).
⁴ _Ibid._, 166.
⁵ _Murphy_, 257–8.
⁷ _Murphy_, 185.
⁸ Ellmann, _James Joyce_, 649.
⁹ _Murphy_, 257.