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THE VOCAT PROJECT  
CRITICAL EXCHANGE #20: WINTER, 1986

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## NOTE

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Randolph L. Wadsworth Jr. for his contributions to *Critical Exchange* as Managing Editor. Beginning with *CEx* 15, Professor Wadsworth completely redesigned and reformatted the journal. Recently, we changed computer equipment and Professor Wadsworth has again redesigned and reformatted *CEx*. We are all in his debt.

At this time, I would like to welcome three new members of the *Cex* editorial staff: Andrew Lakritz, who will take over as Managing Editor, and Susan Jarratt and Arthur Casciato, who will assume the responsibilities of Associate Editors.

James J. Sosnoski  
General Editor

## INTRODUCTION

Stephen Nimis

The topics of SCE's MLA sessions this year were the feasibility of creating an encyclopedic dictionary of twentieth-century literary criticism and theory, and the appropriate procedures for doing so. The MLA sessions were the last of a series of public and private discussions on one of SCE's most ambitious projects, dubbed the VOCAT Project (The Vocabularies of Criticism and Theory). Ralph Cohen conceived the project and will be editor-in-chief of the various publications produced by it. The first item in this issue of *Critical Exchange* is an interview with Ralph Cohen concerning his aspirations for the encyclopedic dictionary and his views on various issues related to it. This interview was conducted on January 12, 1986, immediately before a weekend conference devoted to the project; the interviewers were James Sosnoski, Randolph Wadsworth, Edward Tomarken, and Stephen Nimis, all of Miami University. The subsequent conference, held at Miami University, brought together twenty-five scholars, including lexicographers, bibliographers, computer and grant consultants, etc., who met in order to conclude the preliminary discussion of the project by setting up appropriate procedures for accomplishing the work of the project. The other papers in this volume reflect, for the most part, the consensus of the participants in that conference on a variety of issues, and attempt to represent what the VOCAT Project is and plans to do. R. L. Wadsworth outlines the plans for the use of data base technology, something which will have a powerful impact on the results of the project. Richard Spuler takes up the thorny problem of "foreign" words, while David Vander Meulen and David Nordloh discuss

problems and strategies relating to lexicographical and bibliographical formats.

Of the many subsidiary issues discussed at various meetings on the VOCAT Project, one seems to me deserving of further comment: the opposition between "dictionary" and "encyclopedia" - the two words which appear together in the title of the project's proposed final volume. In his numerous discussions of dictionaries and encyclopedias, Eco observes that the former are usually thought of as semantic devices which set up equivalences among various words, whereas the latter specify all sorts of contextual information and world knowledge that one needs to know in order to *use* various words in various situations, and are thus pragmatic devices.<sup>1</sup> However, Eco argues, the reverse is actually the case: encyclopedias, with their inclusion of all sorts of contextual information, are more accurate descriptions of what the "semantic space" actually looks like, while dictionaries are really strategic selections from the totality of encyclopedic information which *take for granted* certain contextual knowledge, and are thus really pragmatic devices. Dictionaries tend to level out meaning, seek for the most general and the most common: that which can be asserted with the least controversy. They are, in fact, one of the strongest examples of the scholarly aspiration toward some sort of disinterested neutrality, in this case, a neutrality based on the exclusion of the marginal and the controversial. Encyclopedias aspire towards completeness, as the name implies, and seek to be neutral in that sense. Both types of neutrality are illusory, of course. There are no such things as uncontroversial agreements - certainly literary theory is no exception to that; and encyclopedic aspirations are always stymied by, if nothing else, a sort of Heisenberg principal of indeterminacy stemming from the fact that encyclopedia makers alter the semantic space by making encyclopedias.

It will be seen from the discussion below that the VOCAT project - with its computer technology and extensive use of citations, with its historical emphasis and its signed essays - is aiming at something more like an encyclopedic description. As such, it will be worthwhile to list briefly the characteristics attributed by Eco to the topography of the semantic space. Although Eco is speaking of the totality of language - the universe of semiosis - the same principles apply even to VOCAT's more modest attempt to slice out of that universe twentieth-century literary criticism and theory:

1. The meanings of words must be thought of as virtual or potential texts, and language is a flexible system for producing texts. An encyclopedic representation of a word's meaning would not simply specify its equivalents, but rather all the ways in which a word has become or could become part of some text. An account of these relationships cannot be reduced to a hierarchy of designators, but will remain a *labyrinth* of tangled passages.

2. An encyclopedic account of the semantic space is virtually infinite. It would have to take into account the multiple interpretations of every word, a multiplicity which would only be compounded by the process of creating a description.

3. An encyclopedic account would register not only "truths," but rather what has been said about the truth, what has been believed to be true, as well as what has been believed to be false or imaginary, etc.

4. Such an encyclopedic description cannot be accomplished but remains a *regulative idea*. It is only on the basis of such a regulative idea that one is able to isolate a portion of the semantic universe in order to interpret specific discourses or texts.

5. Such a regulative idea does not deny the existence of structured knowledge; it only asserts that such knowledge cannot be recognized and organized as a global system, as a totality. It provides only local and transitory systems of knowledge, which can be contradicted by alternative and equally local organizations; every attempt to recognize these local organizations as unique and global - ignoring their partiality - produces an *ideological bias*.

The production of a reference work is similar in many respects to any explanatory intervention which tries to make explicit how language works and what it is doing; and like such interventions, not all of its effects can be predicted at the outset. The undeniable importance of the project lies not only in its plan to map the

vocabularies of criticism and theory, but also in its ability to change the way we think about criticism and theory.

Stephen Nimis  
Miami University

#### NOTE

<sup>1</sup>Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976); *The Role of the Reader* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979); *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

#### AN INTERVIEW WITH RALPH COHEN ON THE AIMS OF THE VOCAT PROJECT

Sosnoski: First, Professor Cohen, I would like to welcome you to Miami University. It's a great pleasure for us to have you here, especially as President of SCE. At your inaugural address as President of the Society for Critical Exchange you proposed that SCE undertake as one of its projects an encyclopedic dictionary of literary critical and theoretical terms. What needs do you think such a dictionary would address?

Cohen: I am very pleased to be able to be here and to meet with you and the other members of the Society interested in this project. You're quite right to question me about needs an encyclopedic dictionary will address. I know of no dictionary that provides a full vocabulary of twentieth-century critical and theoretical terms. Moreover, it is clear that since critics operate from different points of view, they tend to convert common terms to the view they have. There is no way in which anyone can expeditiously discover what the various views are of a single term. An encyclopedic dictionary will make such variants immediately accessible and if, as Duck [Wadsworth] has suggested, we can retrieve all the possible entries of a term like "convention" or a term like "genre" or a term like "value," we shall be able through this dictionary to assess the common core of meaning, if any, a community of definitions which critics share despite their different views.

Sosnoski: When you say "community of definition," do you oppose that term to a "school"?

Cohen: Yes, because schools take a part of the common definition and apply it to psychoanalytical criticism or apply it to phenomenological criticism or apply it to Marxist criticism. A good

example is the term "reading." You know the issues that are involved. For us the issue is, does the term have no common basis for all these different critics? Only if you can give the citations indicating the usage, only if you can get a sense of the different possibilities that the term presents, can you then evaluate the issue of shared meaning. It does seem likely that at the very least a mite of such common meaning exists. Even a "mite" seems to me immensely important in contemporary criticism and theory because of the proliferation of what are called critical and theoretical points of view. It begins to appear that there are only differences; there are no similarities. This seems to me a mistake, but there has been no way in which, aside from arguing among critics, to indicate that critical and theoretical terms do share certain common meanings, however minimal these may be.

Another need that this dictionary will fill is to provide a body of information about how important critical terms undergo change. A very good example of this is a term like "genre." This is a term that becomes functional in literary criticism in the nineteenth century. Critics who use it today have abandoned the earlier synonyms, "kinds" or "types." This dictionary will elaborate the reasons for abandoning "kinds" and substituting "genre." We shall provide explanatory essays analyzing reasons for the abandonment of one critical term and the substitution of another. For the first time, a dictionary will provide a whole range of information about such changes. In this respect, it will also serve the need of providing information about how critical terms come to be initiated. And this indeed is an area in which we have almost no information.

Nimis: There have been many other handbooks and glossaries of literary terms published at various times. How will this encyclopedic dictionary be different?

Cohen: One of the new things about our enterprise is that it includes not only the dictionary terms and a wealth of twentieth-century citations for each use of the term, but it also includes essays for key terms. These essays will indicate the broad range of relationships among the usages which a term has and its connection with other terms in literature and in art, religion, rhetoric, and science. Thus, for example, it will be possible to talk about the term "paradigm" as a term taken from science and used in describing

changes in literary periods, literary genres, literary problems, etc. I think another aspect of the innovative quality of this dictionary is the interweaving of terms from different critical and theoretical perspectives. It will demonstrate a considerable interaction between theories that insist on their isolation. But not only do psychoanalytic terms and Marxist terms often appear together as they do in the writings of Jameson, psychoanalytic terms appear in the writings of linguists who engage in literary theory. Thus, we will have a much more adequate sense of the interrelation of theoretical categories than we've had up to this time.

Sosnoski: In the sixties, when structuralism was at its height, many people argued that theories were like systems. Part of the argument was that if you took the term out of its systematic context - out of the conceptual network in which it was embedded by the developers of a theory - you would misuse the term. I gather from what you are saying about the interrelation between terms that you don't think that this is historically true, that terms are interrelated in a free-floating way and cannot be characterized as part of a system.

Cohen: That's right. Although there may be terms which are so specific that they can only be part of a single system, it seems to me most unusual to presuppose that a system alters all the words that are used in it. There could be no possibility of our understanding a system if all the words in it were new. How could we understand what is said or written? I think this assumption results from a generalization which is all too hastily identified as contextual. Indeed, many of the words which appear in one linguistic context do share meanings when placed in another linguistic context. The very basis of understanding requires that this be so, because otherwise, in any new context, psychoanalytic or phenomenological or deconstructive, the implication would be that past meanings provide no basis for adapting to new contexts. That seems to me a misconception.

Sosnoski: Then this project will make distinctions among a community of users, a school, and a theoretical system. I'm still interested in what you said earlier on when, instead of using the word "school" where it might have been appropriate, you spoke of a "community of users," and then, later, you spoke of "point of view" rather than

"school." What exactly are you implying about the nature of schools? One thinks of schools as made up of people who habitually use a set of terms in the same way.

Cohen: One of the characteristic ways of talking about schools is, I think, partly derived from Kuhn and partly derived from Fish; it presupposes that a certain way of dealing with the literary issue is presented and taught to other people the way you teach them to solve problems that have previously been solved and the students continue to solve the problem in the same way as their teachers; any new problems are merely alterations of the received way. This seems to me not to apply to the way we study literature. No teacher of literature who passes on a psychoanalytic procedure prevents his students from confronting other procedures. There are in the study of literature other teachers who provide alternative hypotheses and solutions.

In the market place of criticism and theory, even a psychoanalytic critic like Crews found it necessary to abandon many of the psychoanalytic assumptions he initially employed. The reason for this is that psychoanalytic critics, for example, disagree with other psychoanalytic critics who want to introduce into their criticism elements of originality and individual sensibility, or who interpret psychoanalysis or society differently. When they do this they alter the way in which the vocabulary of criticism is operating. It therefore becomes necessary to realize that a community may share certain views in common but the expression of these views is bound to be in one way or another different. In that sense, unless you take account of the fact that the students who are taught differ from the teachers who are teaching them, who bring their own views to what they receive, you really need a different term than the concept of school, or you need to redefine the nature and function of the term "school." And it seems to me that the dictionary, by citing multifarious uses of a single term, will do just that - it will demonstrate how the gradual shifting of a term can come to be used antithetically to its early definitions. The example we have before us is the way in which Derrida opposes a term like "genre" on the grounds that every time something is generic, it also undermines its genericness. It will be possible through this dictionary to observe the conflicts among critics as well as the combat over terms. The description of this process seems to me much more like a community

where people disagree about particular issues than a school which is assumed to teach a given procedure to all. Critics may share in a common enterprise of analyzing a text, though they disagree about what a literary text is or what procedures for analysis are most useful. So too, the responses which they have to a particular text, even though there will be common features, will nevertheless be different, and it's the differences weighed against the similarities that lead us to changes in critical terms. So, I would want to distinguish my notion of community and how a community functions as against a school when "school" implies that people are merely taught to repeat what has proved to be successful. It doesn't seem to me a satisfactory way of describing what actually happens.

Tomarken: Can you suggest how an encyclopedic dictionary will be useful to understand how terminology crosses fields and how that helps one understand the nature of criticism or theory?

Cohen: The crossing of boundaries in a term like "interpretation," which begins with religion and enters into fields as diverse as literary study, medical diagnosis, and history of art and science indicates that there are some practices pertinent to the term that are shared despite the differences in disciplines. I would say, for example, that one of the characteristic procedures of a physician is to ask for a story or explanation of what troubles the patient. As the patient tells the story, the physician interprets it in such a way as to draw conclusions or to concede bafflement with regard to the illness. This process by which he looks for information which will fall into a generalization pertinent to an illness is not unlike a critic reading a story and trying to arrive at the ways in which the story is composed and the implications of its composition. There are shared practices and sometimes even shared aims in interpretation. When one deals with a medieval text, or when an anthropologist comes to a foreign community and tries to understand the behavior of the community, or when we try to understand the behavior of characters in Hamlet, we are all involved in interpreting foreign worlds. And the procedures seem to me to be analogous. Thus, a theory of literature which sticks only to a given small number of texts delimits unnecessarily the whole enterprise in which we are engaged. A dictionary of this type will broaden the scope of possibilities available to us.

Sosnoski: I agree with your description of the way language is used by a writer like Jameson or Althusser, where there is a mixture of psychoanalysis and Marxism and terms from other vocabularies, but I'm not sure I would be prepared to discount totally the school-like aspect of the usage of terms because it seems to me that schools (in the sense that you identified them before as inculcating the particular usage of the term) are an aspect of the way we train undergraduates, particularly, and even graduate students into literary criticism. We mislead them by getting them to believe there are such things as schools and paradigms. Graduate students frequently want to get in touch with a particular set of terms that can be used as a method to run texts through for grinding out interpretations. Would you say that this dictionary might help take up arms against that attitude?

Cohen: I certainly think that in the citations one would see a far greater range than any one school advocates. But I also think that if the emphasis on "schools" exists in some of our colleagues, and I quite agree that it does, that it is making students clones of the teacher. I think that others of us constantly question the cloning procedure, the school procedure, so that actually a university is less a school than it is a community which calls into question any one school.

Sosnoski: Are you suggesting that theoretical advances or innovations occur around a shift in the usage of the key term rather than say the advent of a school of thought?

Cohen: Well, I would certainly say that the conflicts that arise in criticism and in theory often are the result of deliberate attempts to alter the nature of a term because of the theoretical hypotheses one wants to develop. I think probably the most obvious example of this is "text." Here is a term that very clearly referred to a bibliographical procedure. "Literary work" was the term we normally used for a finished poem, or a novel, or a drama. We talked of it as a "literary work." The attempt to use a term like "text" to apply to all works has as its basis the elimination of the distinction between literary and nonliterary works.

Wadsworth: That's an example that becomes notorious when we go so far as to assume that "text" no longer necessarily implies an artifact (or at least not an artifact produced by a writer) but becomes something produced by a reader. Presumably our dictionary will still want to be able to show what is common even after such changes.

Cohen: That's right, because in this case it's very apparent. I think it's somewhere in *Of Grammatology* that Derrida explains his resistance to the literariness of works. He wants to wipe out the literariness, whereas the Russian formalist critics wanted to *insist on* literariness. So that, we have here a very good example of a term, text, traditionally used in a very limited, way being altered and used as a substitute term in order to introduce a critical concept of anti-literariness.

Wadsworth: I recall some time ago when we were initially addressing the issue of whether to call the work a dictionary or an encyclopedia, you said, "Let's call it an encyclopedic dictionary." What is meant by the collocation of those two terms? What does it imply when we say it is both a dictionary and an encyclopedia?

Cohen: To me, the dictionary aspect of it is to keep in this volume etymologies because I think it is important, as a number of phenomenological critics have made clear, that etymologies when properly traced often reveal that only one aspect of a term has been selected and etymologies reveal that there are other aspects that remain untouched in the definition of the term. The most obvious example for me is the term "genre" which in its etymology is identical with "gender." Gender criticism has only very recently become an important part of criticism. But the point is that genre actually has as one of its examples the biblical birth of woman from man and suggests that you can't understand genre unless you have two. Then you have a male and a female principle and the Bible suggests that it's the male principle which is the hierarchical dominant over the female. It's only recently that we've begun to see that the very uses of genre have totally disregarded the possibilities that hierarchy might be connected with gender, and I think that this is an example of the way in which etymology reveals to us that a certain part of the term has been closed off, suppressed, disregarded, and it had to be, in a sense, rediscovered.

Wadsworth: When you say etymologies properly traced, however, you seem to be suggesting a procedure which is different from the standard Germanic philological historical approach. Would you elaborate on that a little? What's the distinction between this notion of etymology and the classical philological one?

Cohen: I would like our etymologies to seek to explain why the terms that we use in criticism have come to be used. Why, for example, in talking about theory do we make distinctions between space and time? Anyone who seeks to deal with the etymology of "space" will discover that before the Renaissance the terms "space" and "time" were seen as interchangeable. It becomes very important for us to understand why it became necessary to separate space from time and to identify one art as spatial and another art as temporal. This I hope distinguishes between traditional philology and our use of etymology.

Wadsworth: And indeed that goes back then to what you said earlier about wanting to deal with how terms are initiated, used, and changed. The etymology is the story of how that happens, isn't it?

Cohen: That's right, and what I would like the essays in the encyclopedic dictionary to do is to begin interpreting the stories which etymology will present to us. One of the interesting things that will result will be a body of new information about the ways in which terms come to be used, so that critics will be perhaps surprised at what it is that they are actually saying.

Wadsworth: And this kind of information in the normal acceptance of the term is encyclopedic rather than lexicographical.

Cohen: That's right. What you have said about etymology is certainly, I think, one aspect of the use of the term "encyclopedic"; another seems to me to be that encyclopedias do not have dictionary entries and etymology entries, but they do have essays; and to the extent that major terms will be written up in historical and critical essays indicating the relation which a term has to other terms and the varieties of meanings it has accumulated, such essays are modeled on encyclopedic entries. Thus, there are features of an encyclopedia

that are included in this work that make it reasonable to classify it both as a dictionary and an encyclopedia.

Wadsworth: And in the attempt to incorporate a good deal of information about the social background of change, it's also encyclopedic. Lexicographers normally distinguish between books that emphasize merely pointing to other words and books that emphasize the real world activities that are pointed to by those words. There's a great deal of that kind of world knowledge incorporated into any one of these entries.

Tomarken: Suppose someone is reading Jauss and wants to look up Jauss' use of the term "hermeneutics circle." The reader may only be really interested in understanding what Jauss means by that; but your essay will undoubtedly make reference not only to other uses of that term, but to entire elements of the term that are not used by Jauss. Might not such a reader complain that this is simply cluttering the entry with unneeded material?

Cohen: We have to recognize that when a person goes to a dictionary, for example, it's full of terms that he doesn't want to look up. In that sense every dictionary is bound to be cluttered, but it is a desirable "clutter" - the more the better. What is important in the point you're making, is that it should have information about the terms one is researching, for example, "hermeneutic circle." Such information will be there. Moreover, the appropriate essay on "hermeneutics" will also list sources, bibliographical references, etc. This is all that is necessary if someone is trying to look up Jauss and "hermeneutic circle"; the inquirer might even find that as a result of the historical approach to hermeneutics, the essay will help him understand Jauss's views more adequately.

Tomarken: Can you explain a little more how the historical approach of the essay will clarify contemporary uses of terms?

Cohen: When Jauss came to Constance, his inaugural address "Literary History as a Challenge to Theory," opened with the statement that he was trying to develop a theory that would take account both of Russian formalist and Marxist approaches. A person who wants to understand Jauss will surely want to understand what

he means when he speaks of incorporating Russian formalism and aspects of Marxism into his view of hermeneutics. An encyclopedic dictionary on historical principles will have an essay that will explain why he wants to do this, and will have entries for "Russian Formalism" and "Marxist Criticism." Such entries will provide information about Jauss's procedure not readily available elsewhere. Thus, a dictionary on historical principles will provide an explanation of aspects of theoretical positions which readers very often overlook. That is, they don't realize that one position often comes out of opposition to or absorption of or competition with another position, whereas in this dictionary we will be able to cross-list entries and indicate interrelations among them.

Tomarken: How will the dictionary be related to your project of new literary history?

Cohen: Well, it certainly is related to an effort to explore history in ways that scholars have not normally chosen. I indicated how we plan to treat etymology historically. I should add here that we shall assume that language is an acculturated phenomenon and that we hope the essays will relate this acculturation to social and other changes in society. I believe that history refers to the way members of society come to think and feel about themselves, others, and their institutions. Insofar as individuals and groups sympathize with or object to or compete with others and with social institutions, a history explains the nature of this competition and why it arose, how it came to embody diverse views and how these persist, diminish, develop, or disappear. I think this is not absolutely different from what happens in the writings of historians of the Annales school who seek to understand why people do the things they do in terms of the motives, places, social and economic situations they find themselves in. In assuming that language, including critical language, is acculturated, we shall try to relate literary history to other types of cultural history. Such a procedure will, I hope, restore our understanding of critical and theoretical terms as part of a cultural enterprise, which is where I think it actually belongs. But this is not the occasion to develop a theory of literary history.

Tomarken: The combination of dictionary and encyclopedia suggests to me a bringing together of the two elements of literary theory

because I see that there are two kinds of literary theories: those which make central reference to the matrix of language and others that make central reference to some kind of *telos*. And what I see happening in this reference book is that the dictionary refers to one aspect but the encyclopedic essay refers to the other. Do you think that's an accurate picture?

Cohen: Yes, I think that's a fair way of putting it so long as you recognize that the etymological aspect is also historical and encyclopedic. In other words, there is not to be a very sharp separation between the two. And in realizing this, I think you will come to see that the study of language is not in some special way free from a cultural understanding.

Wadsworth: It's just that encyclopedias and dictionaries are not in fact so opposed as the common acceptance of the terms would imply.

Cohen: That's right.

Wadsworth: We've been speaking of history and particularly of history in conjunction with change, which would lead us to the question, of how to make a dictionary so that it is able to keep pace with a set of vocabularies which not only changes rapidly, but which includes so very many controversial terms?

Cohen: I think it is inevitable that the change in terms will precede additions to and editions of the dictionary. But one of the ways in which this encyclopedic dictionary will make readers cognizant of this is by indicating, through citations, the continual changes of meanings that terms undergo. Not only do they undergo change, but they often do so as a result of conflicts among critics who deliberately alter the meanings of a common term in order to establish their particular identities. An example of this is the term "humanist," which was used positively to describe values in the liberal arts, as in the early part of our century and is used negatively by post-modern critics to describe falsely idealistic values.

Sosnoski: I'm not so sure I understand what you mean by someone using the term both positively and negatively.

Cohen: I can give you another example. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were a number of critics who conceived of "genre" as a classification and as an important way of identifying the different kinds of works: comedy, tragedy, etc. If we assume this definition to serve the positive value of classification, then its negative use would be to treat classification as a useless, irrelevant procedure, even as harmful to literary understanding. This was the way Croce interpreted "genre"; for him it served to block the understanding of the individual talent of the author. His definition of "genre" was "a classification that pays attention to superficial features rather than to essential features." It's in this sense that his use of the term negated its value.

Sosnoski: I had misunderstood you. I thought you were saying that the same person uses it positively and negatively.

Cohen: Well, I wasn't, but I would say that Derrida gives us a good example of how "genre" is used both positively and negatively in this sense. His essay I'm referring to is called "The Law of Genre," and it appeared first in *Glyph*. The essay points out that although we name a text when we publish it, the name it gets (the genre) begins to be undermined. Thus you both need to name it, and you need to undermine the name. In that sense Derrida finds the term "genre" both positive and negative. On the one hand you identify it, and on the other you undermine the identification; you classify it, and then you undermine the classification. I think this indicates a procedure that readers of the dictionary will come to understand through the citations used. And they will recognize a new usage when they do not find it in any of the citations. I think this dictionary will serve to educate readers to the ways in which words change and get to be opposed, resisted, and so on. That's immensely useful because it reveals the practical use of literary and critical terms.

Wadsworth: This may be especially crucial to undertake in the United States. I read an article recently about a survey performed by Randolph Quirk in England which reveals that British students at all levels, but particularly undergraduates, are far more suspicious of dictionaries and far more resistant to them than American students. The latter are much more inclined to accept what the dictionary says as what they ought to say. The English student looks at it and says,

"Well, this isn't what we say anymore; the dictionary must be out of date." And we would encourage our readers to understand that this is the case.

Cohen: That's right. The dictionary will encourage them to understand that words belong in historical, cultural contexts and that as a result of changes in the culture, changes in criticism and theory, in technology - as in the initiation of video cassettes - that these are going to alter the use of old terms and introduce new ones. No dictionary can keep up with the rapidity of language changes, but a dictionary that makes it possible for readers to understand that changes are inevitable and explains why they happen will make the reader treat the encyclopedic dictionary as a guide rather than an authority.

Wadsworth: And in many cases an entry might well show the direction in which the change is most likely to occur and thus enable the user to make a good guess about what a current usage might be, even if it hasn't been covered.

Nimis: One of the inevitable unintended effects of a dictionary, or intended effects of a dictionary, is to produce an authority for various uses of terms. People have expectations about dictionaries that we are simply not going to be able to ignore. So in that connection, let me ask you what sort of effects the availability of a reference work like our encyclopedic dictionary is likely to have on theorists and critics, first of all, and on anyone else who might use it. Do you perceive the dictionary having a normalizing effect on the use of critical terminology? Will it in fact produce the commonality that you initially said needed to be identified?

Cohen: I think that one of the effects of this dictionary will be to reintroduce a historical awareness of language. In doing so, it ought to undermine the concept of the dictionary as an authority. Rather, the dictionary will then be a guide to the multiple uses of a particular term. The commonality of usage may exist at any one time, a norm of usage might be established for some chronological span - "imitation," for example, had a greater duration than "decorum," "epic" much longer than "ballade." But no commonality exists from the beginning of a particular usage to the present.

Different critical and cultural problems in different societies lead critics to emphasize different aspects of terms; a literary history would study the types of changes introduced and their effects on critical study.

It should not be overlooked that theory is itself historical and that the very terms that theory embraces are historical. Thus, the effect on theorists and critics, it seems to me, will be to make available to them the information they need to introduce a self-consciousness in the use of their terms. I expect that many critics and theorists will use the encyclopedic dictionary to differ from it, to try to disrupt whatever commonality the citations suggest. You make reference, and I think quite rightly, to a normalizing effect. I think that one cannot prevent people from wanting to normalize one citation over another. If, for deconstruction, you provide eight definitions and citations, and critics repeatedly prefer the definition of language as self-contradictory, ignoring other definitions, we cannot prevent this selectivity. But the whole import of the series of definitions and citations is to try to prevent that. It is not our aim to specify frequency of use among contemporary usages; rather, to indicate the range of such usages. This is the impact of a dictionary. It will bring a body of new information to demonstrate this, so that wherever one looks, one would find unexpected examples to support the critical range. One of the rather unfortunate aspects of recent criticism and theory is a failure to undertake exploration of theoretical terms. A phenomenological theory or a psychoanalytic theory or a Marxist theory provides terms as though what they signify is agreed upon. We don't explore how we came to use these terms and to accept them, which means that the terms are being dispossessed from the history out of which they came. What is taking place is what a Marxist critic might call reification of the terminology. Our dictionary would undermine any effort at reification. In that sense it would be, I think, restoring the process-like character of criticism and theory.

Tomarken: The dictionary would try then in every way to suggest that it itself is to be placed in a cultural and historical matrix which it makes reference to, and that it would not in any sense transcend history, something which would of course be implied in normalization. My question then is, how do you situate it in the matrix of theory?

How does it contribute to theory? What sort of theory, if any, does it partake of itself?

Cohen: Every theoretical enterprise, as you know, must have a goal that it sets itself. One might say, for example, that the purpose of psychoanalytic theory is to demonstrate the psychoanalytic basis of interpretation. But such goals are circular. I refer to goals that clarify the values that govern the selection and application of a particular theory. Any theory that one undertakes is always related to the larger question of the values it has for our time. In that sense, I take your question to be, why should one at this time want to produce an encyclopedic dictionary. Aside from the points I have made earlier, I believe that this is a time when criticism and theory are beginning to be formalized. At such a time there begins to be a separation between the use of terms and the consciousness of their cultural transformations. One aim of this encyclopedic dictionary is to revive our cultural awareness of theoretical terms. Again, one of the values of the enterprise for our time is that it actually attends to a major characteristic of our time: the rapidity of a cultural, industrial, social and economic change. It is reasonable, therefore, that one of the important things we need to learn about is how language changes, how our writing and speaking contribute to change, how we can shape and use our verbal resources to control the world in which we live. And no dictionary that I know can better prepare us for this task.

Tomarken: Well, it sounds then like you're bringing together the old fashioned dictionary concept, that work of the harmless drudge which accumulates entries and documents usage, with the highest level of interpretation. Can you spell out that a little more?

Cohen: Well, perhaps I can best spell it out by talking a little about the value of the kind of historical interpretation that would be involved. Since this is an encyclopedic dictionary, clearly people who use it will have to know how to read, so we're not dealing with the matter of literacy. We're assuming that we have literate people. Then, I would say, every human being is involved in the process of explaining, describing, and interpreting events in which he or she is involved. This is a normal activity of the day. We talk to people and someone says: "Well, how did your afternoon go?" and one begins

to tell the story about one's disappointments; it requires interpretation on the part of people, and I think this is a common human activity with regard to language. Now, it has often been assumed that the process of interpretation is reserved only for critics; but the dictionary will illustrate in citations and essays that critical terms are often intertwined with those of ordinary language. It is hoped that the audience for the dictionary will not be limited to students and scholars, but will include all who are interested in a vocabulary for interpretation, explanation, and narration. This audience will not merely recognize history in words; they will help make this history.

Tomarken: Is that not also directly related to the difference between new literary history and old literary history?

Cohen: Yes, I would certainly want to say that *New Literary History* has indeed been engaged in demonstrating time and again that the language which is used by so-called ethnic groups is no less "literary" than that of canonical fictions. And indeed, in the coming issues of this year - a number of the essays will be devoted to Hispanic texts, Black texts, feminist texts, demonstrating that the languages of these are as available for interpretation and literariness as those identified as "imaginative" or "fictional."

Wadsworth: And this goes back directly to your earlier statement or assumption that there is a commonality of interpretative procedures to which these names or labels or taxonomies or vocabularies have a large measure of common reference.

Cohen: That's right.

Sosnoski: One contribution such a dictionary could make to literary theory is to introduce a new definition of theory in a remarkably concrete way. It seems to be the brunt of many of your remarks that a dictionary of literary theory would be a form of theorizing in some sense, but, as you continuously point out, a very different form. Many people think of theory as a paradigm or a system, or in more scientific terms, as a set of interrelated concepts constituting an explanation with predictive force and all of that.

Cohen: I would say that etymologically theory belongs with theatre, and relates to performance terms. In Greek, *theoria* is connected with the same word that is used for theatre. And theory is derived from the concept of acting and performing in discussions that involve dialogue and oral exchanges, a type of action in which we are engaged in right now. If we attend to a historical etymology, we realize that theory is in no way sacrosanct.

Sosnoski: When you first proposed this project in your inaugural address, you remarked that it was a project made to order for SCE because it fits in so well with the way in which SCE characteristically works. Would you amplify that observation?

Cohen: When I made that remark I had in mind that SCE is engaged in a broad project for sharing critical ideas with the whole educational community. This project, because of its range, requires the cooperation of hundreds of participants; and it is best done, I think, through a society which can invite its members to participate in an enterprise that directly concerns them. It's as though this project was made to order in terms of the interest which people have in criticism and theory. But it also is made to order for the organization because the organization is interested in the way in which criticism and theory ought to relate to the society as a whole. And this view of a historical approach to critical terms is a very satisfactory way of incorporating one's hopes and one's aims into an important work. I think it's also important for the Society that it should publish a work which can be used everywhere and thus give importance to the project itself and to the Society itself because the future of criticism lies, I believe, less in the multiplication of critical and theoretical points of view than in the willingness of people to cooperate in trying to understand what it is criticism can do for society. An encyclopedic dictionary would be a fitting work to represent the Society everywhere. And I think it will also serve to remove from criticism the emphasis on authority which so quickly takes place when a particular figure, whether it's Derrida or Hartman or Jameson, is elevated into an authority figure. I do not deny the importance of such theorists, but criticism is an everyday activity, practiced in everyday life. Our dictionary is an egalitarian enterprise, and it will serve all who use it.

Sosnoski: One of the things that is personally attractive to me is that the dictionary also reaches out into the public sphere. It's not simply scholars writing exclusively for other scholars, but it's a reference work that's in the "public sphere," potentially anyway.

Cohen: And I think the sense of cooperation such an enterprise entails will serve as a demonstration of the way in which scholars ought to work. Far too long, it seems to me, has the emphasis in scholarship been placed on the value of individual differences; one should work by himself and for himself. Advances in other fields are done by groups, by teams, and it's about time that we recognize that we can produce very important works if we work together.

## THE VOCAT DATA BASES

R. L. Wadsworth Jr.

As our initial grant proposal puts it, a little grandly but not inaccurately:

In addition to the materials collected in direct relation to the dictionary project, we will also store all correspondence (much of which will be from major theorists directly or indirectly commenting on the use of key theoretical concepts), extra citations, bibliography and, so on. Martin Dillon, Director of the Research Office at the Online Computer Library Center, assured us at our January meeting that such information will become a major source of historical data on the development of the humanistic disciplines, one comparable to a library collection but more valuable to scholars because of its computer accessibility. By design the VOCAT data bank will contain far more lexical data than will be published, creating a growing fund of valuable information.

Nor is that all, for in addition to serving the profession as a source of lexical and historical material, this same data base must also be a repository for records helpful to project organizers and administrators, whether for similar research undertakings elsewhere or simply for VOCAT itself.

It is clear from the start that we shall need to organize files in at least six major categories:

- 1) Correspondence files, electronic and paper.
- 2) A budget file.
- 3) Comprehensive logs of computer usage.
- 4) An electronic file of raw, unlemmatized entries.
- 5) An electronic file of lemmatized entries.

- 6) An electronic file of entries formatted for publication in a book.

In addition to the files and indexes of correspondence normally needed to track a large project, we ought to establish a special file for materials outside the dictionary entries proper which are nevertheless of lexical interest: correspondence about words (whether with editors and contributors or others), minutes of Editorial Board meetings, proceedings of VOCAT conferences, and the like. Any information that bears on our treatment of the vocabularies of criticism and theory is of potential interest to other lexicographers and to students both of those vocabularies and of the humanities in general. At a bare minimum this category will include:

- 1) An electronic file of outgoing correspondence.
- 2) A paper file of incoming mail, electronically indexed.
- 3) An electronic file of selected correspondence and other records (as above) of lexical interest.

Comprehensive budget files are a self-evident requirement, equally important for day-to-day operations, for accounting to those who fund us, and for the historical record of computer-aided research in the humanities. We shall have to seek competent advice from systems experts on software for this dual task of tracking and analysis.

Logs of computer usage, while independent of the budget figures themselves, will clearly be necessary in calculating and appraising them. NEH, should they become one of our sponsors, would of course insist on such logs, both because they would need them to monitor our own operations and because they pool information on data management to share among the large number of research enterprises they underwrite. In any case, we shall clearly need periodic reports on frequency of access for each authorized user, length of access, time needed for particular operations, and the like.

The fourth major file, holding the raw materials for the printed dictionary, will also be a powerful utility for students of lexical and historical trends in the humanities, more comprehensive than any volumes we shall ever print, more easily manipulated in a greater variety of ways. Contributors will be asked to submit four different kinds of forms: one for material that goes at the beginning of an

entry; one for information on words or phrases semantically related to the entry term; one for the completed or synthesized definition and illustrative quotations (with dates); and one for bibliography. While the first form is necessary only for each headword, there will be one each of the others for every individual sense or subsense catalogued by our contributors. It is from these that we expect the richest yield.

Semantic relations on which we shall seek information include: the domain of discourse involved; synonyms and near synonyms; antonyms and partial antonyms; sequential or serial relations to other terms; part-whole relations to other terms; the source of the term, where it is known; the product or result of a term, if there is one; and a term's etymology, understood as an account of its history in our discipline or of its origins elsewhere and appropriation into criticism and theory. Adapted from suggestions made by William Frawley (*Dictionaries: Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America*, 1980-81, 18-27), this use of semantic pointers ought to facilitate the work of cross-indexing, making it, as Frawley says, "systematic and motivated." Moreover, this method leads to definitions inherently more "encyclopedic" than conventional, analytic ones, since each will have built into it explicit connections with several other related terms.

An electronic data base featuring such networks of relationships will greatly facilitate the consolidation of materials for incorporation into lemmatized entries of the sort one expects in the printed volumes. Available either in CD-ROM or on-line after publication of the dictionary, the same data base will simplify queries of a sort too irksome to be very tempting in a printed text. Assuming, for example, that both the printed volume and the data base had the raw information, how many hours of thumbing pages would it take to discover what decade of this century had seen the greatest burgeoning in critical discourse of terms borrowed from, say, Freudian psychology? How few moments for a computer? Or suppose that a scholar doing a reception history should want to reconstruct the specialized vocabulary of a particular critical or theoretical project. It would be difficult in the printed text to search all the critics of the 1950's who opposed the reigning contextualism of the day; yet this would be child's play in the computer bank. One could easily list a wide range of other kinds of queries made easier by the computer, from how many times Northrop Frye is given as the source

of a term, to what all the entries are that give a particular term as an antonym. Indeed, insofar as the systematic collation of information so often breeds new insights, we may be confident that as the data begin to accumulate, they will suggest, to editors and to users alike, more imaginative ways of tracing usage, facilitating that exploration of commonalities in the humanities which Professor Cohen has articulated as a primary aim of the VOCAT project.

It is indeed a stroke of luck for the project that the Martin Dillon quoted above is also our Systems Consultant. This past summer, in his alternate guise as a professor in the School of Library Science at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Dillon led his graduate class in an exploration of our data-handling needs. Working from requirements supplied by the VOCAT staff in Oxford, the Dillon group has made several recommendations, upon which we are now acting, and furnished us a core of programs with which to work. While we had initially assumed that the job would require a minicomputer, we shall in fact rely on the IBM microcomputer standard and on commercial software. Dillon argues that the coming generation of thirty-two-bit microcomputers will afford all the power we shall ever need, while the software we are using has proved reliable and seems likely as well to be upgraded to keep pace with the new machines. Relying on such stand-bys as Dbase III-plus, Pro Cite, Word Perfect, Pro Key, SIRE and TeX, our consultants have put together three articulated modules of programs - one for the administration of the project, one for the gathering and organization of materials and one for the formatting of the printed dictionary. The plan is tailored to the aptitudes of the staff as well as to the needs of the project, and it has so far proved congenial. It will be up to the VOCAT staff to see that it lives up to its promise and meets the goals of the project.

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### THE (DIS)POSITION OF FOREIGN TERMS IN THE VOCAT *ENCYCLOPEDIA* DICTIONARY

Richard Spuler

In the Introduction to *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Raymond Williams relates two senses in which he experienced the problem of critical vocabularies: on the one hand he recognized "the available and developing meanings of known words, which needed to be set down," and on the other he acknowledged "the explicit but as often implicit connections which people were making [in] particular formations of meaning - ways not only of discussing but of seeing many of our central experiences" (13). When considering the status of foreign terms in an undertaking like VOCAT's *Encyclopedic Dictionary*, we similarly confront two kinds of distinct but related problems - the one practical, the other theoretical or, more to the point, ideological. Since both necessarily operate on each other (as "ways not only of discussing but of seeing many of our central experiences"), I will consider aspects of each kind of problem in the following paragraphs.

It will be helpful to make explicit some general working assumptions behind the *Encyclopedic Dictionary*. Among these is the intended audience of the work. As formulated in a notice from the Editorial Board, the audience will include "critics or theorists who could use a systematic historical survey of usage in our professional community, advanced students of literature, and scholars in other disciplines with interests in criticism and theory." A readership constituted along these lines will be, in any senses of the word, linguistically heterogeneous, not only with regard to the "natural language" of any given reader (whether English, French, German, etc.), but just as significantly with regard to the terminological diversity across, even within, specific disciplines. To what extent do, say, sociologists and literary critics "speak the same language," or,

among literary critics, post-structuralists, and Marxists? What the assumption of the intended audience of the VOCAT project entails is that the encyclopedic dictionary articulate both the (ideological) differences and the points of contingency among the language(s) of its readership.

The complementary side of this *reception* issue concerns the *fields of production and distribution* of the vocabularies in question. Here the Editorial Board has suggested "limiting the vocabulary to terms used in North American and British critical and theoretical work written in English but not restricted to the discussion of literature in English." This *practical strategy*, like its counterpart above, implicates an *ideological problem*, namely a form of linguistic or geographic centrism. Some kind of restrictions are necessary, but if the VOCAT project seeks an historically adequate description of the function of literary criticism and theory, it will need to remain mindful of the shortcomings of containing it within linguistic or national boundaries. For an historically adequate account, it would be more useful to understand the production and distribution of vocabularies in the context of a sociological model of institutions.<sup>1</sup> For the general purposes of this essay, what I mean to indicate with "institution" are not only the more obvious "material instances" of literary scholarship - departments of literature within universities, professional organizations, publications, and other sites where the activity of critical scholarship is played out - but also its more diffuse "normative function" in the production, regulation, and legitimation of the practice of literary criticism and theory. In other words, the category of "institution" would provide a means for differentiating between material apparatus on the one hand and, on the other, norms which provide the framing conditions for literary work.<sup>2</sup> On this level, critical vocabularies can be seen to mediate discursive norms, not only within the institution of literature and across disciplines to other (institutional) forms of knowledge production, but also in relation to the larger social construction and (re-)production of meaning. When contextualized in this manner, the activity of literary criticism and scholarship becomes meaningful not only in terms of its microstructural relations (i.e., how it produces and reproduces itself); it also becomes meaningful in terms of its macrostructural relations, as a form of social praxis, and this in a manner significant for a work based on historical principles (see the interview with Ralph Cohen in this issue). On this view, the problem

of terminology, whether "foreign" of "indigenous" (and this problematic distinction warrants further commentary - see below), becomes a problem not of *individual words*, but a problem of their *coherence within a system of meaning-construction*. Terminology, in other words, becomes visible as a *function of ideology*, as argued in this passage from Terry Eagleton's *Criticism and Ideology*:

In constructing the history of criticism we are not tracing the exfoliation through history of a linear, if irregular, process: it is the history of *criticisms* which is at issue. We are seeking the determinants of the particular historical "spaces" which make the emergence of such an object possible in the first place, and which determine its relations to other synchronous discourses. The science of the history of criticisms is the science of the historical forms which produce those criticisms - criticisms which in turn produce the literary text as their object, as the "text-for-criticism". (17)

Taken together, these areas - the production, distribution, and reception of critical vocabularies - help contextualize the (dis)positioning of foreign terms as a problem for the VOCAT project. While the aim of the project is not to generate a *bilingual or multilingual dictionary*, a number of foreign terms will need to be considered as essential vocabularies of twentieth-century literary criticism and theory - terms like *différance*, *écriture*, *mise en abîme*, *Bedeutung*, *Sinn*, *Wirkungsgeschichte*, to mention only a few. The list is endless. It will be fascinating to see just how many such terms the research on this project will yield (keeping in mind that *absences* will be just as significant), which terms will prove controversial, and for what reasons.

So far I have only highlighted the problem of (dis)positioning foreign terms within the VOCAT project. What are some ways of dealing adequately with this problem? If we consider the question for the moment from the point of view of classical philology, then the situation could be described something like this: under what conditions would it be advisable to include foreign terms, either as keyword entries, as cross-referenced entries, or as parenthetical glosses behind the (or an appropriate) English term, into this English language, non-bilingual dictionary? To pursue this line of thought

further: to what extent should certain of these terms be connected to other foreign terms, and not just to translations alone? Here we are addressing the problem on the level of *etymology*. From a strict philological viewpoint, etymology would be understood in purely linguistic terms, but at least two problems surface here. First, the specter of nineteenth-century national philology and its attendant notion of "national literatures" would seem to raise its head. Second, there are numerous foreign terms that have been more or less "appropriated" into English and are either considered "untranslatable" (e.g. *Weltanschauung*, or *Weltschmerz*) or belong, *de rigueur*, to a particular kind of parlance, and their etymological history remains unreflected. But perhaps more troublesome are the shortcomings inherent in the philological model itself, because it enables us to conceive of the relations of critical terms only as a problem of *language*. While I do not want to understate the dimensions of the strictly linguistic difficulties encountered in such an undertaking, I do want to suggest that a more historically accountable approach would be to extend the classical philological model of *etymology* to consider the problems of influence and appropriation in their contingent relations to power, authority, and institutions. Toward this end, it will be necessary to re-conceive "etymology" so that one can specify a term's "historical origins within the discipline or its status as a borrowing from another discipline" (Frawley, 22).<sup>3</sup>

Let's consider briefly the example of "subtext." I can't substantiate any claim with empirical evidence, but my impression is that this critical term has widespread currency. Are its historical origins *within* the discipline of literary criticism? (I realize that I am begging the contested question of just *what* literary criticism is or does, and I will comment on this point below.) If we understand literary criticism in an historically strict disciplinary sense, and not as the more general act of interpretation, then the answer to this question is, I suspect, "no." Instead, "subtext" appears either to derive from, or to assume meaning in the context of, the domain of psychoanalysis, where a strong analogy obtains between the relation of "subtext" to "text" and that of "unconscious" to "conscious," with the attendant levels of latent and manifest meaning as elaborated in Freud's inquiry into dream-work. Within forms of Marxist discourse, the term acquires different shades of meaning, indicating moments of "ideological blindness."

This abbreviated account of "subtext" makes no use of etymology in the strict sense of the word, but then "subtext" is not a "foreign term," at least not the kind of foreign term that first comes to mind when faced with the question "how does one deal with foreign terms in a work like the VOCAT dictionary?" If we set aside for the moment the philological model and submit the question as formulated (what I really mean to say is the *Fragestellung*) to some critical reflection, it appears to beg an even more fundamental question: namely, how does one come to recognize a term *as foreign* in the context of the work of literary criticism and theory? This question is more problematic than the first, and it leads to further questions. We could ask, for example: foreign to what? Foreign to English? Foreign to literary criticism and theory? To recall the example of "subtext," and to point to a topic of widespread interest at the most recent MLA, we could ask: is the terminology of psychoanalysis "foreign" to literary criticism and theory? I suppose that a relatively stronger consensus obtains regarding what it is that makes English recognizable as *English* than what it is that makes literary criticism and theory recognizable as *what(ever) it is*. In any case, formulating the question in this manner addresses the dictionary project once again on the level of the *ideological* as well as on the more local *practical* level (although the distinction here is strictly heuristic), for what such a *Fragestellung* makes clear is that "any discussion of differences" assumes a "background identity" (Dowling 74), which is to say that it makes sense for you and me to discuss the crucial differences between, say, a screwdriver and a plier only when we participate in some common understanding of the larger category of "tools" which (*in*)forms the "background identity" for our discussion. (If, for example, one of us were talking about "alcoholic beverages," then the character of the discussion would be different - a rather trivially comic *quid pro quo* - until the source of confusion became clarified.) The assumption of a "background identity" for literary criticism and theory is a substantial and problematic one. By reading in place of "differences" the word "foreignness" we foreground this problem of taxonomy for the VOCAT project. To formulate by means of example a (grossly generalized) question, but one which, in its basic tendencies, informs the tradition of hermeneutics: what serves as the "background identity" for our discussion of the "meaning" of a literary work? Is it an appeal to its (relatively "immanent") *Sinn*, or

to its (relatively historical) *Bedeutung*? And what happens to the character of our discussion when for one of us the background of "literary work" is informed by the term *Kunstwerk* and for the other by the term *texte*? How is identity negotiated under these terms? If we accept the premise that "any formal system of taxonomy exists as such only by making this relationship between difference and identity explicit" (Dowling 74), then we should accept the consequence of this premise. For the purposes of the VOCAT project, I will formulate this consequence as a need to evaluate competing systems of taxonomy for their capacity to establish significant relationships between "difference and identity," with the emphasis here on *significant*.

Let me restate the two systems under consideration here, and in the order of their serviceability for the project as I see it. On the one hand, *etymology* as a *system of linguistic differences* would provide a relatively immediate background against which to read a term's relations of difference and identity. But is *etymology*, thus conceived, adequate to the rigorous historical task of the *Encyclopedic Dictionary*? On the other hand, one could understand "etymology" as a *system of ideological differences*. This conceptual transformation would disperse the (relatively) "hard evidence" of strictly linguistic differences (e.g., this word is French, this one Czech, that one German, and all are translated in English as "x") into a complex of overdetermined "traces" (e.g., the English translation of the French "x" indicates its appropriation from - to -). Such a move would complicate the path of analysis, but it would provide fundamentally dialectical, and thus qualitatively superior "framing conditions" for an account of the historical vicissitudes of literary criticism and theory. Earlier I stated that the problem of terminology should be understood not as a problem of individual words, but instead as a problem of their coherence in a system of meaning-construction. Similarly, the problem of translation should be understood not as a problem of *transcoding per se*. On this level, important relations of equivalence obtain between the concepts (and the work) of "translating" and "transcoding" or, more generally, "interpreting." These are neither innocent nor mechanical acts. To emphasize this point, Fredric Jameson alludes to the Chinese proverb "you use one ax handle to hew another," and then writes that, "in our context, only another, stronger interpretation can overthrow and practically refute an interpretation already in place" (13). Interpretation can be conceived of as that space within which critical vocabularies perform

the systemic function of establishing "identities" and discerning "differences." Indeed, critical vocabularies define the parameters of that space of interpretive acts, a space which, on this view, resembles "a Homeric battlefield, on which a host of interpretive options are either openly or implicitly in conflict" (Jameson 13). Bringing this direction of thought to bear on the problem of etymology, we have thus introduced, as I argued for earlier, the dimensions of "influence and appropriation in their contingent relations to power, authority, and institutions" (above). If, as Eagleton has argued, the history of criticism is not linear, but instead a history of *criticisms*, then we could argue similarly that its vocabularies have not one, but instead several *histories*. This proposition is especially relevant for the case of foreign terms, and it suggests that the VOCAT project should replace "etymology" - continuous, linear, and univocal - with the notion of *genealogy* - discontinuous, serial, and discursively plural.

Framing the problem thus, we have traveled some distance from the initial and seemingly innocuous local context of "foreign terms" to the VOCAT project as a whole and certain important meta-questions, the responses to which will situate the envisioned encyclopedic dictionary in relation to the over-arching background categories of history and knowledge. The relation to these categories requires some additional context here. We can begin with the notion suggested above - "genealogy" - and its specific appropriation by Foucault. His essay, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," confronts the problem of historical continuity, of our interpretation and knowledge of history. Here, "genealogy points to the inequality of forces as the source of values or the work of *ressentiment* in the production of the objective world" (Bouchard 22). This is to say that, from the viewpoint of genealogy, historical *continuity* is rewritten as the *contiguity* of sites of contestation and struggle. The essay begins by circumscribing the term's structural and functional dimensions: "Genealogy is gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times" (139). On this view, history becomes a kind of "text," and as such it remains, as Jameson reminds us, "inaccessible to us except in textual form," which in turn means that "it can be approached only by way of prior (re)textualization" (82). The act of (re)textualization is equivalent to (re)producing the

mise-en-scène of the Homeric battlefield. Thus conceived, history reveals its methodological problematic. These circumstances are not peculiar to historiography; they inform historical inquiry per se, as Peter Burger, for example, underscores in the methodological preliminary to his *Theory of the Avant-Garde*:

The past is certainly to be constructed as the prehistory of the present, but this construction grasps only one side of the contradictory process of historical development. To take hold of the process in its entirety, it is necessary to go beyond the present that first makes knowledge possible. . . . and to do so by using the concept of the self-criticism of the present. (21)

These observations regarding history and historical inquiry provide a context for understanding that the "encycopedic dictionary of twentieth-century vocabularies in literary criticism and theory" will represent a *status of knowledge* of and about literary criticism and theory. Thus, inquiry into the "logic" that informs this knowledge is not only legitimate, but requisite if one is to make explicit the "set(s) of prescriptions determining which statements are accepted as 'knowledge' statements" (Lyotard 4). This is to say that the act of (re)textualizing "twentieth-century vocabularies in literary criticism and theory" is tantamount to stepping onto the Homeric battlefield, that (re)writing their histories means (re)enacting the scenes of struggle within which they derive(d) their functional meaning, and finally, that the encycopedic dictionary will itself come to be something of an "ax handle" (and a hefty one at that).

So far, my observations regarding the (dis)position of foreign terms in the VOCAT project have derived in the main from a reflection on the status of the problem (as a form of self-criticism). They are not intended as "solutions" as such, but as context for the proposals that will follow. Initially, these will be addressed best in terms of Frawley's relational fields (see also the essay by Randolph Wadsworth in this issue). Here, the problem of foreign terms would be dealt with primarily within the field of etymology which, in turn, would be read in its relations to the remaining fields of his lexicographical system. What obtains, according to Frawley, are "systems of lexical relations" which go "well-beyond synonymy and antonymy" and which perform a "transformation . . . into huge networks of explicitly represented 'world knowledge' surrounding an entry in the

lexicon . . . such entries show not only *that* certain entries point to others or require other entries for definition, but also show *why and how* such secondary references matter at all to the definition. The relations make this information explicit" (21-2). The system of relational fields that Frawley proposes yields a fundamental *dynamic*, crucial to the historical concerns of the VOCAT project. But, as I have argued, the concept of "etymology" should be replaced with the concept of "genealogy." In this regard, the (dis)position of foreign terms can be made more precise through a brief elaboration of Foucault's notion of *discursive practices*.

In his essay on "The History of Systems of Thought," Foucault defines discursive practices as "not purely and simply ways of producing discourse. They are embodied in technical processes, in institutions, in patterns for general behavior, in forms for transmission and diffusion, and in all pedagogical forms which, at once, impose and maintain them" (200). Framing the problem in this manner will ultimately yield a significant "encycopedic knowledge" of the influence and appropriation of twentieth-century vocabularies of literary criticism and theory. And since the problematic of knowledge attaches to the encycopedic dictionary envisioned by VOCAT on at least two levels (i.e., on the level of the relative "immanence" of the subject matter as well as on the level of its own historically situated method of analysis), we should recall here as well a passage from the same essay by Foucault concerning the *structure of knowledge*. He further defines discursive practices as "characterized by the delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories. Thus, each discursive practice implies a play of prescriptions that designate its exclusions and choices" (199).

If we return now to the more specific and local question of foreign terms, then the situation would look something like this: given the dialectical relations of structure and knowledge (over-determined by language and systems of power relations, both in their more and their less immediately determinate institutional forms), and with the further understanding that we view semantics not as "the study of meaning as such," but as "the study of formal systems of signification" (Williams 20), what, then, shall we designate as the conditions of appropriateness for (dis)positioning foreign terms within

VOCAT's *Encyclopedic Dictionary of twentieth-Century Vocabularies in Literary Criticism and Theory*? Or, as Frawley puts it: "How does one structure the cataloguing so that it is something more than epistemological hodgepodge?" (21).

In this connection, I will gather my proposals around two central premises and their respective entailments.

Premise I (Level of General System): The encyclopedic dictionary of twentieth-century vocabularies in literary criticism and theory will operate according to historical principles.

First Entailment: The status of critical and theoretical vocabularies, understood both as (structural) signifiers and as (functional) components in formal systems of signification, will be viewed in the context of an open-ended, dialectical relation of production, distribution, and reception.

Second Entailment: The system of relational fields will attempt to account for the historically specific overdetermination of vocabularies in both their structural and functional dimensions.

Premise II (Level of Genealogical Inquiry): The relational field ETYMOLOGY/GENEALOGY will effect a *recursive figure*, a term used by Douglas R. Hofstadter to designate a figure "whose ground can be seen as a figure in its own right," in contradistinction to a "cursively drawable figure . . . whose ground is merely an accidental by-product of the drawing act" (67). Two steps are involved: the first would foreground "the internal organization of the discipline," while the second would foreground "the borrowing from other disciplines." The metaphor of the recursive figure itself foregrounds the relational character of the etymological-genealogical problem, which would find an adequate solution in the construction of relevant *isomorphisms*. (An "isomorphism" results, as Hofstadter explains, when two complex structures can be mapped onto each other, in such a way that to each part of one structure there is a corresponding part in the other structure, where "corresponding" means that the two parts play similar roles in their respective structures," [49]).

First Entailment: The relational field ETYMOLOGY/GENEALOGY will be concerned with the structural and functional dimensions of vocabularies (their status and instrumentality as signifiers) *prior to*, and *in the process of*, appropriation.

Second Entailment: Significantly discrete "modes of appropriation" should be identified. Possible categories include:

- a) chronological-historical: sequence of significant meanings; status as authentic threshold, or transitory neologism;
- b) linguistic-philological: glosses, translations, derivations;
- c) authorial: individuals or collectives, movements, periods;
- d) disciplinary; discipline-internal or -external;
- e) strategy of intervention:
  - 1) linguistically (as neologism, borrowing, or translation),
  - 2) conceptually (as metaphor, analogy, model, etc.),
  - 3) discursively (as more general signifying practice);
- f) appropriational value: described as
  - 1) inflationary transformation,
  - 2) redundant assimilations,
  - 3) deflationary transformation.

I began this essay by citing the difficulties encountered by Raymond Williams as he studied the use and function of "keywords" in the domain of cultural practice. Obviously, defining such words is no easy task. As the situation of foreign terms in the VOCAT project illustrates, even *identifying* such words, not to mention defining them, becomes problematic. These problems are not only practical but, in significant ways, ideological as well. Before answering the question "What does this term mean?" we need to ask "Where shall we look, and how?"

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Here several alternatives can be discerned: for example, the interactionist model elaborated by Talcott Parsons, the theory of norms central to the work of Jurgen Habermas, or the materialist approach of Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser. For a critical assessment of these approaches. see Peter U. Hohendahl, "Beyond Reception Aesthetics."

<sup>2</sup>These and other functional attributes attaching to the category of "institution" are discussed in Ulrich Meier, "Soziologische Bemerkungen zur Institution Kunst."

<sup>3</sup>William Frawley, whose work is discussed elsewhere in this issue of *Critical Exchange*, maintains that entries structured in relational terms allow one to see "the internal organization of the discipline, the borrowing from other disciplines, and the open-endedness or potential expansion of the discipline" (23).

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**PROVISIONAL FORMAT AND CONTENTS FOR  
THE VOCAT *ENCYCLOPEDIA* DICTIONARY**

David Vander Meulen

As the variety among good dictionaries suggests, there is no one format that alone is appropriate to the effective presentation of lexicographical or encyclopedic information. The following outline is of one pattern that Conference participants thought would serve well. Included in the summary are notes on the presentation of information as well as discussion of some issues the Conference did not resolve.

**A. Entry Term.**

1. Each of these headings should appear in boldface, without an initial capital letter unless one is ordinarily required for the term. Boldface, signified in typescript or manuscript by a wavy underline, will be used for all words which receive their own entries the, for entry terms or headwords themselves, obviously, and also for references to entry terms in the course of other entries. Any boldface word not in the position of an entry term will therefore serve as a cross reference.

2. Words derived from a common root will receive separate entries, except when their meaning is identical. Thus, **deconstruct** and **deconstruction** would be entered separately. If the information for such terms overlaps significantly, the entry for one could be reduced by replacing some of the information with a cross-reference to the other entry. (For cases in which the meaning of two words from the same root is the same, see the discussion of "Variant Forms" below.)

## B. Part of Speech.

Given the focus of the project, there seems to be insufficient justification for including this traditional feature of dictionaries. In any event, the part of speech will usually be evident from the definition (a verb being defined by the word "to" + infinitive, for instance).

## C. Pronunciation.

1. Pronunciations should appear for all words not part of a generally educated person's vocabulary. (For well-known terms, there is little point in repeating information readily available in standard dictionaries.) For this specialized dictionary, that would include most foreign terms as well as English terms with possibly ambiguous pronunciation (such as *gynology*).

2. Because providing phonetic transcriptions is difficult, and because the outside experts invited to contribute should be expected to do only that at which they are proficient, the contributors of the entries will not be asked to supply pronunciation information. Instead, a linguist at the editorial headquarters will provide it when the central editorial staff deems it necessary.

3. The Conference did not conclude which method of indicating pronunciation is preferable for this dictionary. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) might provide a standard useful both to English and to non-English speakers, whereas a system found in a popular English-language dictionary (such as Merriam-Webster's *Third International*) would be easier for most English speakers to understand, though its guidance would in some ways be less helpful because its norms are sounds as pronounced in other words - ones whose pronunciation may vary from place to place.

## D. Variant Forms.

1. Other linguistic forms of the word which do not require separate treatment should be listed in the entry. These include foreign spellings of the term, provided that the meaning is the same.

2. The format for such references should be: the word "Also" + the alternate form (italicized) + the language in which the alternate form appears (in parentheses), if applicable. Thus, at the entry *diegesis*: Also *diégèse* (Fr.).

## E. Etymology.

1. In order to avoid duplication within an entry, etymologies ordinarily will not receive separate treatment. Instead, such information will appear elsewhere: all terms meriting an etymological explanation will be significant enough to have an essay, and each essay should include etymological information.

2. Etymologies, to appear within square brackets, will be included (relatively rarely) for:

- a. Neologisms (e.g. *gynology*)
- b. Transliterations of foreign terms

## F. Cross-references.

References to related information at other entries in the dictionary will be specified through use of the same set of categories employed in preparing information for the data base program: synonymy, taxonomy, part/whole, antonymy, grading, inception, domain and source. These categories go beyond traditional designations of synonyms and antonyms in order to make explicit a whole range of relationships. The clear delineation of these categories will be a major task of the early stages of the project. An idea of what these categories will look like can be obtained from the VOCAT Worksheet. Cross-references will be signaled by boldface words within a definition, which will also specify the relationship between both words. In some cases it may be appropriate to list certain cross references before the definition proper: e.g., "earlier called . . .," for terms superseded by the current entry; "also called . . .," for synonyms receiving separate treatment in the dictionary; "see essay at . . .," for important discussion in the essay appended to another term.

## G. Definition.

1. Contributors will be asked to provide information for the data base by filling out a questionnaire (see "Worksheet" below). They should then reformulate that information into a more conventional definition. The purpose of the questionnaire is two-fold:

a. It will provide contributors with the range of information necessary to construct an adequate definition (the art of defining being difficult to acquire, and not always a concomitant of expertise in the field being dealt with).

b. Separately entered into computers at the project headquarters, the information from the questionnaire will provide a means by which researchers can bring together particular aspects of definitions of separate terms and probe their relationships.

2. The definition proper should begin with taxonomy and progress through part/whole, antonymy, grading, and inception.

3. Terms which are defined elsewhere in the dictionary will be boldface in the definition and therefore serve as cross-references.

4. Only variant meanings of a term that are or have been widely used in literary criticism are to be included.

5. As a continuation of the previous point, it is also well to remember that the senses of a term may be subdivided: sense 1. 2a, 2b, 3, etc. Grouping closely related senses, as under sense 2 in the example, serves the reader by clarifying relationships in a way that an undivided sequential numbering might not, especially when a term has many senses.

6. Where several senses are currently in use, the most widely used sense of the term should be the primary definition and come first. Since the dictionary is an historical one, multiple senses should be arranged as nearly as possible in the reverse order of their development (the most recent second, the oldest last), with related senses (reflecting a particular line of development of the term) placed together (3a, 3b, etc.).

## H. Quotations.

1. Each definition should be supported by from two to four quotations which illustrate the use of the term in that sense.

2. The most concise quotations are the best. Ones more than a sentence long are acceptable but require justification.

3. The quotations selected should encompass as many of these features as possible:

a. Earliest twentieth-century use of the term in this sense.

b. Evidence of the use of the term over its chronological range. If the term has been used for five decades, for instance, the quotations should not all be from the 4fme decade.

c. Evidence from the best-known users of the term.

d. Illumination of the use or connotations of the term, rather than mere evidence of its existence.

4. The quotations may include statements or definitions from other dictionaries and encyclopedias, for such materials are part of the historical record that this dictionary seeks to provide.

5. Quotations not directly illustrating the term in question may, *rarely*, be included, provided they are enclosed within square brackets.

a. Quotations from before the twentieth century may be used if they are crucial to a full understanding of the term. Placing them within square brackets both signifies that they are outside the normal range of materials cited and reminds the reader not to expect full illustration before the twentieth century. But the earlier history of such terms should be presented in the encyclopedic essays.

b. Quotations which do not illustrate the term but which bear on matters closely related to it may on occasion be included, in brackets.

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b. Evidence of the use of the term over its chronological range. If the term has been used for five decades, for instance, the quotations should not all be from the 4<sup>th</sup> decade.

c. Evidence from the best-known users of the term.

d. Illumination of the use or connotations of the term, rather than mere evidence of its existence.

4. The quotations may include statements or definitions from other dictionaries and encyclopedias, for such materials are part of the historical record that this dictionary seeks to provide.

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a. Quotations from before the twentieth century may be used if they are crucial to a full understanding of the term. Placing them within square brackets both signifies that they are outside the normal range of materials cited and reminds the reader not to expect full illustration before the twentieth century. But the earlier history of such terms should be presented in the encyclopedic essays.

b. Quotations which do not illustrate the term but which bear on matters closely related to it may on occasion be included, in brackets.

6. The arrangement of quotations under a definition will be chronological, latest to earliest.

7. Because the quotations will tend to be longer than those used in a dictionary like the *OED*, and because the relatively small sampling of illustrations means that providing information about their subject is here a more important function than establishing a detailed chronology of use, the quotations will probably be printed as separate paragraph blocks, though in type smaller than the rest of the entry. Unlike in the *OED*, publication information, including the date, will be given after the quotation rather than at its start.

8. Despite the downplaying of chronology under the previous point, the designation of this work as an historical dictionary means that whenever possible the quotations should be taken from the work in which they were first published.

9. Each person supplying a quotation should submit with it a full record of its publishing information. In the case of a translation the publication date of the original should also be indicated.

#### I. Essay.

1. The entry for a major term will conclude with an essay on that term. Each essay should be between 1,000 and 4,000 words long and make an original contribution to knowledge. The discussion need not follow the order given and can also include other relevant subjects. Terms that are defined elsewhere in the dictionary should appear in boldface the first time they are cited in the essay. Each essay should conclude with a list of important works on the subject. The Conference did not resolve the focus of such a list, nor did it agree on the format.

2. Each essay should discuss the following matters:

- a. The terms's etymology, particularly the relevance of that history to the term's use in criticism and theory.
- b. History of the term in its varied functions for critics.

c. Special reference to major uses of the term before the twentieth century.

d. Synonyms, including terminology the current word replaces.

e. Basic agreements on the term by twentieth-century critics.

f. Conflicting twentieth-century uses of the term, and reasons for the disagreement.

g. Unresolved issues among critics over the use of the term (briefly, in one paragraph).

h. Ways in which this term has become a "cluster" term, or ways in which other terms have come to be used in conjunction with this one.

i. The use of terms of literary criticism in non-literary disciplines. As the etymological discussion shows how the word has come to a literary context, so this discussion shows how it has moved on to other applications.

An entry might therefore look something like this:

**entry term** [pronunc.]  
 Also **variant** [etymology]  
 cross-references

1 Sense 1 definition.

Quotation 1

Quotation 2

2 Sense 2 definition

Quotation 1

Quotation 2

Essay

## APPENDIX

## The VOCAT Procedures for the Definition of Terms

Because the encyclopedic dictionary will be developed from a data base, planned as a reference source in itself, VOCAT contributors will be asked to submit their materials in two formats. One is the conventional paragraph form of a definition for inclusion in the printed dictionary. The other is a "worksheet" designed to facilitate entering the information into the data base contained in the paragraph definition. In our instructions to contributors, we ask that they fill out the worksheet before they attempt to write the paragraph definition. The worksheet is in the form of a questionnaire which asks for specific kinds of information which can then be reworked into the various sections of the entry. Some of the questions designate semantic relationships between the term being defined and other terms which might themselves become entries. Making these relationships explicit produces richer definitions, while considering these categories systematically will help greatly in the task of cross-indexing. A list of the categories and questions follows. Not every category will be applicable to the definition of every term.

**TERM:**

**ETYMOLOGY:** What is the etymology of this term?

**SYNONYMY.** Are there other terms which are substitutable for this term?

**TAXONOMY.** Does this term have a class membership? What kind of thing-- object, activity, process--does the term entail?

**PART/WHOLE:** Does the term designate some thing, activity, or process that presupposes some larger thing, activity, or process of which it is a part?

**ANTONYMY.** Antonyms begin where substitutability ends, with oppositions ranging from "nearly the same as . . . but . . ." through "sometimes confused with" to outright antithesis. Antonymy should be reserved for strongly opposed terms, and other types of entailment should be specified by another category.

**GRADING:** Most terms can be located in some sort of sequence, whether of time, of position, of scope or of magnitude, of evolution or transformation. For example, "Seme, sememe, lexeme, classeme, etc." What, if any, is the sequential or serial relationship of the term being defined to other terms in the same vocabulary?

**INCEPTION:** What sequence or series may be said to begin with this term?

**DOMAIN.** In what critical area, in what family of theoretical or critical terms or in what discourse does this term have its particular status? (Note: For the purpose of consistency, the editors will supply to the Cluster Editors and all other contributors a list of the terms that designate domains.)

**SOURCE:** Where did this sense of the term originate? Who first used it in his sense?

**HISTORY:** What is the history of this term in theory and criticism (and in their disciplines if it is a borrowing)? Try to indicate significant shifts in the meaning of the term. Does the term play a role in any historical trends, schools or movements? What theorists use the term in particularly important ways?

**EXPORTATION:** In what way has the term been used in non-literary disciplines? How does the use of this term in other disciplines retain or lose its literary connotations?

After contributors have researched the answers to the questions listed above, we ask them to reformulate their answers into paragraphs arranged according to the following scheme. A specific number of words will be allotted to each section of the definition.

**HEADING:** term, pronunciation (if necessary) etymology (if appropriate), synonym.

**DEFINITION:** taxonomy, part/whole, antonymy, grading, inception.

**CITATIONS**

**HISTORY OF THE TERM:** domain, source, history.

**NONLITERARY USE:** exportation.

In instances wherein a term must be defined in multiple senses, we ask that the most current and widely used sense of the term be defined first. Then, for other senses of term, we ask that the same definitional scheme be followed, leaving out the categories that would be either repetitious (e.g. etymology) or irrelevant. Later senses of the term are given in reverse chronological order, latest to earliest. We also ask that appropriate citations with brief bibliographic references (Appendix A) be given for each sense of the term defined.

In instances of widely-used terms whose history is complex and controversial, we will invite an expert to write an essay. When the information in the essay duplicates information in the definitions, the editors will decide which repetition should be deleted. As a matter of procedure, we will ask that the information be included in both the definition and the essay. Essayists will be asked to address the following considerations:

1. The term's etymology, particularly the relevance of that history to the term's use in criticism and theory.
2. History of the term in its varied functions for critics.

3. Special reference to major uses of the term before the twentieth century.
4. Synonyms--including terminology the current word replaces.
5. If any, basic agreements by twentieth-century critics on usage of the term.
6. Conflicting twentieth-century uses and reasons for the disagreements.
7. Unresolved issues among critics over the use of the term (briefly, in one paragraph).
8. Ways in which other terms have come to be used in conjunction with this one.
9. Ways in which the term's literary context has been shaped by its application in other disciplines.
10. Important works on the subject.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE  
VOCAT ENCYCLOPEDIA DICTIONARY

David Nordloh

Identifying the sources of critical information cited in the *Encyclopedic Dictionary* is likely to be the least exciting of the many components required by the project. But an accurate record of the bibliographical underpinnings of the discussions of terms - particularly when those discussions have involved serious controversy - can be the most permanently useful aspect of the published work. The terms themselves will continue to change as over time they are used in sometimes broader, sometimes more specialized ways; they may take on further nuance and shed associations, become sacred in some schools of thought, pejorative in others. The basic documents in which the discussion and interpretation of terms were crucially enunciated, however, will not change, and they will retain historical importance for students of criticism even beyond the specific context of their application in the *Encyclopedic Dictionary*. Thus intelligent selection assuring that it will be fully useful to its readers. Asserting the fundamental importance of bibliographical completeness and accuracy is easy enough. Much more difficult are the tasks of defining a format for bibliographical information in the work, specifying the kinds of information which should be cited, and establishing a system for assuring accuracy.

FORMAT

Taking into account both the needs of their proposed audience and efficiency of design, the editors must consider various alternatives for actually citing individual works. As a general rule, identification of specific quotations or specialized sources of information will entail some form of brief citation (the system recently adopted by the MLA

from the social sciences, and described in recent MLA publications, would be the most obvious and flexible choice). That system, providing author and page number, or author, short title, and page number, depends for its usefulness, in turn, on the presence of a master list of sources supplying the rest of the required detail. Where should such a list be located in the *Encyclopedic Dictionary*, and how comprehensive and/or categorized should it be?

One alternative is to conclude individual entries with appropriate and complete bibliographical references, as a single alphabetical list perhaps, or as several lists bearing informative categorical headings. The special advantage of this arrangement is one which any user of a general encyclopedia can appreciate: it supplies a convenient single source of essential information for further exploration of the topic treated in the entry. The possible disadvantage of this system, however, is the potential for constant repetition of the citation of certain crucial documents in great numbers of entries. The *Encyclopedic Dictionary* is after all different from a general encyclopedia in dealing with a much narrower range of information and thus of sources. To provide a full citation of the same title in one or two lists doesn't much expand the total bulk of words in a reference work; but to provide that same citation forty or fifty times, and to treat thirty or forty essential items at such an order of repetition, introduces a serious problem of space which an already bulky work can hardly afford to ignore.

Another alternative - and one which would seem especially sensible for a specialized reference work of the kind being proposed - is to have a single master list of bibliographical citations, arranged strictly alphabetically and placed at the end of the work. In that way, obviously, items cited repeatedly in entries would be efficiently represented by a single full record. That method in turn would save space. It would still permit short-entry citations of quotation and of crucial information within essays. (Bibliographical entries could even be accompanied by cross-references to the most important terms making reference to the works.) It would even permit the inclusion of selected bibliographies at the conclusion of essays, though those bibliographies would now consist of short entries rather than full records.

But this method too has its disadvantages. First, if - as editorial discussions have at various times suggested - the work is envisioned as requiring several volumes, and if those volumes are published in

sequence over a period of several years, a single list in the final volume will render the earlier volumes temporarily useless. Readers will be required to wait several years to obtain the full bibliographical record which will enable them to verify discussions and draw upon selected bibliographies. This limitation could be circumvented by the provision of a master bibliographical list for each volume, recording only the items actually cited therein. This arrangement would certainly offer greater convenience to the user both immediately and finally, since identifying any single work would entail looking only to the end of that volume, not going to the shelves to search through the final one. But that convenience would also be accomplished at the cost of greater expense, since each volume would now contain an extensive section of bibliography.

At this early stage of development of the project, only one option can safely be dropped: supplying full citations in individual essays for each item. That method is just too wasteful of time and space. The other alternatives - and alternatives within alternatives - are attractive as well as limiting in the ways I've described. Choice from among them demands consideration of other issues involved in the full definition of the project: its intended (as opposed to its incidental) audience, its general size, number of volumes proposed, the timetable for individual volumes and for the series as a whole. My own preference - based on concern for flexibility, utility, and those issues of bulk of words which translate into typesetting and printing costs - would be a single comprehensive master list, together with short-entry citations within essays and selected bibliographies of short-entry citations following essays.

#### KINDS OF INFORMATION

Monographs, collected essays, essays in journals, notes, speeches, comments in private letters, even telephone conversations and second-hand reports are all sources of information potentially useful to the *Encyclopedic Dictionary*. As actual sources, however, they ought to be considered in a kind of hierarchy of value and authority. The more accessible and authoritative a source is, the more appropriate it is for use here. The authority of the discussion of critical vocabulary for which the *Encyclopedic Dictionary* is aiming depends upon a very high level of accuracy in the record of language. We are, after all, involved in the study of critical vocabulary; the

meaning of that critical vocabulary, especially in the atmosphere of scholarly discussion which presently exists, depends fundamentally on the words used to define it. To invite imprecise sources of language as support for that discussion defeats the very idea.

In some few, rare instances such ephemeral sources as private conversations might be employed - but then only when one reporter's account of them is verified by another. The basic principle for choice of sources ought to be the extent to which they verify their authority - that is, their attribution to the person who is their author. In these terms, a critic's own collection or selection of his/her work or a monograph generally ranks highest; these constitute the words of that person seen into print by that person. That form also has the advantage of greater general availability to interested readers. Next would come a responsible collection by some other person. Then the individual essay in a scholarly journal.

Insofar as possible, citation in the *Encyclopedic Dictionary* ought to be limited to the kinds of materials just identified, and to avoid the more ephemeral and peripheral as beyond its interest. No doubt authors of individual entries will have intriguing apocrypha which they'll urge is essential. I don't think such claims should be taken very seriously: if a term really is valuable in critical discussion, it will be available in appropriate ways within the authoritative printed forms of that discussion.

There do remain, however, some more specialized questions of authority and accessibility, involving texts in language other than English. Given my prejudice in favor of the most accurate context of discussion, I'd encourage citing the foreign-language discussion in its original language, with English translation following it. Further, I'd avoid any systematic preference for an American or an English edition of a work, and suggest instead emphasizing citation of the authoritative published form, wherever and in whatever language that occurred. Finally, I'd avoid setting a policy concerning citation of the first edition of a work or a later edition, first journal publication or collection into a volume as the preferred authority. Authors of individual entries ought to be aware of the existence of multiple forms of works, and ought to incorporate that information as it is appropriate; after all, if an essay exists in two forms, and the difference between those forms bears on the term under discussion, then that very fact ought to become a part of the intellectual substance.

## ASSURING ACCURACY

The intention of the project editors to use computer technology as widely and deeply as possible in the preparation of the *Encyclopedic Dictionary* means that certain old-fashioned concerns about maintaining accuracy of bibliographical citation ought to be mostly irrelevant. After all, if an entry is stored in a computer file, and if that file constitutes the basic form of the material as it is revised and rechecked and even set in type, then the accuracy of the original detail can be maintained. This rosily optimistic description of the situation, however, ought to be accepted with only the greatest caution. It's very likely that the computer won't alter anything while you're not looking; but anyone working on that file can easily make changes of important kinds without being aware of them. All of which means that the structure of collecting and maintaining information in the project should never assume that information can be made right once and then forgotten. Rather, the project should establish a carefully defined system of checks to assure that the information initially submitted is accurate and that what is finally produced is equally accurate, and that it is known to be so from having been repeatedly re-examined and reverified.

In achieving this end the computer and the photocopy machine can join forces. The guidelines for contributors should specify that every citation, every quotation, be accompanied by a photocopy of the material in question, with the full bibliographical information about the material supplied on a form which the project provides. The availability of the photocopy will enable the central project staff to review the material for accuracy of both quotation and context. The bibliographical citation which the author provides can be cross-checked against an online bibliographical database, against printed reference works, and against the project's bibliographical master file, in which individual works cited may already be recorded as the result of their use in other essays. The project might even consider using this bibliographical database to maintain a full list of cross-references to entries in which items are cited, to verify the consistency of repeated discussions and to examine the representativeness of discussions.

Even after this initial stage of verification of cited material and the bibliographical information accompanying it, the project ought to

define stages of reverification of the material. One such stage should occur, sensibly, after all the revisory procedures are complete and before the individual entries are assembled into the final order of the volume or the entire work. That verification should involve checking quotation and bibliographical entry *by eye* against the photocopies and against one of the external sources of bibliographical information. Another stage should take place after the material has been typeset, even if that typesetting is electronically produced from the same electronic files checked earlier.

#### PRINCIPLES AND PROCESS

As important as the many considerations I've introduced here - and I've hardly introduced all of them - is the careful articulation of the project's decisions about them, down to the most trivial level of detail. Deciding in general terms how to deal with bibliographical and other questions is the tough first step. Identifying the working policy in such a way that every participant in the project understands what that policy requires by way of actual production is the second. Those two steps make both easier and more effective the many steps which follow, writing and revising and checking entries and seeing them into print. As with bibliographical questions alone, this process of preparation is not exciting. But it is essential. And it will have value far beyond the effort that went into it.

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