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- W3 *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*. Merriam. 1961.
- WCD6 *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*. 6th Ed. Merriam. 1949.
- WCD7 *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*. Merriam. 1963.
- WCD8 *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*. 8th Ed. Merriam-Webster. 1973.
- WCD9 *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. Merriam-Webster. 1983.
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## The Treatment of Vulgar Words in Major English Dictionaries (2)<sup>1)</sup>

HIROAKI UCHIDA

### 3. Dictionaries in the U.S.

Now let us examine Table 1 horizontally and see how each dictionary in the U.S. has treated these vulgar terms in its editorial history.

*ACD* is the second oldest dictionary of those listed in Table 1. It was first published by Random House in 1947, and has never really been fully revised up to the present. Therefore one may instantly doubt whether it can be called a *modern* dictionary. But although not fully revised, *ACD* had constantly been reprinted with minor revisions until the 1970s, and certainly had once been "the latest record of current usage made by any dictionary staff since World War II" as critics of that time had commented. At the time of its appearance, *W<sub>2</sub>* was already out of date for its prewar publication, and that *ACD* was born to be the first postwar *modern* dictionary was not an exaggeration. Telling the cruel fact that Random House has been "putting its lexicographical energies into" *RHD* and *RHC* since their publication and not into *ACD* anymore, and pointing to its weakened authority/out-of-date contents as compared to his theory "the estimated life of a college dictionary today is about ten or at most fifteen years", Kister also evaluates its semipermanent usefulness and informativeness which lead to its long-lasting popularity (Kister 1977: 63).

However, in respect to the treatment of vulgar words, *ACD* was not as innovative as it should have been. As is clear from Table 1, almost all of the vulgar words referring to sex and excretion are omitted. The prejudiced attitude toward them are most strikingly expressed in "Usage Levels and Dialect Distribution" written by Charles C. Fries in the explanatory pages of *ACD* as follows:

Some words and expressions occur primarily in the language of those without much conventional education. These expressions are often called "illiterate" or "vulgar English," and are considered "incorrect." As a matter of fact, many of these expressions are survivals from an older period of the language and are "incorrect" only in the sense that they do not occur in the usage of standard English — the practice of the socially accepted, those who are carrying on the important affairs of English-speaking people. Much of the language spoken by the uneducated is the same as that of the polite conversation of cultivated people and also duplicates the expressions of formal literacy discourse. The usage labels in a dictionary attempt to mark only those expressions that are peculiar to a particular type or dialect of English (xxv).

It is very difficult to understand the meaning of this inconsistent passage without asking the following questions. First, is "vulgar English" the same as "illiterate"? If "many of these expressions" were "survivals from an older period of time," they should often have appeared in classic literature, which is an actual fact. Then how can they be called "illiterate"? Secondly, what is the meaning of "those carrying on the important affairs of English-speaking people"? And finally, are the marked expressions on the dictionary really peculiar to "a particular type of English," or English of "the uneducated"? An outdated theory like this would not be supported by many now, but it was the time when the war had ended, and this kind of remark would have caused less social attack than it would now. In any case, *ACD* had never been progressive or instructive as far as slang and vulgar words were concerned, which is about all to be said about the historical significance of this dictionary from the viewpoint of this study.

*AHD* is generally regarded as the first American dictionary to record the worst-reputed four-letter word in the history; *fuck*. Béjoint points this rather surprisingly: "The first American dictionary ever to record the word *fuck* was — surprisingly enough, considering the prescriptive stance of the compilers — *AHD* (except for the Texan edition), published in 1969" (Béjoint 1994: 127).<sup>2</sup> However, it was not surprising at all, for one of the editors Norman Hoss states their policy clearly in explaining the 'Vul-

gar' label in the Guide to the Dictionary as follows:

The label *Vulgar* warns of social taboo attached to a word. A straightforward denotative vulgar sense of a word is distinguished from a slang sense. The label *Vulgar* therefore appears both alone and as *Vulgar Slang*; for example **snot** is labeled *Vulgar*, **snotty**, *Vulgar Slang*. No word is omitted merely because of taboo (xlvi).

Perhaps the editors of *AHD* were willing to pick a square fight with *WNW*, whose stance as we will see later was then completely opposite to theirs. At least *AHD* was never so 'prescriptive' on the treatment of vulgar words, for their positive stance on it was as clear as that of *PED*, to be examined in the part (3) of this study.

When the second edition of *AHD* was released in 1982 as *2nd college edition*, their policy toward the former *Vulgar* words had changed, perhaps in a little more indirect and passive direction owing to its shift from a standard to a college edition.<sup>3</sup> Two of the compounds, *bullshit* and *son of a bitch* are dropped from its entry. What is more, they set up the three-stage usage labels to explain the taboo words more clearly as follows:

*Vulgar*. The label *Vulgar* warns of social taboos attached to a word; the label may appear alone or in combination as *Vulgar Slang*.

*Obscene*. A term that is considered to violate accepted standards of decency is labeled *Obscene*.

*Offensive*. This label is reserved for terms such as racial slurs that are not only insulting and derogatory, but a discredit to the user as well.

(Guide to the Dictionary: 49)

And how these three labels classified the terms listed in table 1 is shown below in Table 3. It is easy to see at one glance, for most of the terms are concentrated in the *Vulgar* (or *Vulgar Slang*) column. There are only three terms from Table 1 with *Obscene* label, three of the Big Six, which probably means that these are the three and only words in *AHD*<sub>2</sub> with this label. It is a sheer mystery why only  *jerk off* got the *Offensive Slang* label along with other racial slurs like *Polack* or *Jap*, or how *cock* escaped from the *Vulgar* or *Obscene* label and just got *Slang*. Anyway, the labeling in *AHD*<sub>2</sub> was significant in separating vulgar words from racial

<i>Vulgar</i>	fart ● ass ○ tit ● turd ● bugger ●
+ <i>Slang</i>	piss ● fart ○ screw ● pussy ●○ dick ● prick ●○ balls ● ass ○ crap ●○ turd ○
<i>Obscene</i>	fuck ●○ cunt ●○ shit ●○
<i>Offensive</i>	jerk off ●
<i>Slang</i>	cock ● queer ● bitch ●○ balls ○ bastard ○ bugger ○ faggot ○

● = literal ○ = figurative

Table 3 Classification of the terms by the usage labels in *AHD*<sub>2</sub>.

slurs, which *AHD* had failed to do, but not so much in breaking down vulgar words into smaller groups.

When it comes to *AHD*<sub>3</sub>, however, a slight modification can be seen. The three labels and the definition for each have not been changed, and their classification of the terms are basically the same, but *jerk off* became a member of *Vulgar Slang*, no longer *Offensive*. Moreover, many of the compounds not listed in *AHD*<sub>2</sub> have been added to *AHD*<sub>3</sub>, gaining the members of the *Obscene* with *motherfucker*, *cocksucker* and *bullshit*. *Asshole* has got the *Vulgar* label, along with other newly added terms not on Table 1 like *blowjob* and *scumbag*. Consequently, the labeling classification in *AHD*<sub>3</sub> became much more arranged, up-to-date and easier to understand.

*RHD* was first published by Random House in 1966, shortly followed by the publication of the college edition (*RHC*) in 1968. *RHD* was born to replace *ACD*, which had already been out-of-date in the 1960s, and to be the most reliable, comprehensive, useful and current dictionary to live beyond the turbulent 1960s, and it has succeeded in acquiring its reputation in spite of its smaller-scale contents (under 300,000 entries) as compared to the then-leading unabridged dictionaries like *W*<sub>3</sub> or *Funk and Wagnalls*. However, as regards to taboo words, it was not as reliable or current as it could have been. On the contrary, what they decided to do about the treatment of these words was just simply to ignore the whole thing, as if none of these *difficult* words had ever existed. As a matter of

course, they did not mention it in the foreword, nor did they add any explanation on the usage labels. From Table 1, you will see that many of the terms are actually listed in *RHD*, including three of the Big Six. But all of them are plainly defined in a dry way; e.g. *shit* as a noun is defined as '1. feces. 2. an act of defecation. 3. pretense, exaggeration, lies, or nonsense' and *prick* just as 'penis.' In addition, most of the terms are labeled '*Slang (Vulgar)*' or plainly '*Slang*,' but there is no explanation on what these labels mean anywhere in the dictionary. So the foreign learners of English using this dictionary would never know the social meaning attached to these terms.

Moreover, what is clearly shown in Table 1 is the exclusion of a number of taboo words from *RHC* that were present in *RHD*. Surely the editors felt unnecessary to include certain strong vulgar terms in the college edition which was purely made for educational purpose. The fact that of the Big Six only *piss* is listed is interesting enough, but what is more curious is the omission of *bullshit*, which is quite convincing from the absence of *shit*, its root word, as well, but not from the presence of *bull*, its derivative, or rather its abbreviation, referring to the same 'exaggerations; lies; nonsense.' *Crap* is also listed, but only as its figurative meaning that is similar to *bullshit*, and not its literal. *Dick* and *prick*, the two most used slang referring to male sex organs, are listed in *RHD*, whereas *pussy* and *twat*, those of the female, are not, which is another suggestive point as regards the sexual asymmetry. But even *dick* and *prick* are excluded from *RHC*.

This passive attitude toward taboo words naturally could not survive in the 1980s, for twenty years later when the second edition of *RHD* was released, all the words on Table 1 completely assembled in the dictionary. They have decided to keep up with, or even ahead of, the time. Probably *RHD*<sub>2</sub> is the first general dictionary to define the figurative usage of *jerk-off* as 'a stupid, bumbling, foolish or lazy person; jerk.' For their grand change of attitudes, the editors Thomas S. Creswell and Virginia McDavid implicate it in "Usage: Change and Variation," one of the essays preceding the main section of *RHD*<sub>2</sub>:

Certain words and expressions are still considered by many to be highly improper in polite society or in sexually mixed groups. Such

expressions have commonly been characterized as **taboo**. Taboo, like other characteristics of language, is a matter of degree. Some expressions are more taboo than others. The commonly designated four-letter words are still strongly taboo in more formal circumstances, but the strength of the taboo has diminished in recent decades. . . . Taboo expressions are often slang or are strongly informal in tone (xxiii).

Furthermore, adopting the labeling of *AHD*, *RHD*<sub>2</sub> has set up three usage labels as follows:

*Vulgar*. Vulgar terms are considered inappropriate in many circumstances because of their association with a taboo subject. Major taboo subjects in English-speaking cultures are sex and excretion and the parts of the body associated with these functions.

*Disparaging*. This label indicates that a term is used with disparaging intent, as to belittle a particular racial, religious, or social group.

*Offensive*. This label indicates that the term so labeled is likely to be perceived as offensive by a listener or reader, whether or not any offense was intended (xxxiii).

Apparently, the label *Vulgar* should refer to the literal meaning of the vulgar terms, whereas *Offensive* to the figurative. But things are not that simple. The classification is shown in Table 4 below. The greater part of the terms are labeled *Vulgar* (or *Vulgar Slang*) for their literal meanings, and just *Slang* for figurative. Also generally for strong figurative terms of abuse, like *prick*, *motherfucker* and *cocksucker*, *Vulgar* label is given, but not always, as *asshole* and *bugger* are just labeled *Slang*. Of the Big Six, only the

<i>Vulgar</i> (+ <i>Slang</i> )	fuck ● cunt ● cock ● shit ● piss ● fart ● motherfucker ○ cocksucker ●○ bullshit ○ asshole ● jerk off ● screw ● pussy ●○ twat ● dick ● prick ●○ tit ● ass ● balls ●○ crap ● turd ●○ bugger ● ( <i>often Vulgar</i> )
<i>Disparaging</i>	cunt ○ faggot ● queer ●
<i>Offensive</i>	cunt ○ faggot ● queer ●
<i>Slang</i>	fuck ○ shit ○ piss ○ asshole ○ ass ○ crap ○ ( <i>Sometimes</i> <i>Vulgar</i> ) bitch ●○ bastard ○ bugger ○ bloody ○

Table 4 Classification of the terms by usage labels in *RHD*<sub>2</sub>.

figurative of *cunt*, also a term of abuse, has been labeled *Disparaging and Offensive*. If *cunt* is *offensive*, then why not *motherfucker* or *cocksucker*? Besides, how can it be *disparaging* when it does hardly 'belittle a particular racial, religious or social group'? *RHD*<sub>2</sub> is certainly advanced in treating *faggot* and *queer*, two most contemptuous terms for homosexuals as *disparaging*, in the time when the power and rights of gay people have increasingly been accepted, but the labeling classification of this edition should be reexamined on other points.

*W*<sub>2</sub> is the oldest dictionary listed in Table 1, which was first published in 1934. Some may not want to admit a dictionary published before the war to be a 'modern' dictionary. But considering the fact that it had not been revised until 1961, almost thirty years later, and that it had been the leading unabridged dictionary of the 1940s and the 1950s, we can claim that *W*<sub>2</sub> could have been the pioneer of the modern dictionaries from the viewpoint of this study. Unfortunately, most of the strong vulgar words are omitted here, and even the ones that barely managed to stay on the list are defined with full modesty. For example, *arse*, under British spelling, is defined as 'The buttocks or posteriors; rump; hence, hind or rear end; tail, as of a cart,' not forgetting the '*Now vulgar*' mark at the end. Even *bitch* could not get away with '*Vulgar*,' and *bloody* has a kind explanation attached: 'Not in polite use, and regarded in England as a gross vulgarity.' For *crap*, there is an incomprehensible '*Archaic & Dial* (ectal)' mark, and it is defined as follows: 'a. Residue from rendered fat; greaves. b. Sediment or dregs of beer or ale.' And lastly, here is the strangest definition of *twat*; 'Some part of a nun's garb,' which neither Farmer, Partridge, Wentworth & Flexner nor any other slang lexicographers made clear of.<sup>4)</sup>

These were all they could do in the 1930s. And *W*<sub>2</sub> had not been altered until the beginning of the 1960s, keeping the same old face for almost thirty years. Thus, it is rather difficult to say that *W*<sub>2</sub> was the first modern dictionary to reconsider the basic principle of lexicography, as far as vulgar words were concerned. *W*<sub>2</sub> does not clarify its position regarding the treatment of difficult words, but it does explain how it deals with slang, dialect and colloquialisms, and probably tries to connote its future possibility of

including certain terms as yet undefined as follows:

The entry, definition, and proper classification of selected nonstandard and substandard English words have been greatly extended in the New Edition. Both Samuel Johnson and Noah Webster conceived it to be a duty of the dictionary editor to maintain the purity of the standard language. However, with the growth in literacy of the past century, and the increase, in fiction and drama, in radio and motion picture, of the use of dialect, slang and colloquial speech, it has become necessary for a general dictionary to record and interpret the vocabularies of geographical and occupational dialects, and of the livelier levels of the speech of the educated. The shifting status of many expressions in slang and colloquial speech has made it necessary to review and rejudge the status and validity of all such terms, whether newly collected or contained in former editions of this dictionary. Slang terms and slang meanings of standard words have been entered only when there is evidence that the slang term has been in use for a considerable length of time, and when it has been used in printed work which is likely to continue being read (Introduction to *W*<sub>2</sub>: xi).

When G. and C. Merriam published the third edition of *Webster's International* in 1961, things were so much different from the time when the second edition had first appeared, which is evident in Table 1. All the words here were listed in *W*<sub>3</sub> except for four, that are marked with asterisks. They had certainly changed their whole policy of not treating the most popular "slang terms" that "has been in use for a considerable length of time" and are the "liveliest levels of the speech," and decided to have their dictionary live up to its name, 'The Unabridged,' which made *W*<sub>3</sub> the first American dictionary ever published to record two of the most notorious terms in human anatomy; *cunt* and *cock*. The work by Barber (1963) is devoted to list up all the slang terms labeled differently in *W*<sub>2</sub> and *W*<sub>3</sub>, but he does not mention this change "which have occurred in Merriam-Webster editorial policy between 1934 and 1961" on vulgar terms (Barber 1963: 105). He gives *ass kisser*, *cock sucker*, *crook of shit*, *no shit* and other vulgar terms in his appendix, some of the omissions *W*<sub>3</sub> made that hopefully it would include in its addenda in the future. Indeed, most of them are already included in the 1976 edition, so there should have been another separate table for the terms labeled '*Vulgar*' to make his work

more complete. The asterisked words, the most popular four-letter word in English and three strongest and most popular derogatory epithets in compounds, did not appear in its first printing, but later did in the addenda section of the fourth printing in 1976. It is difficult to understand why capable scholars like Wilson, Béjoint and Hughes failed to examine this addenda section and made false claims like '*Webster III* (1961) has *shit*, but not *fuck*' (Wilson 1987: 29), '*Fuck* is still not listed in *W*<sub>3</sub>' (Béjoint 1994: 126), or 'the Third edition of *Webster* . . . excluded *fuck* and *cunt*' (Hughes 1991: 200). Perhaps it was a little hard to recognize the presence of the addenda in the pages preceding, not following, the main section, or there must be no particular reason for not counting it as a part of the dictionary. *W*<sub>3</sub> is probably not due to be revised for another ten years or so, and the addenda section will continue to add more pages as it goes through new printings. Therefore it should be a treasury for new lexica, and we cannot ignore it as just a surplus to the main section.

*Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* was first published by Merriam-Webster in 1898 and has gone through nine revisions, in 1910, 1916, 1931, 1936, 1949, 1963, 1973, 1983, and 1993 respectively. The newest edition, *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, tenth edition*, which is not listed in Table 1, is out of '*New*' from the title. This '*New*' was first put on the seventh edition, the first abridgment of *W*<sub>3</sub>. In Table 1, three *new WCDs* are listed, each with exactly ten years of interval, making it easier to see the transition of this dictionary over the three decades. Before *WNCD*<sub>7</sub>, the editors' policy toward the treatment of vulgar words were basically unchanged and conservative; in other words they ignored the words. In the preface to *WCD*<sub>5</sub>, abridged from *W*<sub>2</sub>, there is an explanatory note stating their way of not treating most of the dialectal terms, colloquialisms, and slang:

Many words formerly regarded as nonstandard or substandard have become accepted in good usage; and such changes in status are reflected by the inclusion in the present work of a number of words of this kind. The size and scope of the COLLEGIATE have always precluded, however, the inclusion of all save the most important and

necessary Dialectal, Colloquial, and Slang terms; and in this particular the *Fifth Edition* follows the practice of its predecessors (iv).

It is not surprising that a dictionary with a policy above in a time before the war should put the *Vulgar* label on *bitch*, or define no figurative usage, as an intensive, of *bloody* at all. It was all that the dictionary of this size with a reputation could do in the 1930s in America. And *WCD*<sub>6</sub> had approximately followed suit, even though it was published after the war.

The sign of change did not appear even in *WNCD*<sub>7</sub>, failing to live up to its name, *New Collegiate*. No particular comment on the subject can be seen in the preface or elsewhere, and most of the terms are still not listed. Of course no longer *Vulgar* label attaches to *bitch*, nor the figurative usage of *bloody* omitted. But comparing its column with that of *W*<sub>3</sub> in Table 1, it is more than obvious to see what kind of words had been mainly *abridged* in the largest abridgment of *Webster's New International*. Moreover, a number of etymological inconsistencies are noticeable. Although *bullshit*, *piss* and *fuck* are not listed, their derivatives *bull*, *pissoir* and *snafu* are. The last one, *snafu*, is an abbreviation of *situation normal all fucked up*, a popular phrase among the U.S. armed forces. But in *WNCD*<sub>7</sub>, it is defined as 'situation normal all *fouled* up (italics mine),' that had been made up as "an antecedent which was readily available" (Sagarin 1962: 141).

Therefore we had to wait until the eighth edition of *WCD* came out for the change. There, in *WNCD*<sub>8</sub>, most of the terms appeared in the *Collegiate* series for the first time. Again, there is no particular explanation on why they had changed their policy, no different from other Webster dictionaries. Furthermore, several degrees of usage notes are attached to the definitions, classifying the terms into three categories as in Table 5 below. But it is difficult to see the general rules, or how much difference there is between the adverbs 'usually,' 'often' and 'sometimes'.

In *WNCD*<sub>9</sub>, however, the classification is much more in order, and easier to see its intention. As is clear from Table 6, another usage note, *usually considered obscene*, is provided, referring to the four strongest taboo words still at present: *fuck*, *cunt*, *motherfucker* and *cocksucker*. Maybe some of the terms with *usually considered vulgar* note should come down to *often considered vulgar*, but otherwise *ass* and *ball* are indeed growing weaker in

usually considered vulgar	fuck ●○ cunt ●○ cock ● shit ●○ fart ● bullshit ○ jerk off ● screw ● pussy ●○ twat ● dick ● prick ● crap ● ass ○
often considered vulgar	ass ● balls ●○
sometimes considered vulgar	piss ● S.O.B. ●○ crap ○ turd ● bloody ○

Table 5 Classification of the terms by the usage notes in *WNCD*<sub>8</sub>.

usually considered obscene	fuck ● cunt ●○ motherfucker ○ cocksucker ●○
usually considered vulgar	fuck ○ cock ● shit ●○ fart ●○ jerk off ● bullshit ○ asshole ●○ screw ● pussy ●○ twat ● dick ● prick ●○ ass ○ tit ● turd ○
often considered vulgar	ass ●○ ball ●○
sometimes considered vulgar	piss ●○ S.O.B. ●○ crap ○ turd ● bloody ○

Table 6 Classification of the terms by the usage notes in *WNCD*<sub>9</sub>.

their vulgar sense as compared to other terms, and still less *piss*, *bloody* and others with *sometimes considered vulgar* note. The distinction between *often* and *sometimes* may not be necessary, but who knows, in *WNCD*<sub>11</sub>, none of the words may *usually* be considered vulgar.

*WNW* was first published in 1957 as a college dictionary, and for the educational concern of this period, it was natural that most of the strong vulgar words were omitted from its entry. And its basic policy had been maintained to the second edition. In the foreword to *WNW*<sub>2</sub> written by the Editor in Chief David R. Guralnik, there is a famous declaration regarding to the policy it takes toward vulgar words using a whole paragraph, which will be cited below:

The absence from this dictionary of a handful of old, well-known vulgate terms for sexual and excretory organs and functions is not due to a lack of citations for these words from current literature. On the contrary, the profusion of such citations in recent years would suggest that the terms in question are so well known as to require no explana-

tion. The decision to eliminate them as part of the extensive culling process that is the inevitable task of lexicographer was made on the practical grounds that there is still objection in many quarters to the appearance of these terms in print and that to risk keeping this dictionary out of hands of some students by introducing several terms that require little if any elucidation would be unwise. In a similar vein, it was decided in the selection process that this dictionary could easily dispense with those true obscenities, the terms of racial and ethnic opprobrium, that are, in any case, encountered with diminishing frequency these days (Foreword to *WNW*<sub>2</sub>: viii).

Béjoint attacks this as “embarrassed explanations from lexicographers caught between their desire to be descriptive and the impossibility of disregarding powerful social forces,” but still speaks for Guralnik in a way by claiming this “obviously faulty argumentation” is “relieved by humor” (Béjoint 1994: 126). And Wilson even sympathizes with this dictionary for having to worry about its sales in the school and college market, consenting to the latter half of the paragraph as “if it is to earn a profit for its producers, and if this dictionary, of which its editors are justifiably proud, is to reach the largest possible part of its intended audience, then the decision seems at least prudent” (Wilson 1987: 34). But it is absolutely difficult to excuse the childish argument of the former half; even an elementary schoolchild can refute this by bringing up any other non-vulgar terms that are “so well-known as to require no explanation” but are actually explained thoroughly in *WNW*<sub>2</sub>. It is unbelievable that an irresponsible statement as such could pass unremarked in a dictionary with a reputation like *WNW* to the year 1970.

However, what is probably the most irresponsible about *WNW* is that with all this declaration in *WNW*<sub>2</sub>, they have never once explained why there had been a drastic change in their policy toward vulgar words in the new edition. *WNW*<sub>3</sub> was finally published in 1988, after ten times of printing *WNW*<sub>2</sub> with the last one out in 1986. As it is clear from Table 1, there had certainly been a *drastic* change during these two years, and almost all of the vulgar words once thought to be “so well known as to require no explanation” are now being defined with full explanation and examples. In fact, *WNW*<sub>3</sub> has become one of the most detailed and exhaustive college

dictionaries on slang and vulgar terms. But the reason for their decision is not clarified. Had they simply decided to fall silent and swim with the current? Well, who can blame them? After all, nearly twenty years had passed since the first publication of *WNW*<sub>2</sub>. Only they should have at least made an excuse. In the foreword to *WNW*<sub>3</sub>, the new Editor in Chief Victoria Neufeldt mentions the great many addition of the terms in the field of liturgics, business and commerce, computer science and technology, metric units of measure and so on, but not a word on vulgar terms. Or maybe she was trying to hint at it between the lines:

This new dictionary has more usage labels to assist the readers in the choice of language to fit the occasion. It must be remembered that these labels reflect not our editorial opinion of the comparative desirability of a given term, but rather our assessment and interpretation of how it is viewed in the speech community as a whole. It is not the lexicographer's mandate to pass editorial judgment, but only to describe as best he can, using innate and acquired linguistic sensitivity and lexicographical skills (plus a good up-to-date citation file), the language as it exists. Language cannot be separated from its environment and a large part of our most common vocabulary cannot be properly used without a knowledge of the way in which individual words are perceived within a given social context (Foreword to *WNW*<sub>3</sub>: ix).

Of these usage labels, there is, of course, the ‘Vulgar’ label, and it is explained like this: “The term or sense may be an old one, but it is today regarded by most people as highly inappropriate usage in all or almost all social contexts. Many, but not all, such terms are also slang” (Guide to the dictionary: xvi). And what are the words that received this honorable crown? They are, as we can guess, *fuck*, *cunt*, *shit*, *motherfucker*, *cocksucker*, *screw*, *jerk off*, *pussy*, *twat*, *dick*, *prick*, *ass*, *asshole*, *ball*, *crap*, etc. What we could not guess, however, was that *cock*, one of the Big Six, is no longer regarded as *vulgar*, and is just labeled as ‘Slang.’ The other two of the Big Six, *fart* and *piss*, are without any labels, but are explained as ‘Now a vulgar term’ or ‘Now somewhat vulgar in all uses’ along with *tit*, *turd*, *bastard* and so on. A plausible explanation for the ‘Vulgar’ coming off from *cock* is that it is the only word in the Big Six that used to be a euphemism

for *penis*. A euphemism of a direct expression may well begin as a slang, and thus may keep its status as a slang all the way to the present. The question is whether we can consider *screw*, *prick* and *pussy*, all of them having once been euphemisms for some direct expressions, as vulgar and *cock* not. We hope that *WNW* will work out on this kind of inconsistency in the future.

(to be concluded)

### NOTES

1) This paper is the second part of Chapter 3 from my MA thesis submitted to Tokyo University of Foreign Studies on January 16, 1996, revised and edited. I am very grateful to Prof. Nobuyuki Higashi for his kind and patient advice.

2) In the State of Texas, where the social attitude had and has always been more puritanical, fastidious and conservative than other states, *AHD* was compelled to be published as a special edition which refrained from including any of the taboo words.

3) The second edition of *AHD* was only released as a college edition, never as a standard one, which makes things a little complicated when we look at the history of this dictionary. This generally regarded as *AHD<sub>2</sub>* is in fact the revised edition of *AHD*, *New college Edition*, published in 1976, which had the same text, and number of entries as *AHD<sub>1</sub>*, the standard or so-called Larger Format Edition of 1969.

4) For the definition of *twat*, *OED<sub>1</sub>* cites a passage from *Pippa Passes*, a poem by Robert Browning, and explains that the word is used "under the impression that it denoted some part of a nun's attire" in the poem. *W<sub>2</sub>* had obviously took this part out of *OED<sub>1</sub>* without much inquiry. For the contents of the poem and more details on *twat*, see Uchida (1997: 39-40).

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- AHD<sub>2</sub>* *The American Heritage Dictionary*, 2nd college edn. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982.
- AHD<sub>3</sub>* *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 3rd edn. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992.
- OED<sub>1</sub>* *The Oxford English Dictionary*, in 12 volumes, eds. J. Murray et al. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884-1928; reprinted with supplement, 1933.
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- WNW<sub>2</sub>* *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*, 2nd college edn. ed. David B. Guralnik. New York and Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1970.
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Appendices

	A C D	A H D	A H D 2	A C D 3	R H D	R H D 2	R H C	W 2	W 3	W N C 7	W N C 8	W N C 9	W N W 2	W N W 3	O A L 2	O A L 3	O A L 4	C O D 5	C O D 6	C O D 7	L D C E	L D C E 2	P E D	
<i>the Big Six</i>																								
fuck	×	⊙	○	○	×	⊙	×	×	×	⊙	⊙	×	×	×	×	⊙	⊙	×	○	○	○	⊙	⊙	
cunt	×	⊙	⊙	○	×	⊙	×	×	×	⊙	⊙	×	×	×	×	⊙	⊙	×	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	
cock	×	●	●	●	×	⊙	×	×	×	●	●	×	×	×	●	⊙	⊙	×	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	
shit	×	⊙	⊙	⊙	×	⊙	×	×	×	⊙	⊙	×	×	×	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	
piss	×	●	●	○	●	⊙	●	●	×	⊙	⊙	●	⊙	⊙	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	
fart	×	⊙	⊙	○	●	⊙	×	×	×	●	⊙	●	⊙	⊙	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	
<i>compound</i>																								
motherfucker	×	×	×	○	×	○	×	×	⊙	×	×	○	×	×	○	×	×	×	○	○	×	×	×	
cocksucker	×	×	×	○	×	○	×	×	⊙	×	×	○	×	×	○	×	×	×	○	○	×	×	×	
bullshit	×	○	×	○	○	○	×	○	×	○	○	×	○	×	○	×	○	×	○	○	○	○	○	
asshole	×	×	×	○	×	⊙	×	×	⊙	×	×	⊙	×	×	×	⊙	×	×	×	●	×	⊙	●	
jerk off	×	●	●	●	×	⊙	×	×	●	×	●	●	×	×	●	×	×	●	×	×	●	●	●	×
son of a bitch	×	○	×	○	○	○	●	×	×	○	○	×	○	×	×	●	×	●	●	●	●	●	×	
<i>popular slang</i>																								
screw	×	○	●	○	●	⊙	×	×	⊙	×	●	⊙	×	⊙	×	●	⊙	×	⊙	●	○	○	●	
pussy	×	○	○	⊙	×	⊙	×	×	⊙	×	⊙	×	×	×	×	×	×	●	×	●	●	○	×	
twat	×	×	×	○	×	●	×	×	×	×	●	●	×	×	×	×	×	⊙	⊙	○	○	○	○	
dick	×	●	●	●	●	●	×	×	●	×	●	●	×	×	×	×	●	×	●	●	○	○	×	
prick	×	○	○	○	●	⊙	×	×	⊙	⊙	⊙	×	×	×	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	●	
crap	×	○	○	○	○	○	×	×	⊙	×	⊙	⊙	○	⊙	×	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	
turd	×	○	○	⊙	●	⊙	×	×	⊙	×	●	⊙	×	×	●	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	●	
tit(s)	×	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	×	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	
arse, ass	×	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	×	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	●	
ball(s)	×	○	○	○	●	●	×	×	⊙	⊙	⊙	×	⊙	⊙	×	○	○	⊙	⊙	○	○	○	○	
<i>female derog</i>																								
bitch	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	○	○	×	○	○	○	⊙	●		
whore	●	○	⊙	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
<i>homosexual</i>																								
fag, faggot	×	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	×	●	●	×	●	●	×	●	●	×	●	●	●	○	○	
queer	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
<i>classical</i>																								
bastard	●	⊙	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	⊙	⊙	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
bugger	⊙	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
<i>profanity</i>																								
bloody	○	○	○	○	○	⊙	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
damn	○	○	○	⊙	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	

× ... not given ● ... literal ○ ... figurative ⊙ ... literal + figurative

Table 1. Major vulgar words in major modern dictionaries.

## Categorization

- 1) noun
- 2) personal: 'You ——!'
- 3) personal compound: '—— face', '—— head'
- 4) intransitive verb
- 5) transitive verb: 'to —— someone'
- 6) phrasal verb: '—— around', '—— off'
- 7) adjectival: 'a —— / —— ing shame'
- 8) adverbial: '—— ing good'
- 9) cursing expletive: '—— you!', '—— it!'
- 10) general interjection of anger, frustration, annoyance: '——!'
- 11) intensifier: 'What the —— is that?'
- 12) other special phrases: 'don't give a ——', '—— one's mind', 'full of ——', etc.

terms	category											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
fuck	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
cunt	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
cock	○	×	×	×	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	○
shit	○	○	○	○	○	×	△	×	×	○	○	○
piss	○	△	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	×	○
fart	○	○	○	○	×	○	×	×	×	×	×	○
motherfucker	○	○	×	×	△	×	△	△	△	○	△	×
cocksucker	○	○	×	×	×	×	△	△	×	×	×	×
bullshit	○	×	×	○	○	×	×	×	×	○	×	○
asshole	○	○	×	×	×	×	○	○	×	×	×	○
jerk off	○	○	×	—	—	○	○	×	×	×	×	×
son of a bitch	○	○	×	×	×	×	○	×	×	○	×	×
screw	○	×	○	○	○	○	△	×	○	×	×	×
pussy	○	○	×	×	×	×	○	×	×	×	×	×
twat	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
dick	○	○	○	○	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×
prick	○	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
crap	○	×	×	○	○	×	△	×	×	○	×	○
turd	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	○
tit(s)	○	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	○	×	×
arse / ass	○	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	△	×	○
ball(s)	○	×	×	○	○	○	×	×	×	○	×	○
bitch	○	○	×	○	○	○	○	○	×	×	×	×
whore	○	○	×	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
fag / faggot	○	○	×	×	×	×	△	×	×	×	×	×
queer	○	○	×	×	×	×	○	×	×	×	×	×
bastard	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
bugger	○	○	×	○	○	○	△	×	○	○	×	○
bloody	×	×	×	×	×	×	○	○	○	×	×	×
damn	○	×	×	○	○	×	○	○	○	○	×	○

○ ... usage × ... lack of usage △ ... usage in derived forms (e.g. shit → shitty)

Table 2. Flexibility of vulgar words.

## Remarks on the asymmetry of antonyms in modern Japanese — Some pairs of verbs in directional opposition —

YUKIHIKO OKADA

### 0. Introduction

The Japanese verb 'iku/yuku' denotes "movement to a place except here", and verb 'kuru' denotes "movement to here", when used non-figuratively (i.e. in situations where they express an actual movement).

#### The verb 'iku/yuku'

○ Kaimono ni deta tuide ni, syuutome ga taoreta toki sewa ni natta **isya no tokoro ni iku** to, . . . . . (Kookotu no hito/70)

#### The verb 'kuru'

○ Kono sannenkān ni ikudo kono **sinryoozyo ni kita** daroo. (Kookotu no hito/16)

But, as far as 'iku/yuku' is concerned, in the case of collocation with a noun with 'o', there are examples in which the relevant property 'to the place except here' blurs or almost disappears.

○ Aru hito wa, kawaita **sabaku o yuku**. (Kumo no utage: 2/102)

Miyazima (1972) refers to such a phenomenon:

○ されば君若し、一の小径を往き、忽ち三条に分るゝ処に出たなら困るに及ばない、君の杖を立てゝ其倒れた方に往き玉へ。(武蔵野 19)

このあとの方の「往き玉へ」は、主人公のいる場所から遠ざかる方向へ、という方向性をもっているが、前の「往き」はそのような方向性のない単なる移動で、その点では「すすむ」「あるく」「うごく」などと近い。「くる」の方は、こ