9

ENGLISH AT THE ONSET OF THE NORMATIVE TRADITION

Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade

WHEN Betsy Sheridan, sister of the playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan, came to London in 1784, one of her friends—as she later reported to her sister Alicia in Dublin—accused her 'of having some brogue which [her] Father would by no means allow'. The Sheridans came from Ireland and this was, it seems, still evident in the way Betsy spoke. Her father, Thomas Sheridan, had just published a pronouncing dictionary as part of his project to standardize English pronunciation and Betsy's elocution had already been a matter of concern (and no little parental endeavour).[1] Sheridan was, however, by no means alone in his interests in reforming language. In contrast to the 'babel' of varieties which, as the previous chapter has explored, was in many ways seen as typical of the seventeenth century, it was the desire for a standard language, in national as well as individual terms, which was to be one of the most prominent issues of the century which followed.

The beginnings of this development can already be found within the variety of discourses which typified the seventeenth century. Chapter 8 has mentioned the Royal Society which had been founded in the early 1660s, and which 'served as coordinator and clearing house for English scientific endeavours'.[2] From its very

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[1] As part of the elocutionary training given by her father, Betsy was, for example, made to read at length from Johnson's *Rambler*, afterwards being subjected to detailed correction of the mistakes she had made. See Mugglestone (2003*a*), 147.

[2] See A. C. Baugh and T. Cable, *A History of the English Language*, 5th edn. (London: Routledge, 2002), 245.

early days, the Royal Society concerned itself with matters of language, setting up a committee in 1664 whose principal aim was to encourage the members of the Royal Society to use appropriate and correct language. This committee, however, was not to meet more than a couple of times. Subsequently, writers such as John Dryden, Daniel Defoe, and Joseph Addison, as well as Thomas Sheridan's godfather, Jonathan Swift, were each in turn to call for an English Academy to concern itself with language—and in particular to constrain what they perceived as the irregularities of usage.

Upon adapting Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and *Troilus and Cressida* in 1667 and 1679 for a contemporary audience, Dryden, for example, had discovered not only that the English language had changed since the days of Shakespeare, but that his plays contained what might be considered as grammatical 'mistakes'. Shakespeare had used double comparatives and double negation, as in 'more softer bowels' in *Troilus and Cressida*, and 'no nearer you cannot come' in *The Tempest*; he had moreover used adjectives as adverbs, *which* with a human antecedent, for example 'The mistress which I serve' (*The Tempest* III.i.6), as well as *you* instead of *ye*, and *who* when *whom* was strictly required. Shakespeare would even end sentences with a preposition, a construction which Dryden determinedly removed from his own writing when revising his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* in 1684. Dryden had been a member of the Royal Society language committee, and he and his fellow writers believed that an English Academy along the example of the Italian Accademia della Crusca (which had been founded in 1582) and the Académie Française (founded in 1635) might provide the solution for such irregularities in usage. An Academy would codify the language by refining and fixing it, and by laying down its rules in an authoritative grammar and dictionary. 'The Work of this Society,' Defoe argued in 1697, 'shou'd be to encourage Polite Learning, to polish and refine the *English* Tongue, and advance the so much neglected Faculty of Correct Language, to establish Purity and Propriety of Stile, and to purge it from all the Irregular Additions that Ignorance and Affectation have introduc'd'. English, it was felt, had no grammar, and in this it compared unfavourably with Latin, which it had been gradually replacing in all its important functions. 'Our Language is extremely imperfect,' Swift complained in 1712, and one of the problems noted by Addison the year before was that the language was 'clogged … with Consonants, as *mayn't, can't, sha'n't, wo'n't*, and the like, for *may not, can not, shall not, will not*, &c'. What these writers wanted to establish was a written medium that was free from contamination by the spoken language and that had enough prestige to be able to compete with Latin. This had to be brought about, as Swift put it on the title page of his

famous proposal, by 'Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining [i.e. fixing] the English Tongue', and an English Academy was to take charge of the process.

But no Academy was ever founded, and the codification process was taken up instead by a series of interested individuals: clergymen, scientists, schoolmasters (and mistresses!), poets, and booksellers. And actors too, for Thomas Sheridan, although he had originally intended to become a clergyman, had felt so disgusted with the drawl of preachers that he decided to tackle the problem properly by training as an actor. Sheridan's rival John Walker, who also wrote a pronouncing dictionary (1791), likewise had his early background in acting, playing alongside the celebrated David Garrick in Drury Lane. Codifying the English language hence became the result of private enterprise, as in the case of Samuel Johnson who was invited to compile his famous *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) because his friend, the publisher Robert Dodsley, felt he was in need of a project with which to occupy himself. The same was true of Robert Lowth, a clergyman who originally wrote his canonical *Short Introduction to English Grammar* of 1762 for his son Tom. When Dodsley, who had published Lowth's earlier work, learnt of Lowth's plans for a grammar, he decided that a grammar was just what the public needed. As in the case of Johnson's dictionary, he turned Lowth's grammar into a publishers' project. Lowth's grammar was not the first grammar of English, but the 1760s marked the beginning of a veritable explosion of English grammars, culminating during the nineteenth century in what Ian Michael characterized in 1991 as 'more than enough English grammars'.[3]

These newly published grammars and dictionaries did not, of course, have an immediate effect on the language. Instead, throughout the period, there continued to be a considerable amount of variation in spelling, grammar, and vocabulary, as well as in pronunciation. The extent of this variation has not, however, always been made visible in studies of eighteenth-century English, which have traditionally focused on the language as it appeared in print. The following excerpt from Chapter X of Sarah Fielding's novel *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744) illustrates some of the ways in which the features of printed texts can differ from equivalent forms in present-day English (indicated here in square brackets):

On these Considerations they agreed to go, and at half an Hour past Four [half past four] they were placed [took their seats] in the Pit; the Uproar was [had] begun, and they were surrounded every way [on all sides] with such a variety of Noises [noise], that it seemed as if the whole Audience was [had] met by way of Emulation [in a kind of competition], to try

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[3] See I. Michael, 'More than Enough English Grammars', in G. Leitner (ed.), *English Traditional Grammars* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1991), 11–26.

who could make the greatest. *David* asked his Friend, what could be the Meaning of all this; for he supposed they could be neither *condemning, nor applauding the Play*, before it was [had] begun. Mr. *Orgueil* told him, the Author's Friends and Enemies were now shewing [showing] what Parties they had gathered together, in order to intimidate each other.

Compared to the English of today, the differences in grammar as well as vocabulary, including the capitalization of almost all nouns, can give the text an unduly formal character, while the author had merely intended to write plain narrative prose.

Private writings, such as diaries and letters, offer a very different perspective on the language from that customarily taken in histories of English, and these will be the major focus of the present chapter. The basic material for discussion will be the language of a variety of individual writers, men and women from all layers of society, ranging from those who were highly educated to those who were barely able to spell. All these people wrote letters, and many of them were socially and geographically mobile, a fact which undoubtedly exposed them to the existence (and influence) of different linguistic norms.

MOBILITY: GEOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIAL

The playwright Richard Sheridan, Thomas Sheridan's son, was a very ambitious man; he felt ashamed of his father's background as an actor, and an Irish actor at that. In her letters to her sister Alicia, which she wrote in the form of a journal, Betsy Sheridan describes Richard as 'a little *grand*'; unlike his sister, Richard shed his regional accent as soon as possible upon his arrival in London: he, too, had been the recipient of his father's speech training.[4] Regional accents were increasingly being seen as social shibboleths, although Irish seems to have been particularly stigmatized. Swift, for example, had felt embarrassed by his own Irish accent, noting that, in England, 'what we call the *Irish brogue* is no sooner discovered, than it makes the deliverer in the least degree ridiculous and despised'. In a later letter to her sister, Betsy Sheridan describes a meeting with a certain 'Irish Doctor', who 'is very civil and talks French in Public, as he says "to *hide* his Brogue"'. Of course Betsy herself may have learned to hide her brogue, too, especially when she came to live with her brother after her father's death.

Another example of someone who felt embarrassed by his regional origins is Johnson's biographer, James Boswell. Boswell recorded this embarrassment in his

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[4] Some traces of his original accent must have remained, attracting the attention of the observant Fanny Burney (see further pp.[**]).

Life of Johnson, first published in 1791, writing that upon being introduced to Johnson in 1763 he

was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, . . . I said to Davies [a mutual acquaintance], 'Don't tell where I come from'—'From Scotland,' cried Davies roguishly. 'Mr. Johnson, (said I) I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it'.

Boswell may not have had much of a Scottish accent because, as Frank pointed out in 1994, educated Scotsmen of the time would make every effort to avoid being caught out. Boswell had, moreover, taken private lessons in elocution with Thomas Sheridan in order to make certain that this was so.

As in previous centuries, many people at the time felt the pull of London (see the map in Fig. 9.1), attracted by the better social, economic, and cultural opportunities which the capital seemed to offer; all of them must have experienced similar anxieties and embarrassment at being confronted with a different linguistic context. John Gay, the poet and playwright, came from Barnstaple, Devonshire, and the novelist (and printer) Samuel Richardson, from Mackworth in Derbyshire; Robert Dodsley, writer and publisher, was born near Mansfield, Nottinghamshire; Henry and Sarah Fielding, both novelists, came from Dorset, though they attended school in Salisbury in Wiltshire; Samuel Johnson, the writer and lexicographer, and the actor David Garrick both came from Lichfield in Staffordshire (travelling to London together in March 1737); the grammarian Robert Lowth (later Bishop of London), was born in Winchester; Laurence Sterne, the author of *Tristram Shandy*, was born in Clonmel in Ireland, and the novelist Fanny Burney came from King's Lynn, Norfolk. William Clift, first conservator of the Hunterian Museum, originated from Bodmin in Cornwall: upon his arrival in London, his letters show that he quickly lost all traces of his local dialect. Note the speech-like quality of the first letter which he wrote home on 19 February 1792 to report his safe arrival in the capital:

I have a thousand things to write and I Can't tell where to begin first—But I think Ill begin from the time I left Fowey—Just as we was getting out of the Harbour I saw you and Cousin Polly out at St Cathrines and I look'd at you till I saw you get out at the Castle and sit down upon the Bank the other side and I look'd and look'd and look'd again till you look'd so small that I Cou'd not discern you scarcely only your red Cloak.

His later letters display considerable change; *we was*, still characteristic of southern dialects today, no longer occurs after this first letter, while other regionally-marked usages—such as *where* for *whether* and *was a week* for *a week ago*—were likewise soon shed.
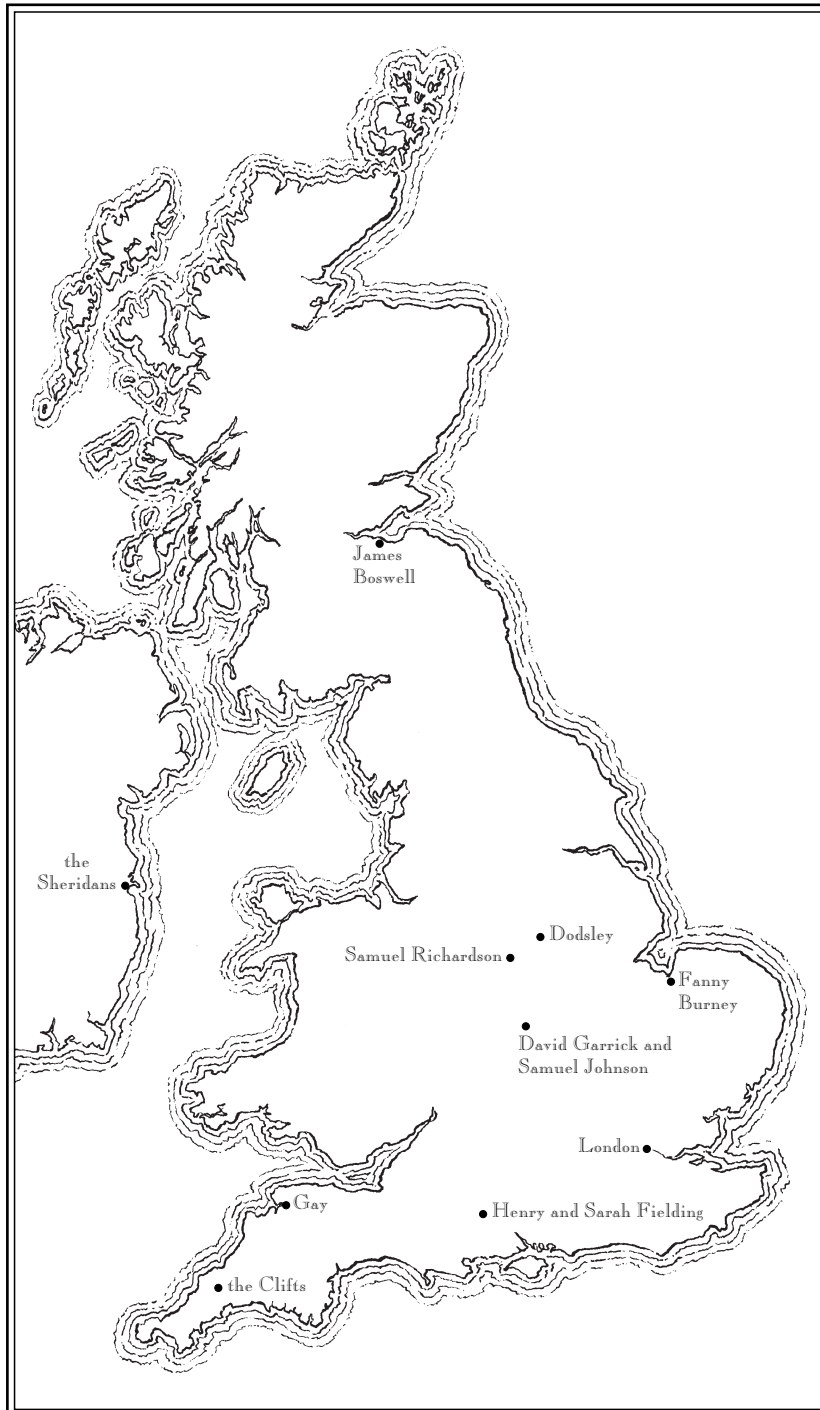
FIG. 9.1.   Geographical mobility in eighteenth-century Britain

All these people were geographically mobile, a fact which in itself (as Clift's letters already confirm) had the potential to affect their language in significant ways. But some of them were socially mobile too. John Gay, for instance, came from a family of traders, and his ambition was to find himself a place at Court. Richardson's father had been a joiner, but although Richardson himself became a successful printer (as well as a celebrated novelist), he never felt quite at ease with those who had similarly made it in society. While he got on well with Sarah Fielding, one of the reasons for Richardson's rivalry with her brother Henry was his feeling of inequality due to the fact that he hadn't had a grammar school education. Robert Dodsley, who later became the publisher of most of the important writers of the period, including Johnson, Lowth, and Sterne, began his career as an apprentice to a stocking weaver; afterwards he became a footman, which is how the author Horace Walpole, fourth Earl of Orford, would still occasionally refer to him, even after Dodsley had turned into a successful bookseller. Lowth effected a social transition within a different sphere; coming from a family of clergymen, he set out to become a bishop and was, towards the end of his life, called to the highest office in the Church of England, that of Archbishop of Canterbury (although his failing health forced him to decline). Fanny Burney's father, the musical scholar and composer Charles Burney, was also a fashionable music teacher; this brought him in contact with the more highly placed in London society, and both Garrick and Sir Joshua Reynolds were frequent visitors to his home. Charles Burney saw a lifelong wish fulfilled when Fanny was appointed lady-in-waiting at the court of King George (although he must have been sadly disappointed when she became ill and asked to resign her position). The greatest social leap was, however, probably made by William Clift, who came from a very poor family indeed: his father earned a living by making sticks and setting hedges, while his mother managed to scrape together barely enough money to send him to school. William possessed great skill at drawing which, according to Frances Austin, 'attracted the notice of Nancy Guilbert, the Squire's lady, and it was through her good offices that at the age of seventeen he was apprenticed to John Hunter ... the most eminent surgeon and anatomist of his day'.[5] Upon Hunter's death in 1793, and soon after Clift arrived in London, he was appointed conservator of the Hunterian Museum.

Mobility could of course occur in the opposite direction too. Johnson's close friend, Mrs Thrale (later Piozzi), for example, came from a Welsh aristocratic

[5] See F. Austin, 'The Effect of Exposure to Standard English: The Language of William Clift', in D. Stein and I. Tieken-Boon van Ostade (eds), *Towards a Standard English 1600–1800* (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994), 287.

family but married down: her husband was Henry Thrale, a London brewer, wealthy but still middle class. The Fieldings, too, experienced a similar downward mobility; their grandparents belonged to the aristocracy but their mother married an army officer. Henry nevertheless made use of his aristocratic connections by soliciting literary patronage from his cousin, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. His sister Sarah did not: the road to success in literature was different for women. The downward mobility of Mrs Thrale or the Fieldings may not have been sought consciously; that of Boswell, by contrast, was: he was the son of a Scottish laird, with whom he did not get along well. In search of a substitute father, he felt more attracted to Johnson and his circle. Whether upward or downward, geographical or social, any type of mobility would, as already indicated, have brought people into contact with different norms of speech, with the potential for their own language to change in response. Some, such as William Clift, may have consciously sought new linguistic models, working hard to adopt the desired norm—in this case that of his newly found patron, John Hunter. Robert Lowth similarly strove throughout his life to rise in the church hierarchy. His awareness of what was appropriate language is evident from his most formal letters, and with his *Short Introduction to English Grammar* he made this linguistic norm accessible to those who similarly wished to rise in social status.

SPOKEN ENGLISH

First-hand evidence of the way people spoke is very hard to come by. Sometimes, occasional spellings in diaries and journals indicate colloquial pronunciations, such as when Betsy Sheridan cursed her sister-in-law's father Thomas Linley with the words '*od* rot *un*' ('may God rot him'), for not allowing her the use of the family's theatre box, or Fanny Burney's mocking of Richard Sheridan's Irish accent in a letter to her sister dated 11 January 1779: 'I assure you I took it quite *koind* in him [Sheridan] to give me this advice'. On the whole, however, there is no indication in the spelling of the letters and diaries of the more educated writers to show how their words were pronounced. The letters of the uneducated members of the Clift family are a different matter. When, on 3 December 1795, Elizabeth, William's eldest sister, reported to him on their brother Robert's recovery from a recent illness, she wrote: 'whin I Left him he was abel Seet up an he Promisd me to writ to you the next day', and 'they ware All very well'. Her spelling of *whin* ('when'), *seet* ('sit'), *writ* ('write'), and *ware* ('were') suggests a different pronunciation of the vowels in question. Generally, however, her letters

show a skill in spelling that did not go much beyond high-frequency words of more than one syllable (and sometimes, as the examples above indicate, not even that). But the skills she did possess were exceptional for a woman of her background, and more than enough to keep the family together by corresponding with them.

There is more evidence of the use of spoken grammar and vocabulary, and not just in the letters of the barely literate. But in looking for such evidence, not all sources can be considered equally trustworthy; the language of drama, for instance, can be a dangerous source to use. Gay's *Beggar's Opera* (1728), which features thieves and other lower-class characters, does not contain a single instance of multiple negation. This is odd, because by this time this feature was already being avoided by more highly placed people (see further pp.**). Given the stratified nature of variation within English usage, we might therefore realistically have expected some occurrences of double negation in the play. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, in her play *Simplicity* (*c*1734), puts the following words into the mouth of the servant girl Lucy in Act 1: 'Says my Master, says he, 'Lucy, your mistress loves you …' 'Yes, Sir,' says I. What could a body say else?'. This sounds like the authentic speech of the lower orders, but it is the only time it occurs in the play. Lucy's words function merely as an indication of her social class at the outset; the rest was presumably left to the theatrical skills of the actress in question. Better sources are the novels by writers like Tobias Smollett and Fanny Burney. In *Evelina* (1778), for instance, Fanny Burney renders the language of speech by using short sentences connected by *and* and *nor*:

'Well,' said Miss Polly, 'he's grown quite another creature to what he was, and he doesn't run away from us, nor hide himself, nor any thing; and he's as civil as can be, and he's always in the shop, and he saunters about the stairs, and he looks at every body as comes in' (Letter XLIV).

Miss Polly's use of the relative *as* instead of *that* would have called for the censure of Lowth, who proscribed the form in his grammar. Deviant spelling was not normally used at this time to indicate colloquial language or non-standard speech, as it would be in the century to come by writers such as Charles Dickens or Emily Brontë. Eighteenth-century novelists instead used different devices in attempting to render distinctive speech patterns, such as Sarah Fielding's use of the dash to indicate pauses and hesitations in Chapter 6 of her first novel *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744):

If I got any Book that gave me pleasure, and it was any thing beyond the most silly Story, it was taken from me. For *Miss must not enquire too far into things—it would turn her*

Brain—she had better mind her Needle-work—and such Things as were useful for Women—Reading and poring on Books, would never get me a Husband.—Thus was I condemned to spend my Youth ....

Although—or perhaps because—this device was also used by Richardson, the dash was obliterated from the text by her brother Henry, who got involved with the reprint that was brought out later that year. In doing so he failed to understand its function. Removing the dash was only one of the many—and often uncalled for—changes which Henry made to the text. Reflecting contemporary norms of 'good' usage, he also corrected Sarah's use of the preposition at the end of the sentence which, then as now, and in spite of Dryden's earlier strictures, remained a common pattern in usage, especially in informal language.

Plays and novels offer only fictional dialogue, but there are two eighteenth-century authors who were renowned at the time for recording the way people actually spoke. Both James Boswell and Fanny Burney carried around notebooks for noting down things worth remembering, which were later copied into their diaries. Apparently Boswell's contemporaries believed that his reported conversations in the *Life of Johnson* sounded like the real thing, while people warned each other to be careful in what they said when in Fanny Burney's presence: for all they knew they might end up as a character in one of her novels! Fanny Burney's skill in recording the spoken language of the time is evident from the large number of first recorded instances under her name in the *OED*. There are nearly three times as many of them as for Jane Austen, who is usually credited as the first to record colloquial language in her novels.

If it represents natural conversation, the following dialogue, which Fanny Burney reported as taking place between Dr Johnson, Mrs Thrale, and herself on 25 September 1778, seems rather formal, at least to speakers of modern English:

He [i.e. a Mr. Smith] stayed till Friday morning When he was gone, 'What say you to *him*, Miss Burney? cried Mrs. Thrale, I am sure I offer you *variety*'
'Why I like him *better* than Mr. Crutchley—but I don't think I shall *pine* for either of them'
'Mr. Johnson, said Mrs. Thrale, don't you think Jerry Crutchley very much improved?'
Dr. J. Yes, Madam, I think he is.
Mrs. T. Shall he have Miss Burney?
Dr. J. Why—I think not;—at least, I must know more of him: I must enquire into his connections, his recreations, his employments, & his Character, from his Intimates before I trust Miss Burney with him ...

The use of titles instead of first names, of questions and negative sentences without *do* (as in Mrs Thrale's 'What say you to him?' and Johnson's 'I think not'), the presence of the interjection *why*, as well as Johnson's conspicuous wordiness . . . to the modern reader all of these suggest a discrepancy between the informality of the situation and the language used. Such apparent discrepancy is also evident in the language of the letters of the period.

THE AGE OF LETTER WRITING

The eighteenth century has been called the 'great age of the personal letter'.[6] As a result of the improved postal system, which made sure that letter writers could rely on the actual arrival of their letters into the hands of their addressees, people began to communicate by letter in vast numbers. One indication of the increase in letter writing is the fact that 'by 1704 the post office was receiving 75 per cent more money per year than in 1688'.[7] Many collections of correspondence have come down to us, and a good example is the one between the Lennox sisters, which was used as material for the book *Aristocrats* published by Stella Tillyard in 1994. The letters were not only exchanged between Caroline, Emily, Louisa, and Sarah Lennox: there are, according to Tillyard in her introduction, 'thousands of . . . letters—between sisters, husbands and wives, servants and employers, parents and children'. The letters themselves are unpublished, as are many other correspondences from this period that have survived: a vast amount of material is therefore still waiting to be analysed. Private letters contain important material, not only in terms of their contents (they can, for instance, provide detailed pictures of eighteenth-century society, as in the letters and diaries of genteel Georgian women which Amanda Vickery used as the basis for her book *Gentleman's Daughter* published in 1998), but also in terms of the language of the period. Just as today's private informal communication differs from that of formal speech styles or from writing, eighteenth-century English varied depending on the formality of the situation, the topic people wrote about, and the relationship they had with their correspondents. This kind of variation is evident in spelling, grammar, as well as vocabulary, and the different styles found in eighteenth-century letters provide important evidence of this.

[6] See H. Anderson and I. Ehrenpreis, 'The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century: Some Generalizations', in H. Anderson, P. B. Daghlian, and I. Ehrenpreis (eds), *The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1968), 269.

[7] Ibid., 270.

The letters, moreover, help us reconstruct social networks, the study of which is important in tracing the origins and processes of linguistic change. Based on a study of present-day speech communities carried out during the mid-1970s, the sociolinguist Lesley Milroy in 1987 described the extent to which the kind of social network one belongs to correlates with one's use of vernacular speech (as in, say, the local dialect) or, conversely, that of the standard variety. In doing so, she distinguished between closed and open networks. In closed networks, which are usually found among the working classes and in rural communities (although also within the highest social classes), everybody knows everybody else, and usually in more than one capacity at the same time (e.g. as neighbours, friends, relatives, *and* colleagues). The language of such networks serves as a means of identification to the network's members; as such, it is hostile to influence from outside so that it tends to be conservative and inhibits linguistic change. Open networks, in which people might have no more than a single loose tie with each other, are less subject to fixed linguistic norms. Such networks are typically found among the middle classes, and it is here that linguistic change may be most evident because members of open networks are usually more mobile, geographically and otherwise, than people belonging to closed networks. Their mobility brings them into contact with other social networks, and hence with different speech norms which may influence their own language and that of those around them. The social network model, therefore, has enormous potential for the analysis and description of linguistic change. In doing research on language change, it is important to try and identify people who were mobile, as these are the ones who may have carried along linguistic changes from one network to another. At the same time, many more people were probably not mobile: such people probably belonged to closed networks, and their language would therefore have been conservative compared to those people who did move about a lot.

In the eighteenth century, however, mobility (both social and geographical) was, as already indicated, an established fact for many people who—consciously or unconsciously—experienced the influence of other norms of language. If this happened on a large enough scale, we can assume that the language may have been affected accordingly. But even on a small scale the influence from other networks or from individual speakers (or writers) may have had its effect. On the other hand, as many histories of the language have stressed, the eighteenth century was also—stereotypically—the period when the English language was being codified. Codification is when the language is being submitted to rule by means of the publication of grammars and dictionaries. As has already been noted, this is one of the final stages of the standardization process. Typical of the

approach of the codifiers is that their grammars or dictionaries are normative in nature: by means of their publications, they set the norms of the language down for all to see and for all—at least potentially—to adhere to. This is indeed the function that Johnson's *Dictionary* and Lowth's grammar came to have. The latter aspect is part of the prescription stage, which completes the standardization process, although without—as other chapters have indicated—ever putting an end to it. Unlike, say, the system of weights and measures, language can never be fully fixed; if such were the case, it would no longer be functional as an instrument of communication, which has to be flexible to be able to adapt itself to changed circumstances. But the codification process did result in slowing down the rate of linguistic change: never again would the English language change as rapidly as it had done before.

All the people who have been mentioned so far within this chapter wrote letters, and some wrote diaries as well. It is nevertheless important to remember that, at least in a wider context, they do not form a representative section of society, for the majority of the population of this time did not write and hence no direct evidence of their language usage has come down to us. Tony Fairman, who has studied the language of what he calls 'unschooled people' from the early nineteenth century, calculated that 'of the one-third to 40% who could write, less than 5% could produce texts near enough to schooled English').[8] We can assume similar—if not even lower—figures for the eighteenth century. But there is a further complication: for those who could write, the eighteenth century was also the period during which letter writing, just like spoken communication, was considered an art. Spontaneous utterances, therefore, they were not—even if, at times, they can give the *impression* of spontaneity. Letter writing had to be learned and, as Tillyard confirms in her own account of the letters of the Lennox family, it was done so with various degrees of success. Caroline Lennox, for instance, complains about her son Ste's lack of skill at the age of 17: 'His letters are quite a schoolboy's. He is well, hopes we are, and compliments to everybody. Adieu. Yours most sincerely'. His cousin Emily, by contrast, was 'a delightful correspondent, her style quite formed'[9]). Consequently, such letters are not of interest to an analysis of the kind of unmonitored language which sociolinguists try to identify in their search for the vernacular language of the period.

[8] T. Fairman, 'Letters of the English Labouring Classes and the English Language, 1800–34', in M. Dossena and C. Jones (eds), *Insights into Late Modern English* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003), 265.

[9] See S. Tillyard, *Aristocrats. Caroline, Emily, Louisa and Sarah Lennox 1740–1832* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1994), 93.

Receiving a letter was a social event and letters were usually passed around at an assembly of relatives and friends. Letter writers as a result usually knew that they did not write for the addressee alone, and their language must also have reflected this. The Lennox sisters had found a solution to this predicament: private affairs were written on separate sheets which the addressee could remove upon opening the letter and before it was made public. Such sheets contain more truly private language, and it is this kind of unmonitored writing that is interesting for sociolinguistic analysis. In other cases, spontaneous language may be found in letters to correspondents with whom the author had such a close relationship that the need to polish one's style was felt to be irrelevant. Examples are Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters to her husband in the days of their courtship, or those to her daughter Lady Bute later in life. Robert Lowth wrote his most intimate letters to his wife when he was in Ireland in 1755. There are sixty-four of them, and their intimacy of style is reflected in his spelling, his grammar, as well as his choice of words. Mary Lowth's letters, unfortunately, have not come down to us. Sometimes authors informed their recipients that their letters were unpremeditated, such as Betsy Sheridan who, on 19 June 1785 told her sister: 'But as I scribble a great deal I am forced to write the first word that occurs, so that of course I must write pretty nearly as I should speak'.

In eighteenth-century correspondences the relationship between writer and addressee can be determined by the form of the opening or closing formula in a letter. Opening formulas may vary in formality from, in Lowth's case, 'Dear Molly' (his wife), 'Dear Tom' (his son), 'Dear Brother' (his closest friend Sir Joseph Spence), 'Dear Sir' (friends and acquaintances), 'Sir' (acquaintances), 'Rev. Sir' (fellow clergymen), to 'My Dear Lord' (e.g. the Archbishop). Closing formulas similarly range from informality to formality: from 'Your's most Affectionately' (relatives and friends), 'Your most Obedient & most faithful humble Serv^b' (acquaintances), to 'Your humble Servant' (enemies). With Gay a different principle applied: the longer the formula, the greater the distance from the addressee and, hence, the more polite the letter. His shortest form, 'Adieu', is found only in a letter to his cousin. Gay is the first to use the formula 'yours sincerely', which, judging by his relationship with the people to whom he used this formula, does not indicate politeness as it does today but rather the opposite: extreme informality.

An example of how the topic of a letter can influence its style may be found in letters exchanged between Boswell and his friend John Johnston of Grange: they are often about nothing in particular, and merely serve the purpose of expressing the intimacy between them. This becomes clear from the following letter which Boswell sent to Johnston on 27 October 1762:

My dear friend: I know it will revive your spirits to see from whence this Epistle is dated, even from a Place in which the happiest moments of your life have passed. While the multitude consider it just as *the town of Edinburgh* and no more; How much more valuable is it to you, who look upon it as an ancient City—the Capital of Scotland—in which you have attended the Theatre, and there had your soul refined by gentle Music, by the noble feelings of Tragedy, by the lively flashes of comedy and by the exalted pleasure resulting from the view of a crowd assembled to be pleased, and full of happiness.

The opposite occurs in letters between Sarah Fielding and her lifelong friend James Harris, the author of *Hermes* (1751): when asking advice on her translation of Socrates, Sarah wrote to Harris as one scholar to another, adopting the kind of formal language that suits the topic. 'Dear Sir,' she began her letter of 18 August 1761:

Many Acknowledgements and thanks are due to you for your ready compliance with my Request in giving me a Translation of that hard passage about $Διαλέγεσθαι$, which I could not render into English with any Satisfaction. Where the Sense so intirely depends on the Etymology of a Word in ye Original, it requires more Knowledge than I am Mistress of, to make it clear in another language; and your friendly Kindness in doing it for me is felt most cordially and gratefully.

She had ended an earlier letter to him (from September or October 1760) with 'I should take it as a favour if you will mention to [Mr Garrott] how much I am obliged to him and his Sister. I ... beg my Compliments. I am Dear Sir with true regard your sincere and Obed[t] hum[ble] Serv[t]. S Fielding'. The use of words like *favour*, *obliged*, *sincere*, *obedient*, *humble*, and *Servant* in her letters are part of what McIntosh (1986) calls 'courtly genteel prose', the kind of language that has its origin in the language of the fifteenth-century courtier and that is characteristic of eighteenth-century letters of 'high friendship', usually exchanged between men. Sarah Fielding's letters show that women in her position were capable of such language too. In the whole of her correspondence, her use of extra initial capitals assumes its highest frequency in her letters to Harris, precisely matching the kind of patterns which we find in the printed texts of the time (see further pp.***).

Language

According to traditional accounts of eighteenth-century English, nothing much happened to the language during the period. Spelling had been fixed since the end of the seventeenth century, and Baugh and Cable (2002), for example, discuss only the development of the passive, in particular the rise of the progressive passive (*the house is building* and *the house is being built*). On this model, English grammar would already more or less have reached its present-day state. But this perspective is based on the idea that the English language is that which appears in print (see

further Chapter 10). As a result of the advent of historical sociolinguistics, which primarily looks at data derived from other sources, such as personal letters, it has, however, come to be recognized that both in the case of spelling and in that of grammar a lot more went on than was formerly given credit. There was even a large increase of new words in the period, especially during the second half of the century. Evidence for this can, of course, also be found in the *OED*, which includes considerable amounts of data from letters and journals in its second edition, a change in policy since its conception at the end of the nineteenth century.

Spelling

The first scholar who systematically studied the spelling of letters in relation to printed texts was Noel Osselton (1984), who found to his surprise that Dr Johnson's private spelling was 'downright bad'. Johnson's letters contained spellings like *chymestry, compleat, chappel, ocurrence, pamflet, stomack, stiched, Dutchess*, and *dos* ('does'), none of which were formally sanctioned in his *Dictionary*. How could such seemingly 'illiterate' spellings be reconciled with Johnson's status as the one who, in another popular eighteenth-century stereotype, was supposed to have fixed English spelling? When looking at letters by other educated eighteenth-century authors, Osselton discovered that there were at the time two standards of spelling—a public one, as found in printed documents (and duly codified in Johnson's dictionary), and a private one, found in letters. This dual spelling standard was even recognized by the schoolmasters. And, indeed, it was very widespread. People like Lowth, Sarah Fielding, and Laurence Sterne, who must all have learned to spell around the same time, likewise used very different spellings in their private writings from those which were found in printed books. Lowth's letters to his wife, for instance, contain spellings like *carryd, copys, gott*, and *immediatly*. Sarah Fielding wrote *rejoyces, intirely*, and *Characteristick*, while in the draft of Sterne's *Memoirs* we find *Birth Day, a Drift*, and *small Pox* (all were corrected in the printed version of this text). Private spelling can be called a system of its own, with different rules from those in use by the printers. And for published works the printers were responsible for correcting private spelling according to their house rules, just as in the example of Sterne's *Memoirs*. We see the same phenomenon with James Boswell, whose spelling underwent a sudden change in favour of the printed system. This change coincides with the moment when he finally gave in to his father's wishes for him to study law. Having become a serious student, he seems to have adopted the spelling of the books he read during his studies.

Osselton discovered that in printed texts there were many different spellings for the past tense and past participle endings of weak verbs. He recorded as many as seven: *sav'd*, *save'd*, *saved*, *sav d*, *lack't*, *lackd*, and *lackt*. The forms with the apostrophe rose steadily during the second half of the seventeenth century, reaching just over 50 per cent during the first half of the eighteenth, after which they rapidly declined. In private letters, *'d* lingered on much longer, although some, such as Johnson, abandoned *'d* very early on. Upon his arrival in London, and in his zeal to adapt to a new linguistic norm, William Clift first dropped *'d* and other contractions but later started reusing them. It is as if he were hypercorrecting, using *'d* more frequently than would be expected of him in the context of his letters, perhaps under the influence of a self-imposed reading programme. In effect, he had to learn that contractions were acceptable in private letters as part of a different spelling system. Osselton also studied the use of extra initial capitals in printed texts, which rose to nearly 100 per cent around the middle of the period, becoming almost like the pattern we find in modern German. The eighteenth-century system arose out of the practice of authors to stress particular words by capitalizing them. But in eighteenth-century manuscripts, capitals are at times very hard to distinguish from lower-case letters, and in the interest of speed of production, compositors must have decided to impose their own rules on authorial practice, hence capitalizing all nouns. Spelling was usually left to the compositors in any case, as is apparent from frequent references in the correspondence of the printer and publisher Robert Dodsley. In September 1757 Lowth, for example, instructed Dodsley as follows: 'But before you send the Book to the press, I must beg the favour of you to take the trouble of reading it over carefully yourself: & not only to alter any mistakes in writing, spelling, &c. but to give me your observations, & objections to any passages'. Five months earlier, Dodsley had commented in a letter to the printer John Baskerville that: 'In the Specimen from Melmoth [one of Dodsley's authors], I think you have us'd too many Capitals, which is generally thought to spoil the beauty of the printing: but they should never be us'd to adjective verbs or adverbs'. Sarah Fielding was also aware of the fact that her own use of capitals differed from that of published texts. In a letter to Richardson (14 December 1758) she wrote: 'I am very apt when I write to be too careless about great and small Letters and Stops, but I suppose that will naturally be set right in the printing'. Possibly she had become aware of the existence of different spelling systems by her brother's correction of the language of *David Simple*. In line with this awareness, she varied her capitalization practice in her private correspondence depending on her relationship with her addressees: the less intimate this relationship or the more formal the topic of discussion (as in her correspondence with Harris which has been discussed on

p.**), the more her use of extra initial capitals approximates that of the publishers of the time.

Spelling, therefore, had a social significance at the time, and it can be used as a marker of relative formality in a private letter. This situation would, however, begin to change towards the end of the century, as appears from William Clift's criticism of his sister Elizabeth's spelling in a letter which he wrote to her on 9 January 1798:

I shall never be convinced to the contrary of what I now think, by you, unless you learn to mend your Orthography or spell better; because No person on earth I am very certain can understand the true meaning of what they read unless they read it right … Now you surely do not understand the true definition and derivation of the words Lutheran, Calvinist, Methodist, &c, otherwise you could not spell them wrong.

Clift's insensitivity here may be explained by his youthful pride at being about to make it in society—he was 23 when he wrote this letter. But it seems unfair for him to expect similar spelling skills of his barely literate sister. And Elizabeth took it hard, for it would be eighteen months before she wrote to him again. She had probably never enjoyed any formal education but she did learn to spell, possibly from Nancy Gilbert, daughter of the Vicar of Bodmin. Her letters show that she mastered the first stages of spelling: monosyllables such as *should*, *thought*, *treat*, and *know* are generally spelled correctly. She managed some polysyllables as well (*Particular*, *Company*, *Persecuted*, *inherit*), while others were evidently beyond her capabilities: *upurtunity*, *Profshion*, *sevility*, *Grandyear* ('grandeur'). For all that, her spelling skills were more than adequate for her to communicate with her family.

For Elizabeth Clift, to be able to read and write must have meant a giant educational leap compared to her mother (who probably had had no education at all). In genteel families, the mother was responsible for teaching the children their letters. 'I am very glad,' Lowth wrote to his wife in 1755, 'to hear that the dear Tom learns his book so well'. Tom was not even two at the time. Lowth himself appears to have learnt to spell from his mother too: he had a peculiar habit of breaking off words at the end of a line, using two colons, one on each line, as in 'my Af::fairs', rather than a hyphen or a double hyphen, as was more common. A surviving letter from his mother suggests that he must have learnt this practice from her! Genteel women did not on the whole spell worse than men: as long as English was not a school subject, they would have learnt to spell alongside their brothers at home.

Grammar

As with spelling, letters contain grammatical constructions that may strike a modern reader as somewhat surprising given the social background of the writer

in question. In a letter to her future husband, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, for instance, refers to 'them admirers you speak of'; Dodsley told Garrick of his 'suspicion that you was concern'd in it on purpose'; Lowth told his wife that he had arrived safely after his journey in the following words: 'Old William, after having happily drove us to Town with great spirit, sett us down at M^r. Garnier's'; Lord Hertford informed Horace Walpole that 'Lady Mary Coke and her have conversed upon it'; Walpole, gossiping with George Montagu, wrote: 'don't it put you in mind of any thing?'; and Betsy Sheridan, commenting on the appearance of Lady Anne Lindsay, wrote that she 'should not of known her'. These kind of sentences do not occur in printed texts: they would seem more typical of the language of the lower classes (such as the servant girl Lucy in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's play *Simplicity*), but they are found in informal letters of more highly placed writers. Even relatively educated writers had a vernacular style at their disposal, which they used in informal, private correspondence; this style was characterized by different grammatical rules from those which came to form the basis of the normative grammatical tradition. People were also familiar with the kind of grammar that befitted the style required in more formal correspondence, such as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu when she wrote to Bishop Burnet, or Lowth when corresponding with his superiors in the Church. Richard Sheridan's letters, however, show no such stylistic distinction, for they contain hardly anything remarkable grammatically speaking. In his social ambitions, he evidently took care to write by the book, irrespective of his relationship with his addressees. In doing so, he may actually have been hypercorrecting, because it seems unusual that he would not have had a vernacular style. Such behaviour is typical of people who, like Sheridan, were social climbers, who are often almost too eager to show that they fully belonged to the class of people to which they were aspiring.

Fanny Burney observed that Dr John Hawkesworth, a writer and acquaintance of her father's,

does not shine in Conversation so much superior to others, as from his writings might be expected. Papa calls his Talking Book Language—for I never heard a man speak in a style which so much resembles writing. He has an amazing flow of choice of words & expressions … All he says is just,—proper, & better express'd than most *written* language.

What she must have meant by 'Book Language' is the kind of language prescribed by the normative grammars of the time, which was often characterized by an over-scrupulous application of rules that more frequently than not had their basis in Latin rather than in actual usage. One example is what Görlach in 1997 called the 'ablative comparationis', as in 'We have lost our good Friend D^r. Chapman, than whom no man had better pretensions to long life', a construction

which Lowth used in a letter to Dodsley dated 19 June 1760. The construction as such is not very common: Görlach found only 68 instances like the above sentence in a period of 400 years. Lowth perhaps used it when he had just started on his grammar in an effort to show off his grammatical competence to Dodsley. The correct use of case was a similar point. Actual usage shows considerable variation, as with Mrs Thrale who uses both *whom* and *who* in object position in her letters to Dr. Johnson: 'who you know I haven't seen' and 'whom he was heard to call'. In a footnote on p. 127 of his *Grammar*, Lowth (1762) picks up a similar pattern of usage from the philosopher John Locke, commenting: 'It ought to be *whom*'. The correct use of *whom* in letters of the period, however, suggests an almost unnatural awareness of the grammatical stricture that was supposed to regulate usage.

Women were often blamed for breaking these rules, supposedly because they had not received as much formal and especially clerical education as men; they would therefore not know about the concept of case, and hence be able to apply it correctly—even in English which, as previous chapters have illustrated, had gradually seen the erosion of the case system it had originally possessed. Walpole wrote to a friend as follows:

You will be diverted to hear that a man who thought of nothing so much as the purity of language, I mean Lord Chesterfield, says. 'you and *me* shall not be well together,' and this not once, but on every occasion. A friend of mine says, it was certainly to avoid that female inaccuracy *they don't mind you and I*, and yet the latter is the least bad of the two.

This construction was used by women, as by Walpole's correspondent Lady Ailesbury ('by Mr Conway and I') and by Lady Hertford ('and both Mr Fitzroy and her were vastly liked here'). It was, however, also used by men, including Walpole's own friends and acquaintances such as Conway ('but what might very probably have happened to anybody but you or I') and Lord Hertford (see above). Not surprisingly perhaps, Walpole did not use it himself. This provides a good example of what Jennifer Coates in 1993 termed 'The Androcentric Rule', according to which women are blamed for whatever is perceived as wrong in the language, while men are praised for the opposite. Another example of the Androcentric Rule in eighteenth-century English is the rise of the so-called sex-indefinite *he*, as in *anyone may do as he pleases*. An alternative, then as now, is the use of *they* as a singular pronoun: *anyone may do as they please*. Such a rule would have violated the principle of number but not that of sex, as with the choice of *he*, a decision which would no doubt have been preferred by women. It is therefore odd that this rule first appears in a grammar by a woman, Ann Fisher (1745): 'The *Masculine Person* answers to the *general Name*, which comprehends both *Male* and *Female*; as, *any Person who knows what he says*' (2nd edn.

260   INGRID TIEKEN-BOON VAN OSTADE

1750,[10] 117n). Did Ann Fisher record preferred practice, and by formulating it into a rule, attempted to inform her female audience of its existence, or did she draw up the rule herself? What remains clear, however, is that, despite the normative grammarians' proscriptions, both *between you and I* and singular *they* are still current today.

The grammarians were more successful in their condemnation of other items. *You was* is one of them. Usage of this construction increased considerably during the eighteenth century, and it apparently functioned as a transition in the development of *you* into a singular pronoun. There was a peak in usage during the 1760s, and this presumably caught the attention of the normative grammarians: though Lowth regularly used *you was* himself, he was the first to condemn it as 'an enormous solecism' in the first edition of his grammar. He was similarly the first to condemn the use of participles like *wrote*—as in the example he gives in his *Grammar* from the poet Matthew Prior, 'Illustrious virtues, who by turns *have rose*'—although he may have picked up the stricture from his friend James Harris. During the eighteenth century, past tense forms and participles of strong verbs regularly appeared in more than one form, such as *chose/chused* and *chose/chosen*, or *swum/swam/swimmed* and *swum/swimmed*. In their desire for regularity, the grammarians advocated the principle of one form, one function: *chose—chosen* and *wrote—written*. Again, and as illustrated above, Lowth frequently used *wrote*, *drove*, and *forgot* as past participles himself, although only in his informal letters.

In the letters of the period, grammatical forms are also attested that are not discussed in the grammars. One example is *he/she don't*, as illustrated above. It is used by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and by Walpole and his correspondents (Montagu, Lady Dysart, Lady Suffolk), but not by Boswell, Mrs Thrale, Fanny Burney, Lowth, or Thomas Turner, who is described by Vaisey (who edited Turner's diaries) as a Sussex 'shopkeeper, undertaker, schoolmaster, tax-gatherer, churchwarden, overseer of the poor and much besides'. About a generation ago today, the use of *he/she don't* would be considered affected, and if it was typically found in the language of the higher social classes during the eighteenth century (and also the nineteenth century; see further p.***), it may also have been considered affected in those days too. What complicates the matter is that *he/she don't* is also found in the novels of Fanny Burney and Smollett to mark non-standard speech. To social climbers, it would therefore have been a tricky form to use, as one ran the risk of being considered uneducated if one did. Stigmatized

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[10]   The first edition was probably published in 1745, although no copy is currently known to be in existence.

though the form probably was at the time, particularly to those belonging to the middle classes, we do find it in the language of Betsy Sheridan. This may therefore be taken to indicate that, despite her protestations to the contrary ('I never coveted the honor of sitting at great people's tables and every day I live I wish for it less'), that she was as much a social aspirer as her brother, though less openly so.

Another feature, not even discussed by present-day grammars of English, is found among all speakers, that is the use of -*self* pronouns instead of pronouns proper, as in 'Miss Allen & myself went to an Auction' (Fanny Burney), 'nobody is to see this letter, but yourself and . . .' (Walpole), and 'myself being the bondman' (Turner). This non-reflexive use of -*self* served as an avoidance strategy, functioning as a kind of modesty device by skirting the rather more direct use of the pronoun *I* on the part of the speaker and, interestingly, even that of *you* on the part of the addressee. It is more common with modest people, such as Turner and Fanny Burney, than with men like Boswell, who was very much the opposite. Tag questions are not treated in the grammars of the period either. They do occur, even in letters (e.g. Walpole: 'is not he'), although not as frequently as today: Lowth's letters to his wife do not contain a single instance. The use of tag questions was an informal device—seeking confirmation, deferring to the addressee—that still had to become common usage.

The subjunctive has a fixed place in the grammars of the period, and it still occurred regularly, although less so in informal contexts. Lowth, for example, when writing to his wife, says 'If he writes to the Bishop in the same style', but he used the subjunctive when addressing the Duke of Newcastle, as in 'Whether the exchange were advantageous'. He also used it to William Warburton (with whom he fought what Hepworth called in his biography of Lowth, 'the greatest literary battle of the century'), just before breaking off relations with him: 'That an end be put to this Correspondence'. There was also considerable variation in the use of periphrastic *do* in negative sentences and questions depending on the style of writing, the author's background, and the degree of influence from prestigious users. Usage of *do*-less negative sentences, for example, *I question not but that* . . . , in informative prose (novels, essays, history) ranges between 2 per cent (Lady Mary Wortley Montagu) and 75 per cent (Fanny Burney), that in letters between 1 per cent (Walpole) and 52 per cent (Richardson). In both styles, usage is most advanced with members of the aristocracy. Fanny Burney's exceptional status can be explained by the fact that she allowed her language to be influenced by that of Dr Johnson, who was her linguistic model. Richardson's usage is equally high in his letters as in his informative prose, which is unusual for the time: like Fanny Burney, he appears to have modelled himself on Johnson, and on the language of

Johnson's periodical the *Rambler* rather than on Johnson's other prose styles (that of his *Lives of the Poets*, for instance), which are less archaic in their use of periphrastic *do*. Another auxiliary that was changing at the time was the use of *be* with mutative intransitive verbs (*arrive*, *go*, *come*) which was increasingly re-placed by *have*. It is a change which appears to be led by women. With Lowth we find the auxiliary *be* most frequently in his informal letters, as in 'I rejoice that yᵉ. Dear Tom is gott so well again' (to his wife Molly, 1755). This suggests that by the middle of the eighteenth century the construction with *have* had already become the predominant one.

Lowth himself did not use double negation, nor did his correspondents; this probably explains why there is no stricture against it in the first edition of his grammar. One of his critical readers must have brought this oversight to his attention, and Lowth made up for it in the second edition of 1763: 'Two Negatives in English destroy one another, or are equivalent to an Affirmative'. According to Baugh and Cable, 'the eighteenth century is responsible for the condemnation of the double negative'; double negation was indeed for the first time formally proscribed, but it was already on the way out. Well before Lowth's grammar appeared, the physicist Benjamin Martin had set out the argument which lay behind the condemnation of the double negative:

But the two negatives as used by the Saxons and French must be understood by way of apposition … which way of speaking is still in use among us; and in this case the two negatives answer to the addition of two negative quantities in Algebra, the sum of which is negative. But our ordinary use of two negatives (in which the force of the first is much more than merely destroyed by the latter) corresponds to the multiplication of two negative quantities in Algebra, the product of which is always affirmative; as mathemat-icians very well know.

Martin's explanation—which appears on p.93 of his own *Institutions of Language* of 1748—is interesting because it indicates that double negation was no longer considered quite acceptable ('our ordinary use of two negatives'), but that it was common in speech ('which way of speaking is still in use among us'). It still occurred in drama and in novels, but also in letters, as by Sir Richard Steele, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Walpole ('I told them that I did not neither') and his correspondents (Montagu, Lord Hertford, Lady Hertford, the writer Hannah More), by Boswell ('I am troubled with no dirty sheets nor no jostling chair-men'), and by Mrs Thrale ('nor I see no Call'). But from the absence of any double negatives in the *Beggars' Opera*, commented on above, it appears that double negation was becoming stigmatized even in the spoken language—hence its presence in Lowth's grammar.

When he arrived in the capital, William Clift had to adapt his grammar to London practice and, because he was socially ambitious, he modelled himself on the language of the middle classes to which he aspired. He thus got rid of *he don't* and *you was*, as well as a range of a dialectal features such as *where* for *whether* and time adverbials as in 'the Footman left us last monday was Sennight', that is 'Monday, a week ago'. The adverbial *sennight*, grammaticalized from the Old English phrase *seofon* + *niht* (literally 'seven' + 'night', meaning 'week'), also occurs once in a letter by Lowth addressed to his friend and co-executor of the anecdotist Sir Joseph Spence's will, Gloster Ridley: 'I propose being in Town ab^t. nex[t] Wednesday Sennight'. Lowth had been born in Winchester, and this instance suggests that in informal letters—Ridley was one of his closest friends—regionally marked usages might show up occasionally. But he and his social peers would avoid them in their more formal letters, upon the risk of being considered uneducated by betraying their local origins.

Vocabulary

In an age in which many new words arose, it is interesting to see that almost all authors discussed in this chapter, including those of the first half of the century, are represented in the *OED* with first occurrences of new words. This need not imply that they had actually invented these words; in many instances they were simply the first to record common usage. Some writers appear more frequently in the *OED* than others, which probably merely means that their writings were better studied by the dictionary's volunteer readers who tracked down citations and evidence of usage for the *OED*. For all that, it is illuminating to see with what kind of words their names found their way into the *OED* as first users; it could be argued, for example, that the kind of words they supposedly coined are probably representative of the kinds of social and cultural developments that were going on at the time. In order of frequency, the following authors are listed in the *OED* online edition at the time this research was carried out: Richardson (245), Walpole (214), Fanny Burney (160), Henry Fielding (108), Sterne (100), Johnson (72), Gay (43), Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (35), Richard Sheridan (31), Boswell (25), Martin (18), Mrs Thrale (18), Garrick (16), Dodsley (8), Lowth (8), Thomas Sheridan (8), Sarah Fielding (4), and Betsy Sheridan (4). Except for—not surprisingly—Elizabeth Clift, all of the others occur in the *OED* as well, although William Clift and Thomas Turner do not have any first recorded words to their name, and only very few instances of other usages, such as *bumbo* ('a liquor composed or rum, sugar, water, and nutmeg') which was used by Turner in his diary in 1756, and the palaeontological term *megatherium* (referring to an 'extinct

genus of huge herbivorous edentates resembling the sloths') which was used by Clift. The majority of the other writers are literary figures, including the women; Benjamin Martin was, as already indicated, a scientist, and Robert Lowth and Thomas Sheridan were linguists—if this term can indeed be used for the period. Eighty per cent of Walpole's quotations derive from his letters, which is also true for Betsy Sheridan: all her quotations in the *OED*—thirty-three altogether—are from her journal letters. Given his literary status at the time, Johnson seems rather underrepresented in the *OED*; there are, however, many words in the *OED* for which the first recorded evidence is in his *Dictionary*. This indicates that the *Dictionary* served as an important source for recording words that were new at the time—for everyday or colloquial words such as *brilliantness* and *chickling* ('a tiny chick') as well as more learned ones, such as *menagogue* ('agents which increase or renew the menstrual discharge').

In his introductory 'General Explanations' for the *OED* in 1884, James Murray, the dictionary's principal editor, described the nature of the lexicon. Its core was, he noted, made up by Common words, bounded by the categories Literary and Colloquial words. These are surrounded in turn by Archaic, Dialectal, Vulgar, Slang, Technical, Scientific, and Foreign words. These categories are not discrete: they overlap with each other, for it is not always easy to classify a word as Vulgar or Slang, or as Technical or Scientific. All these categories are found among the first occurrences of words used by the authors listed above, with the obvious exception of Archaic words. There are many words that are now considered part of the common stock of words which were first used in the eighteenth century, and their nature usually reflects the interests of the author in question. We owe *heroism* to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1717), *to bother* to Thomas Sheridan (1718), the noun *growl* to Gay (1727), *pork-pie* to Henry Fielding (1732), *babyhood* to Richardson (1748), *descriptive* to Johnson (1751), *littered* to Dodsley (1754), *low-bred* to Garrick (1757), *biographically* to Sterne (1760), *ostensibly* to Walpole (1765), *dressing gown* to Richard Sheridan (1777), *pinafore* to Fanny Burney (1782), *coquettishly* to Sarah Fielding (1785), *box-office* to Betsy Sheridan (1786), *lapel* to Mrs Thrale (1789), and *colloquially* to Boswell (1791). To Lowth we owe two rather strong words, *intolerance* and *atrociously* (1765). Both occur in the final stages of his correspondence with Warburton. Johnson's new words are mostly of a learned nature, which is not surprising given his reputation for using Latinate words. Most of the Common words are found with Fanny Burney. It is interesting but not unexpected to see that the words *Johnsonian* and *lexicographical* are first found in Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (1791, ed. Chapman (1980))!

Martin did not add any common words to the English language according to the evidence of the *OED*. The first occurrences under his name are almost all

scientific: *geology* in 1735, *goniometer* ('an instrument used for measuring angles') in 1766, *uranology* ('the study of the sidereal heavens; astronomy') in 1735. Technical words appear, too (*archetypical* 1737, *diacritical* 1749). Martin was an inventor of microscopes, although any new project that crossed his path would appeal to him, even a grammar (1748) and a dictionary (1749). Johnson was also at the forefront of adopting scientific and technical words, as the citations for the *OED* entries for *acescence* ('the action of becoming acid or sour; the process of acetous fermentation'), *catenarian* ('pertaining to the curve formed by a chain or rope of uniform density hanging freely from two fixed points not in the same vertical line'), *alliterated* ('composed with or characterized by alliteration'), and *conglobulate* ('to collect into a rounded or compact mass') confirm. These were first used by Johnson in (respectively) 1765, 1751, 1776, and 1768. Lowth is credited with the first occurrences of *pleonastic* and *suffix*, both of which occur in his translation of *Isaiah* (1778). Literary words are found with Gay (*chanting*, 1720), Sarah Fielding (*exulting*, 1744), Dodsley (*shroudless*, 1758), and Sterne (*attrited*, signifying 'worn down by continued friction', 1760). Colloquial words are rare: *pill*, used as a verb by Henry Fielding in 1736 to mean 'to dose with pills', *pop-visit* ('a short, hasty, or unannounced visit, in which one "pops in"') used by Sterne in 1767, the onomatopoeic *piff* ('an imitation of various sounds, as of that made by the swift motion of a bullet through the air') used by Garrick in 1775, and *plumply* ('directly'), as used by Fanny Burney in 1786. Rarer still are vulgar words: *arrow* (given in the *OED* as a 'corruption of *e'er a*, *ever a*', meaning "always"') and *pottle* ('bottle'), used by Henry Fielding in 1749 and 1733; *imperence* ('impudence'), used in *The Clandestine Marriage* by George Colman and Garrick in 1766; *ain't* (Fanny Burney, 1778). Slang too is rare, such as *agad* ('egad') used by Henry Fielding in 1728. Such words would not be expected from writers such as Lowth, Martin, or Mrs Thrale, who were neither novelists nor playwrights (and who therefore had no need to represent the variety of discourses which might appear within these genres). Dialect words also occur, but not frequently and with a few authors only: *bocking* ('a kind of coarse woollen drugget or baize') which occurs in Martin's *Natural History of England* (1759) and *graddan* ('to parch (grain) in the husk'), used by Boswell in his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* which he undertook with Johnson in 1773.

Foreign words are a different matter. There are first cited instances in the *OED* for Henry Fielding (*poulard*, 'a young hen fattened for the table', 1732), Thomas Sheridan (*benecarlo*, 'a coarse-flavoured astringent Spanish wine', 1734), Walpole (*papillote*, 'a curl-paper', 1748), Sterne (*accoucheur*, 'a man who assists women in child-birth, a man-midwife', 1759), Boswell (*consulta*, 'an (official) consultation; a meeting of council', 1768), Fanny Burney (*passé*, used in 1775 to mean 'past, past

the prime; *esp.* of a woman: past the period of greatest beauty; also, out of date, behind the times, superseded'), Richard Sheridan (*amadavat*, 'an Indian song-bird', 1777), and Mrs Thrale (*casino*, 1798, used in sense 2 of the *OED* entry: 'A public room used for social meetings; a club-house; *esp.* a public music or dancing saloon')—but none, however, from Richardson. The largest number of foreign words is found with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, for example *cicisbeo* (1718, 'the name formerly given in Italy to the recognized gallant or *cavalier servente* of a married woman'), *feridgi* (1717, 'the dress of ceremony of the Turks'), and *diligence* (1742, from French, 'A public stage-coach'), due to her travels abroad. Most of these words, however, did not become part of the common word-stock of the language, and one wonders how current they ever were.

There are likewise many words for which the *OED* offers no more than a single quotation, that of the author in question. Examples are *tawder*, 'to deck out in tawdry garments' (Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 1716), *paradeful*, 'full of parade or display' (Richardson, 1755), *awaredom*, 'the state of being on one's guard' (Walpole, 1752), *phenomenous*, 'of the nature of a remarkable phenomenon' (Fielding, 1754), *to obstreperate*, 'to make a loud noise' (Sterne, 1765), *complimentative*, 'expressive of, or conveying, compliment; of the nature of a compliment' (Boswell, 1778), *amatorian*, 'amatorial, amatory' (Johnson, 1779), *feudatorial*, 'of or pertaining to a feud or fief; of the nature of a feud or fief' (Mrs Thrale, 1789). The question is why the *OED* lists them, or why the authors did not use *sorrowful*, *awareness*, *phenomenal*, *complimentary*, *amatorial*, or *feudal* instead, all of which were already in existence. Evidently, even the vocabulary, and particularly the use of suffixes, was still in a state of flux at the time.

One striking suffix among the new words is *-ess*, as in *Tristram Shandy*: 'The abbess of Quedlingberg, who with the four great dignitaries of her chapter, the *prioress*, the *deaness*, the *sub-chantress* and senior *canonness*, had that week come to Strassburg …'. *Deaness* ('a woman who is head of a female chapter') is first attributed to Sterne, who also was the first to use *nabobess* ('a female nabob; the wife of a nabob'); Walpole first used *adventuress*, *agentess*, *artistess*, *chancelloress* ('a female chancellor; also a chancellor's wife'), *incumbentess,* and *Methusalemess* ('a female "Methuselah"'). Fanny Burney used *censoress* and *commoneress*, and Richardson *briberess*, *doggess* ('a female dog, a bitch'), *fellowess* ('a female "fellow"'), *gaoleress,* and *keeperess*. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu used *interpretess*, which, according to the *OED* entry, is also recorded in the usage of Fanny Burney. Lowth, when he was in Ireland, asked his wife: 'Do you want to be a bishopess?' Not, obviously, a female bishop, as there were none at the time. 'Wife of a bishop' had been the common meaning of the word since the 1670s, and the new meaning would only be attested 200 years later. Many of these words

are recorded no more than once, and are labelled 'nonce words' by the *OED*. Their number, however, demonstrates that there was a need for gendered words at the time.

The prefix *un-* was likewise a productive one, most of all with Richardson: it is found in 17 per cent of his new words, as against 14 per cent with Fanny Burney and 10 per cent with Sterne and Walpole. Evidently, it was felt that almost any word could be turned negative by attaching *un-* to it. Some of these words were subsequently used by other writers, while others are listed no more than once: *unaudienced* (Richardson, 1748), *unsecrecy* (Walpole, 1759), *unkindhearted* (Sterne, 1759), *to unattire* (Fanny Burney, 1791).

SOCIAL NETWORKS AND LINGUISTIC INXUENCE

The entry for *interpretess* in the *OED* is supported by two citations, one from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the other from Fanny Burney. Yet is it unlikely that Fanny Burney adopted the word from her predecessor, who had used it in a private letter to her sister, the Countess of Mar. Fanny Burney used it 75 years later, in her diary. Possibly, she reinvented the word herself: *-ess* was, as we have seen, a productive suffix at the time. But there are some cases where influence does seem to have occurred. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is first credited with the word *cicisbeo* ('a gallant accompanying a married woman'), which she must have picked up in Italy on her way to Turkey with her husband, whom she accompanied on a diplomatic visit in 1716–1718. Walpole, 25 years later, used the word *cicisbeism* in a letter to Thomas Mann, one of his regular correspondents. Walpole and Lady Mary were close friends, and they frequently exchanged letters, gossiping about mutual acquaintances. Richardson used the word *over-indulged* in *Pamela* (1741). The next user of the word in a printed text was, according to the *OED*, Sarah Fielding in her novel *The Countess of Dellwyn* (1759). Sarah Fielding was both an admirer of Richardson—she had been the first to write a critical study of *Clarissa*—and a close friend. Richardson also appears to have influenced Johnson in the use of the word *out-argue*: he had first used it *Clarissa* (1748), and Johnson is next recorded in the *Life of Johnson* as using the word on 3 April 1778: 'Though we cannot out-vote them, we will out-argue them'. Like Sarah Fielding, Johnson was influenced by Richardson, with whom he likewise had a close tie; he had, for example, decided to adopt in his *Dictionary* a list of moral terms which Richardson had compiled, and which had been published as an appendix to the fourth edition of *Clarissa* in 1751. In another possible line of influence, the word *crinkum-crankum*

('applied playfully to anything full of twists and turns, or intricately or fancifully elaborated') was first used by Garrick and Colman in their play *The Clandestine Marriage* (1766).[11] It is next found seventeen years later, in Fanny Burney's novel *Evelina*. It is highly likely that Fanny Burney had read this popular play, or had seen it performed. Garrick, moreover, was a friend of her father's, and a frequent visitor of the Burneys.

Vocabulary was not the only field where linguistic influence occurred. Sarah Fielding conceivably was influenced in her use of *'d* in the past tense and past participle forms of weak verbs by the letters she received from Richardson, while Lowth's spelling of the word *immediatly* changed when he began to correspond with his friend Ridley. Boswell abandoned his private spelling habits when he became more serious as a student of law and Mrs Thrale in her letters to Dr Johnson, and only in those to him, accommodated to his preference for *-ck* in words like *musick* and *publick*, which is how these words appeared in his dictionary. Similarly, William Clift appears to have modelled his use of contractions on that of his new and much admired patron John Hunter. With the exception of Boswell, these examples were all motivated by the presence of a linguistic model, someone with so much prestige that they would set a linguistic norm to those around them. Fanny Burney changed her usage of periphrastic *do* (and presumably other linguistic features as well) after she became acquainted with Dr Johnson, who in turn had been influenced by Richardson. Fanny Burney's later novels consequently lost much of her originally colloquial style. Lowth's use of periphrastic *do* is very different from that of his middle-class peers; he used as few negative sentences without *do* ('wch. I know not where to get here') as people like Sir Horace Walpole. This suggests that Lowth's private linguistic model was not that of the educated gentleman, the class to which he himself belonged, but that of the class above, the aristocracy. And it is this model which he presented in his grammar, which came to serve as a tool for all those in the eighteenth century with similar social aspirations to himself.

Johnson, as already indicated, was widely perceived as a linguistic model. So had Addison been before him, providing a model of linguistic correctness during much of the eighteenth century through his popular journals *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. Linguistic models, however, do not normally innovate but they pick up, consciously or unconsciously, changes which were made or introduced by others. According to the research model of social network analysis, it is these people who are the true linguistic innovators. Usually, they are marginal people

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[11] The date supplied by the *OED*—1761—must be a mistake, for the play was completed in 1765 and first performed in 1766.

who are not fully integrated into a social network to which they aspire, although they might have a strong tie with the person who eventually adopts the innovation; often they are socially and geographically mobile. An example is John Gay, who came from a lower-class background in Cornwall. He was probably the first to use the formula *yours sincerely*, but he was not the one to cause its spread. Once it was adopted by the more influential members of his social network such as Swift, Pope, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, it spread further. Walpole, in turn, might be someone following the linguistic norm of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, in adopting part of her vocabulary. In the network around Johnson at the time the *Dictionary* was published in 1755, Richardson was a linguistic innovator: he occupied only a marginal position in it, and Johnson conceivably picked up innovations (vocabulary, usage of periphrastic *do*) from him and which others in turn adopted from Johnson, due to his own recognized status as a writer and lexicographer. But Richardson also belonged to other networks, in which he occupied a more central position. Sarah Fielding belonged to one of them: she admired Richardson and his work, and consequently modelled certain aspects of her language on him. The case of William Clift is similar: upon his arrival in London, he found himself in a new network, with John Hunter at its centre, and in the changes which his language subsequently underwent, his old linguistic norms, modelled on his sister Elizabeth, were displaced by Hunter's.

CONCLUSION

The twenty-one authors discussed in this chapter—Gay, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Richardson, Robert Dodsley, Martin, the Fieldings, Johnson, Lowth, Sterne, Garrick, Turner, Walpole, Boswell, Mrs Thrale, the Sheridan family, Fanny Burney, and the Clifts—do not belong to a single social network. There is, for example, no way in which Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Elizabeth Clift would have known each other, either socially or chronologically. Even Lowth and Johnson did not belong to a single social network, despite the fact that they were friends of Dodsley. In Dodsley their networks touched, but without overlapping. But what these people all have in common, apart from the fact that they wrote, which in itself turns them into a kind of linguistic elite, is that they did so at a time when the language had not yet been fully standardized. This applies to spelling, of which there were two recognized systems, one for printed and the other for private use, as well as to grammar, where people still varied in their use of sentences with and without *do* and between different forms for past participles of

strong verbs (*wrote* alongside *written*), and also to vocabulary: many eighteenth-century words have so far been attested in the *OED* in only a single instance. Given our present state of knowledge, this suggests that, at the time, authors were still to some extent free to coin new words along their own principles. Consequently, almost all the above authors have linguistic 'firsts' to their name in the *OED*. All this demonstrates that, contrary to the stereotypes of this period which often prevail in histories of the language, writers were not yet as constrained by normative writings—the grammars and dictionaries produced during the period—as they would be in years to come. Grammars such as those by Lowth and his contemporaries primarily served the function of making accessible new linguistic norms to those who sought social advancement, rather than controlling the language *per se*. This important insight comes from the recognition of the significance of the language of private letters. No history of modern English will be complete unless the language of letters is taken into account as well.

REFERENCES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

The most reliable first-hand information on how people spoke in eighteenth-century England, at least according to their contemporaries, may be found in Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (ed. Chapman 1980) and Fanny Burney's diaries (ed. Troide *et al.* 1988–). The journals and letters quoted from in this chapter are worth studying for the ways in which people wrote to different correspondents. Apart from Fanny Burney's early journals (also edited by Troide *et al.* 1988–) and Boswell's correspondence (see e.g. the edition by Walker (1966)), there are the letters of the Clift family edited by Austin (1991), of Robert Dodsley, edited by Tierney (1988), of the Fieldings, edited by Battestin and Probyn (1993), of Betsy Sheridan, edited by Lefanu (1960), of Mrs Thrale (available in Chapman's edition of Johnson's letters (1952)), as well as Thomas Turner's *Diary,* edited by Vaisey (1984). By far the most voluminous correspondence is that of Horace Walpole (edited by Lewis *et al.* (1937–83)). All of these are readily accessible. The only exception is Lowth, whose letters have not been published yet. Most of his letters are in the Bodleian Library, Oxford and in the British Library in London. A record of Lowth's correspondence can be obtained through the website of the National Register of Archives <**http://www.nationalarchives. gov.uk/**> → Search the archives → National Register of Archives → Personal Name → Lowth). A survey of eighteenth-century published collections of letters may also be found in *Historical Sociolinguistics and Sociohistorical Linguistics*, <**http://www.let.leidenuniv. nl/ hsl_shl**> (→ Contents → Correspondences). For readers interested in the lives of eighteenth-century people, there are, apart from Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, many biographies which are worth reading, for example, see Lonsdale (1965) for Charles Burney, Fanny Burney's father; Nokes (1995) for John Gay; Solomon (1996) for Robert

Dodsley; Thomas (1990) for Henry Fielding; Bree (1996) for Sarah Fielding; Millburn (1976) for Benjamin Martin; Halsband (1956) for Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Benzie (1972) for Richard and Thomas Sheridan. Vickery (1998) offers an account of how gentlewomen lived during the eighteenth century, based on an analysis of their diaries, while Tillyard (1994) is concerned with the lives of aristocratic women. Her book formed the basis of the outstanding BBC television series *Aristocrats*.

Görlach (2001*a*) offers a general introduction to eighteenth-century English, although the sections on grammar are largely based on an analysis of the normative grammarians' statements regarding usage. An account of the rise of normative grammar can be found in Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2000*c*). For a good selection of contemporary opinions on language from this period (including relevant extracts from Dryden, Defoe, and Addison), see Bolton (1966). Swift's *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue* was published (anonymously) in 1712. For the making of Johnson's *Dictionary*, see Reddick (1990). Robert Lowth's *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762) has also been reprinted by Menston Scolar Press (1967); for details of its genesis with reference to Lowth's son Tom, see Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2003*a*). Still the best general account of the codification process of the English language, although it dates back to the first edition of 1951, is Baugh and Cable's chapter 'The appeal to authority, 1650–1800' (2002: 248–89).

Mobility: geographical and social

Betsy Sheridan's *Journal* has, as already mentioned, been edited by Lefanu (1960); her statement about her brother is taken from p. 186, and the letter referred to on p.** is taken from p. 192. Mugglestone (2003*a*: 55), which provides a detailed study of the rise of (and attitudes to) a non-localized English pronunciation, is the source of the quotation from Swift about the increasing unacceptability of Irish accents. She also discusses Boswell's elocution lessons with Thomas Sheridan. T. Frank (1994) provides useful evidence on eighteenth-century Scottish and language standardization. The cited extract from William Clift's letters is taken from Austin (1991); Austin (1994) examines Clift's changing patterns of usage. The life of John Hunter, William Clift's patron and linguistic model, is discussed by Qvist (1981).

Spoken English

The Clift Family correspondence has been edited by Austin (1991). For Sarah Fielding's use of the dash, see Barchas (1996); Henry Fielding's textual emendations of his sister's novel are discussed in the introduction to her novel edited by Kelsall (1969). For Fanny Burney's acuity in representing eighteenth-century speech patterns, see Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2000*a*); the reported conversation between Burney, Johnson, and Mrs Thrale can be found in Vol. III of Burney's *Early Journals* (ed. Troide *et al.* 1988–: 170).

The age of letter-writing

An excellent discussion of eighteenth-century letter writing practice is Baker's (1980) introduction to John Wesley's correspondence. See Milroy (1987) for a full account of social network analysis; the potential for using social network analysis as a model for research on earlier stages of English is explored in Tieken-Boon van Ostade *et al.* (2000). Codification is discussed in Milroy and Milroy (1997). Betsy Sheridan's characterization of her own informal style can be found in Lefanu (ed. 1960: 57). For the various formulae which can appear in eighteenth-century letters, see Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1999), and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2003*b*). Bijkerk (2004) also provides a good analysis of their development and use. Boswell's letter to Johnston can be found in Walker (1966: 17), while the extract from Sarah Fielding's letter to James Harris is taken from Battestin and Probin (1993: 171). The use of courtly-genteel language in eighteenth-century letters is treated by McIntosh (1986).

Language

Osselton (1984) provides important information on the private spelling practices of the eighteenth century; private and public spelling practice are examined in Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1998). Austin (1991) is, as before, the source of the cited extracts from the letters of William and Elizabeth Clift; Austin's detailed introduction also provides useful evidence on Elizabeth's acquisition of literacy. Lowth's own education at his mother's knee is discussed by Luteijn (2004).

Grammatical variation is, as the chapter indicates, well-represented in private letters from a range of sources. Burney's letter on the stylistic formality of John Hawkesworth can be found in Troide *et al.* (1988: 63). Walpole's criticism of Chesterfield's usage is quoted from Leonard (1929: 188), while Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1994) analyses Walpole's own usage as well as that of his contemporaries, male and female alike. The 'Androcentric Rule' and associated gender stereotypes in language are discussed by Coates (1993). For the role of the female grammarians in eighteenth-century normative tradition, see Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2000*d*), and for a description of Ann Fisher's life and work see Rodríguez-Gil (2002). With reference to the development of the *be/have* periphrasis with mutative in-transitive verbs (as in *the parcel is/has arrived*) Rydén and Brorström (1987) present evidence of the role of gender in eighteenth-century linguistic change. On *you was*, see Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2002*a*); Lowth's condemnation of this construction can be found in a note on p. 48 of his *Grammar* (1762); on another example of Lowth's prescriptive strictures in relation to his own language, see Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2002*b*). Lass (1994*b*) provides a useful analysis of variation in past tense and past participle forms of strong verbs. *Self-* forms are discussed in Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1994).

Vocabulary

As in other chapters, the *OED* remains the prime source of evidence for both words and meaning, although Görlach (2001*a*) provides a good account of salient features of

ENGLISH AT THE ONSET OF THE NORMATIVE TRADITION   273

eighteenth-century usage. James Murray's nineteenth-century analysis of the structure of the lexicon is reprinted in Craigie and Onions (1933: xxvii). Richardson's list of moral terms, used by Johnson in his *Dictionary*, is discussed in Keast (1957).

Social networks and linguistic influence

For Garrick's connections with the Burney family, see Troide *et al.* (1988: xxi). Addison as a linguistic model is discussed by Wright (1994).