it from Condorcet was the specific emphasis on 'the oldest author', and the explicit references to chronological cataloguing and to chronological order. When Passow wrote in 1812 that 'the first authority adduced for a word which comes into the language should not be the first in quality, the best, but rather the earliest', the point he was making was precisely the point which separates Fox from Voltaire.[7]

The dating of classical authors was a special interest of Fox's, and he is still remembered by classicists for his contributions to the question of the date of Lycophron's *Alexandra*.[8] But although his thoughts on the historical principles of lexicography are not remembered, they were read and absorbed by one contemporary with a strong interest in the lexicography of Greek and of English, namely Samuel Taylor Coleridge. In 1814, Coleridge wrote in one of his notebooks of his idea of a 'Greek and English Lexicon on philosophical Principles, in which the one sole meaning, or original sensuous Image, of each word, will be first given, and then the different applications of this one meaning developed and explained'.[9] This would have been a dictionary like the one projected by Wakefield. In the following year, he encountered Fox's idea in a review of the recently printed correspondence of Fox and Wakefield, and regarded it as 'nearly the same plan' as his own.[10]

Fox's plan was, as I have just suggested, rather different from Coleridge's, but there is a way in which Coleridge did indeed make it his own. In 1817, Coleridge's prospectus for the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana* promised that one of the elements of the *Encyclopaedia* would be 'a Philosophical and Etymological Lexicon of the English Language, the citations arranged according to the Age of the Works from which they are selected'.[11] Here, Coleridge moves from sensuous images and their applications, to citations arranged, as Fox had proposed, in chronological order. The dictionary issued as part of the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana* became Charles Richardson's *New English Dictionary*, in which the arrangement of quotations in chronological order was of central importance—and the influence of Richardson's dictionary on the *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, although it has not been fully quantified, is well known.[12] So it is possible to discern a thread of influence running from Charles James Fox's remarkable early articulation of the historical principles of lexicography to the expression of those principles in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

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[7] Franz Passow, *Über Zweck, Anlage und Ergänzung Griechischer Wörterbücher* (Berlin, 1812), 32, 'nicht der erste, der beste; sondern der älteste als erste Auctorität für das Wort, das zur Sprache kommt, angeführt werden muss'.

[8] Stephanie West, 'Lycophron Italicized', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, civ (1984), 127–51 at 127.

[9] Coleridge, *Notebooks*, ed. Kathleen Coburn (New York, 1957–2002), 3, item 4210.

[10] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (Princeton, NJ, 1983), 238 (note dated by Coleridge 16 September 1815).

[11] Coleridge, *Shorter Works and Fragments*, ed. H. J. Jackson and J. R. de J. Jackson (Princeton, NJ, 1995), I, 584–5.

[12] Gilliver, *Making of the Oxford English Dictionary*, 5.

'TO DARE LARKS' IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH

In Old and Middle English, the verb *dare* belonged to the inflectional class known as preterite-presents. As such, it lacked the usual present tense ending in the third person singular (OE *dearr*, ME *dar*) and had an irregular past tense form (e.g. OE *dorste*, ME *durst*, etc.).[1] However, from Early Modern English *dare* also occurs as a regular weak verb with the third person singular present tense form *dares* and the past tense form *dared*. The older past tense form *durst* eventually becomes obsolete in the written standard language, but survives until at least the nineteenth century in non-standard dialects.[2]

[1] Cf. the *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. *dare* v.[1]) for forms and spelling variants. References to the *OED* in the following are to the 2nd edn (Oxford, 1989).

[2] J. Wright, *English Dialect Dictionary*, Vol. II (London, 1906), s.v. *dare* v.[1].

Such a change, a shift from an irregular to a regular inflectional class, is probably to be regarded as a conventional case of analogy. However, there is another change to *dare* in the Early Modern period which is harder to explain. Whereas in Old and Middle English the verb was generally used with infinitive phrases,[3] from the late sixteenth century it is also attested with direct object noun phrases. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives meanings such as 'venture upon, run the risk of meeting, meet defiantly' with inanimate objects:

> A Crown's worth tugging for, and I wil ha't
> Though in pursute I dare my ominous Fate.[4]

With a person as the direct object, the meaning is 'challenge or defy': 'What wisedome is this in you to dare your betters?'.[5] The *OED* also mentions the now obsolete pattern 'dare sb. out', as well as the pattern with a *to*-infinitive after the direct object, which is still used in Present-Day English. The first attestation of this is from *Antony and Cleopatra*:

> I dare him therefore
> To lay his gay Comparisons a-part.[6]

The development of these transitive uses is mysterious in light of what is generally known about grammatical change: transitive verbs often change into auxiliary verbs that combine with infinitives, but changes in the other direction are considered exceptional by most linguists.[7] Accordingly, the corresponding verbs in a number of related Germanic languages are not used transitively with the meaning 'challenge, defy'.[8]

However, there may be an overlooked factor which can explain the development of this innovative transitive pattern. For there used to be another verb *dare* in English, indexed as *dare* v.[2] in the *OED*, which had weak morphology and could be used both intransitively and transitively in Early Modern English. The intransitive use with meanings such as 'hide, cower, gaze' appears to be the older one, and is attested quite frequently in Middle English, e.g. in *The Owl and the Nightingale*:

> Ich mai i-son so wel so on hare,
> Theȝ ich bi daie sitte an dare.[9]

At some point a transitive pattern starts to occur, meaning 'frighten, mesmerize'. The first attestation with this meaning in the *OED* is dated to 1547, but if the following example of a passive participle from the early fifteenth century is not a scribal error, we may antedate the transitive use with about a century: 'Selcuth kniȝtis, Sum darid, sum dede, sum depe wondid'.[10]

In the sixteenth century, we often find the verb used in the collocation *to dare larks*, which means to catch larks by mesmerizing them, either with a hobby or a contrivance known as a *dare* or *daring glass*.[11] Thomas Cranmer describes the practice when he criticizes his opponent Stephen Gardiner for leading the discussion away from the heart of the matter, 'Like vnto men that dare larkes, which holde vp an hoby, that the larkes eies beyng euer vpon the hoby, shuld not see the nette that is layd on theyr heades.'[12]

[3] Cf. the *Dictionary of Old English* (doe.utoronto.ca), s.v. *dearr*, and the *Middle English Dictionary* (quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med), s.v. *durren* v. Online sources accessed 18 June 2017.

[4] 1611 Heywood *Gold. Age* i. Wks. 1874 III. 7 (*OED*, s.v. *dare* v.[1], sense 4.).

[5] 1589 *Hay any Work* 37 (*OED*, s.v. *dare* v.[1], sense 5.a.).

[6] *Antony and Cleopatra*, III.xiii.25–26 (cf. *OED*, s.v. *dare* v.[1], sense 5.b.). Shakespeare is quoted from *The Norton Facsimile of the First Folio of Shakespeare*, prepared by C. Hinman (New York, 1968 [1623]).

[7] Cf. e.g. B. Heine, *Auxiliaries* (Oxford, 1993), ch. 2; T. Kuteva, *Auxiliation* (Oxford, 2001), 110f; P. J. Hopper and E. C. Traugott, *Grammaticalization*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2003), ch. 5.

[8] E.g. Dutch *durven* (*Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*, gtb.inl.nl), Swedish *töras* (*Svenska Akademiens ordbok*, saob.se), and Danish *turde* (*Ordbog over det danske Sprog*, ordnet.dk/ods). Online sources accessed 18 June 2017.

[9] *a*1250 *Owl & Night*. 384 (*OED*, s.v. *dare* v.[2], sense 1.). There is also a single Old English attestation of the verb, apparently with the meaning 'hide', cf. *DOE*, s.v. *darian* v.

[10] *a*1400–50 *Alexander* 3044 (*OED*, s.v. *dare* v.[2], ppl. a.). The dictionary mentions that another MS. has the variant reading <dasyd>, cf. OED, s.v. *daze* v.

[11] Cf. OED, s.vv. *dare* sb.[2], *daring* vbl. sb.[2]. The practice of using a hobby is described in *The Booke of Faulconrie* by George Turberville, who considers it 'a very good sporte and full of delight, to see the fearefull nature of the sillie Larcke, with the great awe and subiection that the Hobbie hath hyr in' (London, 1575), 57.

[12] Th. Cranmer, *An answer of the Most Reuerend Father in God Thomas Archebyshop of Canterburye* (London, 1551), 121 (cf. *OED*, s.v. *dare* v.[2], sense 5).

Shakespeare also refers to the practice in *Henry VIII*:

> If we liue thus tamely,
> To be thus Iaded by a peece of Scarlet,
> Farewell Nobilitie: let his Grace go forward,
> And dare vs with his Cap, like Larkes.[13]

However, the verb is also found outside of this collocation, showing that it was a productive transitive verb:

> For our approach shall so much dare the field,
> That England shall couch downe in feare, and yeeld.[14]

Michael L. Samuels has suggested that *dare* v.[2] disappeared from the language to avoid confusion between the two verbs.[15] But could it be that the transitive use of *dare* v.[1], as in 'dare sb. (to do sth.)', developed through conflation of the two verbs, and that *dare* v.[2] has thus survived indirectly? If that is the case, it would make the development of transitive *dare* v.[1] much less mysterious. At first glance it may seem unlikely, for the verbs can actually be considered antonyms—*dare* v.[1] means 'have sufficient courage to do something', while one of the possible meanings of *dare* v.[2] is 'cower, be afraid'. However, in their transitive uses the two verbs come much closer to each other semantically. The former means 'challenge, defy', while the latter can mean 'frighten', and both thus imply an asymmetry in terms of courage between the subject and the object. In fact, there are some early attestations where either of the two interpretations seems possible: 'An Englishman hath thrée qualyties, he can suffer no partner in his loue, no straunger to be his equall, nor to be dared by any.'[16] This could be read both as 'to be challenged/crossed by anyone' or 'to be frightened by anyone'. Similarly, in the following, 'challenged' and 'frightened' both seem possible:

> Of heauen, or hell, God, or the Diuell, he earst nor heard nor carde,
> Alone he sought to serue the same that would by none be darde.[17]

Furthermore, while the verbs evidently go back to different sources, the Old English preterite-present verb **durran* and the weak verb **darian*, their formal similarity was noticed by Early Modern writers. Edmund Spenser puns on the two verbs in one of the *Cantos of Mutabilitie*,[18] and in his *Guide into Tongues*, John Minsheu actually suggests that *dare* v.[2] is derived from *dare* v.[1]:

> to Dare, *an old English word, and it signifieth to* stare, *because they which behold a man stedfastly with a wide open staring eie, are said to bee bold or* daring. . . . *Sometimes likewise it signifieth to challenge*.[19]

In some later dictionaries, the expression *dare larks* is lemmatized under *dare* 'have courage', but this may be because *dare* v.[2] had by then become obsolete. Since it was found in earlier works of literature, including Shakespeare, nineteenth-century lexicographers thought it necessary to include it.[20] However, in some non-standard dialects the meaning 'frighten' survived at least until the nineteenth century, as evidenced by the *OED* and Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*. Interestingly, some dialects also had a meaning 'deter by threatening, forbid' (e.g. in Yorkshire *dar 'em frae't*, 'frighten them from doing it'), but Wright takes this to be a use of *dare* v.[1] rather than *dare* v.[2]. It would be interesting to investigate how long *dare* v.[2] survived in non-standard

[13] *Henry VIII*, III.ii.279–82 (cf. *OED*, s.v. *dare* v.[2], sense 5).

[14] *Henry V*, IV.ii.36–37.

[15] M. L. Samuels, *Linguistic Evolution* (Cambridge, 1972), 69.

[16] J. Lyly, *Euphues and his England* (London, 1580), 48.

[17] W. Warner, *Albions England*, revised and enlarged edition (London, 1597), 230. Accessed 18 June 2017 through Early English Books Online, quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A14783.0001.001.

[18] 'Enclos'd the bush about, and there him tooke, / Like darred Larke; not daring vp to looke', Canto VI, stanza 47, in: *The faerie queene, disposed into XII. bookes* (London, 1609), 357.

[19] J. Minsheu, *Ἡγεμὼν εἰς τὰς γλώσσας, id est, Ductor in Linguas, The Gvide into Tongves* (London, 1617), 118. Thijs Porck (pers. comm.) points out that Minsheu may have meant the false etymology as a joke.

[20] In N. Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language* (New York, 1828), the expression *to dare larks* is treated as a specialized use of the weak verb *dare* 'challenge, provoke, defy'. R. Nares' *A Glossary* (Stralsund, 1825) also seems to indicate that *dare* with the meaning 'terrify' is a specialized use of 'courage' *dare*. Finally, C. Richardson repeats Minsheu's etymology in *A New Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1839).

dialects and whether speakers interpreted it as a separate verb from *dare* v.[1].

Three observations have been made here which may serve as circumstantial evidence for conflation of *dare* v.[1] and *dare* v.[2] in Early Modern English. First, there are attestations where either of the senses 'challenge' and 'frighten' appear to be possible; second, the formal similarity appears to have been evident to writers at the time, at least Spenser and Minsheu; and third, later lexicographers were not able to distinguish the two verbs. It may well be impossible to prove that the two verbs did indeed interact in the way proposed here, but I think it is at least worth entertaining the idea and considering what might count as support for (or counterevidence of) this 'conflation' hypothesis. In any case, the development of transitive *dare* v.[1] is puzzling—could *dare* v.[2], as in *to dare larks*, be the missing piece of the puzzle?

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CREDO QUIA IMPOSSIBILE: WHO SAID IT AND WHEN?

In a query posed just over 100 years ago, Edward Bensley drew attention to a passage in the British monthly *The Nineteenth Century and After* in which 'a medieval philosopher' was said to have vaunted his faith with the phrase '*credo quia impossibile*' (I believe because it is impossible).[1] Bensley asks who that medieval philosopher was, and where and when he made his declaration. That Bensley's query, thus far, has failed to attract a single response is no reflection on the assiduousness of this journal's readership, but rather reflects the fact that almost beyond doubt no medieval philosopher ever said these words. The phrase in question, along with the common variant *credo quia absurdum* (to which Bensley also makes reference) has been traditionally associated not with a medieval figure but with the North African Church Father, Tertullian (*c*.160–*c*.225). Moreover, as patristic scholars have long pointed out, Tertullian wrote neither of the phrases so commonly attributed to him.[2] What he did say was this: '*et mortuus est Dei Filius, prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est; et sepultus, resurrexit; certum est, quia impossibile*', which may be rendered: 'and the Son of God died, it is entirely credible, because it is unfitting, and he was buried and rose again; it is certain, because it is impossible'.[3] Bensley's pointed enquiry was no doubt intended to draw attention to both the distortion of Tertullian's original formulation and its misattribution to a 'medieval philosopher'.

This, nonetheless, still leaves us with the intriguing questions of how and why a nineteenth-century author might have wrongly attributed the saying to a medieval philosopher, who he imagined that medieval philosopher to be, and whether he was the first to make this misattribution. As it turns out, when we trace the history of Tertullian's paradox we find two significant earlier sites of mutation and misattribution. First, in seventeenth-century England, Tertullian's *certum est, quia impossibile* (it is certain, because impossible), morphed into the creedal form *credo quia impossibile* (*I believe* because it is impossible). Subsequently, in eighteenth-century France, a further modification led to the formula *credo quia absurdum*—'I believe because it is absurd'. As part of this latter process the phrase was also misattributed to Augustine (354–430). (We would now tend to place him in 'late antiquity', but 'early medieval' would work, too.)

One of the key agents in the transformation of Tertullian's original words was Thomas Browne, who drew attention to the paradox in his widely read *Religio Medici* (1643).[4] While Browne correctly reproduces the second part of Tertullian's formulation, he reinterprets it to suggest the general principle that the

[1] Edward Bensley, 'Credo quia Impossibile', *N&Qs*, 29 June (1912), 507.

[2] For a representative sample see Vianney Décarie, 'Le Paradoxe de Tertullien', *Vigiliae Christianae*, xv (1961), 23–31; Robert D. Sider, '*Credo quia absurdum*?', *Classical World*, lxxiii (1980), 417–19; Eric Osborn, *Tertullian: First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge, 1997), esp. 48–64.

[3] Tertullian, *De Carne Christi*, V, 4 (PL II, 761).

[4] Thomas Browne, *Religio medici* [1643] in *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, ed. Charles Sayle, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1912), I, 16.