publication said that we "told you so," that the irresponsible and malicious language used in the abortion debate, principally, but not exclusively, by the opponents of abortion, had at least helped somewhat to create a climate in which murder of one's political opponents became the order of the day.

These terrible events prompt me to make this appeal in *QRD*: can we not alter the language that we use in speaking about abortion so that we can discuss the issue in a calm, civil way? Might I suggest for starters that both sides in the debate drop their self-descriptive labels: Right to Life and Pro-Choice. Both terms are doublespeak. The abortion opponents beg the question, and the abortion supporters sidestep it. In he first instance, it is by no means clear that an embryo or fetus is an actual human being, at least not from the instant of conception. Even St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Contra Gentiles* argues that the embryo and fetus go through stages of "vegetable" and "animal" development before becoming human. In the second instance, the issue is not the right of women to generally exercise free will, a proposition that almost everyone in the modern civilized world would support, but that women be free to have abortions. Imagine applying the slogan "a woman's right to choose" to infanticide. Clearly "choice" is not the issue.

The point here is that both sides have decided to get an edge on each other by manipulating language, specifically by enlarging the semantic field of the issue. The anti-abortion groups want to make it seem that if one is for eliminating even the least developed forms of the embryo, then one is against human life, perhaps against all life. The pro-abortion groups want to make it seem that if one is against a woman's right to choose to have an abortion, then one is against a woman's right to have a choice about anything at all. □

The *OED*'s NARP

(from the *OED News*, the newsletter of *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Series 2, No. 2, Jun 95)

Dr JFFREY TRIGGS, Director of the OED North American Reading Programme, describes how it works

Even before the publication of *OED2* in 1989, the editors in Oxford recognized the need for more immediate access to North American sources and began planning to develop Oxford's first official North American Reading Programme based on American soil. In fact, in preparing the original *OED*, James Murray had benefited considerably from an unofficial North American reading programme directed by Professor March at Lafayette College.

On a number of occasions, most prominently in his well-known preface, Murray directed special praise at his American readers. During the period of the four-volume Supplement to the *OED* (1972–86), American sources were widely read, but as part of the *OED*'s reading programme based in Oxford. The fanfare that attended the publication in 1989 was quietly accompanied by another first for the *OED*: the establishment of its new American office in Morristown, New Jersey, and the recruitment and training of its first official readers in America. The North American Reading Programme, in part because of the circumstances of its creation, has been associated with a number of other 'firsts' as well.

From the very beginning, it broke with the tradition of having readers 'card' their quotations on the venerable six-by-four inch slips of paper. Beginning with its first 84 quotations in August 1989, NARP (as it came to be known) has produced all its quotations in electronic form. As the NARP readers have always been scattered geographically across a large continent, it was necessary to invent from scratch a flexible system of data entry that enabled people with different equipment and computer backgrounds to contribute to what was to become an exceptionally accurate and homogeneous quotation database.

Instead of writing out quotations by hand, NARP readers used highlighters to mark their catchwords and then either keyed in the texts with a word processor or text editor, or sent them to be keyed by trained keyboarders. The resultant files in a simple 'template' format were then converted automatically at a central location to structured electronic 'slips' in SGML format. In this manner, the NARP was able to grow within two years from a programme producing hundreds of quotations per month to one that regularly produces anywhere from twelve to sixteen thousand electronic slips per month. To date, NARP has sent over 760,000 quotations to Oxford, each of these averaging over twenty words of searchable text. These

have been combined with a similar electronic corpus being collected by the reading programme in Oxford.

The NARP quotations have been taken from a wide variety of general, regional, and special subject texts of North American provenance. A recent count showed that over 5,500 individual texts have been perused by readers looking for examples of new words or new senses of words, ethnic or regional expressions, and special subject vocabulary (e.g. terms from baseball, computing, cooking and food, law-enforcement, Native American studies, plumbing, etc.).

More recently, as the *OED* revision process has moved into full swing, the NARP has been actively engaged in reading historical sources as well. These include diaries, collections of letters and personal papers, historical non-fiction sources, and works by previously neglected authors (such as the Schornberg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers). The purpose is to build regional, diachronic depth into the electronic quotation database that will be used to ensure that the new *OED* remains the English dictionary of record in the twenty-first century and beyond. ☐

Editions and Adaptations of Shakespeare

(press release)

Chadwyck-Healey announces the publication of an important new resource on CD-ROM for Shakespeare scholars, *Editions and Adaptations of Shakespeare*, which contains eleven major editions of Shakespeare's work, twenty-four separate contemporary printings of individual plays, selected apocrypha and related works and more than one hundred adaptations, sequels and burlesques from the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Editions and Adaptations of Shakespeare brings together for the first time in a single electronic database the First Folio of 1623 and the most important of the original quarto and octavo printings of individual plays, which between them are the focus of so much of the textual debate surrounding Shakespeare. The collection culminates in the Cambridge edition of 1863–6, which is the basis for the famous and popular Globe edition and which still profoundly influences the majority of the twentieth-century editions of Shakespeare.

Every text within the database is reproduced in full, including all prefatory matter and annotations. Facsimile reproductions of the title pages and any illustrations from the original editions are included along with a selection of pages of text.

Editions and Adaptations of Shakespeare is the only electronic version of Shakespeare's works that enables different editions and adaptations to be compared. A powerful feature of the software enables users to display different versions of a text on screen at the same time for the purpose of comparison. Links between the parallel texts enable users to move easily between them, opening up these texts to investigation by Shakespeare scholars and students, literary theorists and cultural historians in ways never before possible.

A wide selection of theatre adaptations of Shakespeare's plays is included. The core is Bell's Acting Edition (1774) which contains versions of thirty-six of Shakespeare's plays. This is supplemented by over seventy-five adaptations of individual plays from the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including works by John Dryden, Nahum Tate, Colley Cibber and John Kemble.

The software for the CD-ROM edition is based on that used for Chadwyck-Healey's earlier full-text literary databases, *English Poetry* and *English Verse Drama*. Users are able to carry out sophisticated searches on any word or phrase in the text or title of any edition or adaptation in the entire database; restrict searches to editions or adaptations only, to a specific genre, play, act, scene or speaker or limit a search to the works of an author of adaptations, to songs and lyrics and to stage instructions. Authorial and editorial notes and prefatory and end matter can be included in or excluded from a search or can be searched exclusively. ☐

Editions and Adaptations of Shakespeare costs £2,500.

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