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Title: *Representing the West in Monolingual Chinese Dictionaries from the XX and XXI Century*

Authors: Chiara BERTULESSI (University of Milan, Italy), Tommaso PELLIN (University of Bergamo, Italy)

Abstract:

In the field of (meta)lexicography, it is now generally acknowledged that there is no such thing as a perfectly objective dictionary. Despite the efforts that have been made in creating dictionary-making processes which aim to be as objective as possible and based on data on actual language use, one should not overlook the fact that dictionaries are cultural artefacts. As such, to some extent they will always carry traces of specific views about language and the world, usually the views embedded in the cultural, social, and political context in which the dictionary compilation takes place (Moon 1989; Fishman 1995; Iamartino 2017).

Starting from the assumption that “dictionaries are not simply containers of the words of a language”, Benson (2001) suggests that we should regard dictionary-making as a process of representation of language, that is seeing dictionaries as “structured representations of the language as it is constructed by the dictionary itself”. In this respect, the relationship between lexicography and ideology has long been an object of interest from scholars researching dictionaries (Buzon 1979; Beaujot 1989; Moon 1989; Fishman 1995; Benson 2001). As Moon points out (2014), meaning and ideology are central to the concerns of critical lexicography. More recently, some scholars have also worked to build a consistent methodology within critical lexicography, defined as Critical Analysis of Lexicographical Discourse (Hornscheidt 2008; Rodríguez Barcia 2012; Chen 2019; Bertulessi, forthcoming). This critical perspective on ideologically positioned meaning in dictionaries can be adopted to investigate the representation of different topics and semantic categories by dictionaries. Among these, a promising object of analysis is the representation of national, political, and cultural realities different from those to which the dictionary under study belongs (see, as an example, Benson’s study on the representation of China in the *OED*).

Drawing on the theoretical framework of critical lexicography, the present paper investigates the representation of the West (mainly Europe and the United States) in a set of monolingual dictionaries of Modern Standard Chinese published in the XX and XXI century. In terms of methodology, the data are gathered from a set of authoritative monolingual Chinese dictionaries (e.g., among others, the *Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*, the *Xinhua dictionary*, the *Comprehensive Modern Chinese Dictionary*, the *Dictionary of Chinese usage*, etc.). In the selected sources, both the wordlists and the definitions are considered, with the aim to identify the associations, in the lexicographical text, with the West. Specifically, following Benson (2001), different lexicographical elements and functions are analysed, i.e., defining and non-defining uses, usage comments, descriptive labels, and other associative functions. A diachronic perspective is also adopted, to detect changes in the representation of the West by Chinese lexicographical sources compiled in different

historical (and political) moments. The objective of the paper is thus to identify and uncover the underlying ideologies in the representation of the West constructed by the entries of the selected dictionaries, as well as to trace the evolution of this representation through time.

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