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Adapting and Rewriting in Eighteenth-Century British Lexicography

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Abstract This paper proposes to include lexicography among the genres that develop and renew themselves most systematically over time by resorting to textual adaptation strategies. This is particularly evident in the history of English dictionary-making, with the most significant and striking example being Samuel Johnson's lexicographical masterpiece. The paper traces and comments on all the different ways in which the 1755 first edition of his *Dictionary* was adapted throughout the eighteenth century to meet the needs of different categories of dictionary users.

Keywords Adaptation in Dictionary-making. Eighteenth-century Lexicography. Samuel Johnson's Dictionary. Samuel Dyer. Edmund Burke. William Perry. Oxford English Dictionary.

Summary 1 Lexicography as the Art and Craft of Adaptation. – 2 Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* as a Case Study of Adaptation in Lexicography. – 3 The Conclusion, in which Nothing is Concluded.

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1 Lexicography as the Art and Craft of Adaptation

It is somewhat surprising that studies on adaptation, which have undergone significant development in recent years, have neglected lexicography.[1] Indeed, every student of the history of dictionary-making knows that adapting and rewriting – often taking the form of plagiarism – have been the main ways in which the art and craft of lexicography evolved over the centuries:

> in early lexicography, it was common practice – at best judicious, at worst flagrant – to copy from other dictionaries, which was done most often without acknowledging one's sources, or mentioning some minor ones in order to disguise the most influential. D. T. Starnes and G. E. Noyes, the authors of a seminal study on the early history of English dictionary-making, wrote that English lexicography up to Samuel Johnson progressed by plagiarism, that the best lexicographers were simply the most discriminating plagiarists, and that a good dictionary was its own justification, whatever the method of compilation. Compilation, rather than plagiarism, is arguably the keyword here: a lexicographer puts together different pieces of information, and legitimately so, wherever they are found. Lexicography develops by accretion rather than progression; continuity is more important than innovation. (Iamartino 2020, 61)

As a matter of fact, lexicography is a very traditional art and craft, with each lexicographer largely relying on his predecessors' work. This basically meant accretion in the first steps of early modern dictionary-making. See for example the evolution of multilingual lexicography in Europe, which started in Venice in 1477, when the German-born Adam von Rottweil, a former collaborator of Johann Gutenberg, published his *Introito e Porta*, an Italian-German topically arranged wordlist. The *Introito* became the basis of a number of polyglot dictionaries, which came to include up to eight languages, so that, by the mid-1630s, some 90 editions of the polyglot dictionaries derived from the *Introito e Porta* had been published in a number of European countries.

Another relevant example is the birth and early development of English monolingual lexicography in the seventeenth century, the so-called tradition of hard-word dictionaries: these were not meant to include the whole lexical store of the language, but only the most

1 There are references to the art and craft of dictionary-making in neither methodological criticism on adaptation nor pertinent collections of essays, such as Leitch 2017; Fehrle, Schäfke-Zell 2019; Magazzù, Rossi, Sileo 2020; Leitch 2023; Chua, Ho 2023; and Leitch 2025.

difficult words, basically "hard vsuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greek, Latine, or French. &c", as one can read on the title-page of *A Table Alfabeticall* of 1604, the first hard-word dictionary compiled by Robert Cawdrey that included less than 3,000 entries. By the time Edward Phillips had published *The New World of English Words* in 1658, the entries had exceeded eleven thousand. The methodology of the increase was explained by another hard-word lexicographer, the barrister Thomas Blount, in the address "To the Reader" of his *Glossographia* (1656):

> I profess to have done little with my own Pencil; but have extracted the quintessence of Scapula, Minsheu, Cotgrave, Rider, Florio, Thomasius, Dasipodius, and Hexams Dutch, Dr. Davies Welsh Dictionary, Cowels Interpreter, &c. and other able Authors, for so much as tended to my purpose.[2]

Hard-word lexicography came to an end in the early eighteenth century, when new developments can be traced in British lexicography. On the one side, the first general (or universal) English dictionaries were published, because the likes of John Kersey and Nathan Bailey – not so much the renowned Samuel Johnson – thought that the ordinary words of English should be included in monolingual dictionaries. They relied on previous English-Latin and English-French dictionaries, with the Latin and French definitions translated into English or replaced by new ones, their own dictionaries thus providing good examples of accretion, adaptation and rewriting at the same time. For instance, in 1755 – the same year when Johnson published his *Dictionary* – a new edition of Nathan Bailey's *Universal Etymological English Dictionary* came out, which contained some 65,000 entries, 20,000 more than Johnson's.

On the other side, the eighteenth-century development of general-purpose lexicography went hand in hand with the production of a

2 Some of Blount's main sources (John Bullokar's *An English Expositor*, another hard-word dictionary of 1616, and John Rastell's *Les Termes de la Ley*, first compiled in 1527 and often revised and reprinted) are not mentioned. More revealing, anyway, is the variety of the dictionaries referred to here: Joannes Scapula was a German lexicographer who published a very successful abridgement of Henri Estienne's *Thesaurus Grecae Linguae* in 1580; John Minsheu was the compiler of the polyglot *Ductor in Linguas* (1617); Randle Cotgrave, John Rider, and John Florio are the well-known authors of, respectively, bilingual dictionaries of French (1611), Latin (1589), Italian (1598, 1611) and English; Thomasius is the Latinised name for Thomas Thomas, the author of a Latin-English dictionary (1587); Dasipodius was the Strasburg schoolmaster and lexicographer Peter Hasenfuss (or Petrus Dasypodius) who published his *Dictionarium Latinogermanicum* in 1535; Henry Hexham was an English soldier, translator, and lexicographer who compiled the first English-Dutch dictionary in 1647; Dr John Davies published a Welsh grammar in Latin, and a bilingual dictionary of Welsh and Latin in 1632; finally, *The Interpreter* was a very influential law dictionary published by the jurist John Cowell in 1607.

wide variety of typologically-different dictionaries – monolingual, bilingual and multilingual dictionaries, dictionaries of arts and crafts, encyclopedic dictionaries, etc. Indeed, Samuel Johnson was right when, in a letter to Samuel Richardson dated March 28, 1754, he defined his time as "this age of dictionaries" (Redford 1992, 79) – dictionaries, again, largely the result of a never-ending process of adaptation, rewriting and/or translation.

2 Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* as a Case Study of Adaptation in Lexicography

The above observations form the backdrop and framework of the present essay, which focuses on the undisputed masterpiece of eighteenth-century English lexicography, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, compiled by Samuel Johnson and published in London in 1755 as two thick folio volumes. While analysing how Johnson's *Dictionary* materials were updated, adapted and reorganised over time in order to meet the needs of new and different users, some elements will also be offered for a taxonomy of the possible modes of adaptation and rewriting of dictionaries, both past and present.

The different ways Johnson's *Dictionary* underwent lexicographical adapting and rewriting in the second half of the eighteenth century can be listed as follows: (1) Johnson's own revisions of his *Dictionary*; (2) further 'full' editions of to the *Dictionary*; (3) manuscript additions to and revisions of the *Dictionary*; (4) abridged and miniature editions of the *Dictionary*; (5) Johnson's *Dictionary* and pronouncing dictionaries; (6) Johnson's *Dictionary* as a source for bilingual and trilingual dictionaries.

2.1 Johnson's Own Revision of His *Dictionary*

A number of editions of Johnson's dictionary were published in the three decades between 1755 and 1784, when he died;[3] still, the only edition he worked on to improve his work was the fourth edition of 1773.

That his dictionary would need some rewriting, he knew even on publishing it, as the first two paragraphs of his *Preface* to the dictionary make clear:

> It is the fate of those who toil at the lower employments of life, to be rather driven by the fear of evil, than attracted by the prospect of good; to be exposed to censure, without hope of praise; to be

3 See 2.2. below.

> disgraced by miscarriage, or punished for neglect, where success would have been without applause, and diligence without reward.
>
> Among these unhappy mortals is the writer of dictionaries; whom mankind have considered, not as the pupil, but the slave of science, the pioneer of literature, doomed only to remove rubbish and clear obstructions from the paths through which Learning and Genius press forward to conquest and glory, without bestowing a smile on the humble drudge that facilitates their progress. Every other authour may aspire to praise; the lexicographer can only hope to escape reproach, and even this negative recompence has been yet granted to very few. (Kolb, DeMaria 2005, 73)

The ideas expressed in these lines – the "writer of dictionaries" is bound "to be exposed to censure, without hope of praise" and "can only hope to escape reproach" – are replaced by the appeal to a more balanced view in the final paragraph of the *Preface*, where Johnson makes clear all the difficulties he had had to face and overcome, before the solemn and rhetorically perfect closing sentence:

> In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the authour, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns; yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it, that the *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academick bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. It may repress the triumph of malignant criticism to observe, that if our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt which no human powers have hitherto completed. […] I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please, have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds: I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise. (Kolb, DeMaria 2005, 111, 113)

Since praise largely outweighed censure,[4] Johnson was able to describe his work on the fourth revised edition of 1773 in a way that mixes philosophy and practicality:

4 Still, some readers commented on his mistakes (see Rypins 1925; Noyes 1954-55): famously, Johnson defined *pastern* as the knee of a horse, while it denotes that part of a horse's leg between the fetlock and hoof.

> Many are the works of human industry, which to begin and finish are hardly granted to the same man. He that undertakes to compile a Dictionary, undertakes that, which, if it comprehends the full extent of his design, he knows himself unable to perform. Yet his labours, though deficient, may be useful, and with the hope of this inferior praise, he must incite his activity, and solace his weariness. Perfection is unattainable, but nearer and nearer approaches may be made; and finding my Dictionary about to be reprinted, I have endeavoured, by a revisal, to make it less reprehensible. I will not deny that I found many parts requiring emendation, and many more capable of improvement. Many faults I have corrected, some superfluities I have taken away, and some deficiensies I have supplied. I have methodised some parts that were disordered, and illuminated some that were obscure. Yet the changes and additions bear a very small proportion to the whole. The critic will now have less to object, but the student who has bought any of the former copies, needs not repent; he will not, without nice collation, perceive how they differ, and usefulness seldom depends upon little things. (Johnson 1773, *Advertisement*)

The same is found in a letter to Boswell, dated Feb. 24, 1773, just a few days before the publication:

> A new edition of my great *Dictionary* is printed, from a copy which I was persuaded to revise; but having made no preparation, I was able to do very little. Some superfluities I have expunged, and some faults I have corrected, and here and there have scattered a remark; but the main fabrick of the work remains as it was. I have looked very little into it since I wrote it, and, I think, I found it full as often better, as worse, than I expected. (Chapman 1953, 504)

Johnson may have been "able to do very little" but he did it quite systematically. Indeed, his revisions and rewritings could and did involve any feature of the microstructure of the dictionary entries: the most relevant adaptations concern entrywords and definitions, that may be omitted, added, moved, merged into one or split into two; but all parts of an entry – word stresses, grammatical marks, etymologies, citations and citation attributions, and spelling mistakes or typos – are sometimes corrected. In order to provide evidence of Johnson's procedure, a sample analysis of Johnson's rewriting of the entries was carried out by systematically comparing the 1755 and 1773 editions in the A-ALW section of the *Dictionary*, i.e. the first half of the letter A. The results are as follows:

Table 1 Sample analysis of adaptation and rewriting in A-ALW entries

Omitted entries (3)	Abarcy, Absis, Alternate ratio
Added entries (22)	Abstractness, To Accommodate *v.n.*, To Accompany *v.n.*, Accumbent, To Accustom *v.n.*, Aching, Acorned, Adaptness, Additional *n.s.*, To Addle *v.n.*, Adorn *adj.*, Advantageable, Advertent, Aggelation, To Agrise *v.n.*, To Agrise *v.a.*, Albe, Alew, Alimentally, All hallow, Alliteration, Alterage
Moved entries (4)	Abby, Abominable, Admirability, All *adj.*
Merged entries (8)	To Abate 2, Abatement 2, Aberrance / Aberrancy, Abhorrence / Abhorrency, Above / From above, Adolescence / Adolescency
Split entries (4)	To Abide, To Account, To Act, To Adventure

Particularly significant examples include Abarcy, Alternate ratio, and Alliteration:

> D1755: Abarcy, *n.s.* Insatiableness. *Dict.*
>
> D1755: Alternate ratio, or proportion, is where the antecedent of one is to its consequent, as the antecedent of another to its consequent; the very same ratio, in this case, holding alternately in respect of the antecedents to each other, and the consequents to each other. *Chambers.*
>
> D1773: Alliteration. *n.s.* [*ad* and *litera*, Lat.]
>
> Of what the critics call the *alliteration* or beginning of several words in the same verse with the same letter, there are instances in the oldest and best writers, as
>
> Bemoth biggest born. *Milton's Paradise Lost.*

Abarcy is omitted in the revised edition as a purely dictionary word, i.e. simply lifted from a preceding dictionary (as shown by the abbreviation *Dict.*), with no evidence of its real usage found by Johnson. Alternate ratio is evidently omitted because it is a technical term and because its definition had not been penned by Johnson, but it was copied from Chamber's *Cyclopaedia*. Johnson must have thought that it was better to leave it there. Alliteration, instead, represents the addition of a literary term that had escaped him while working on the first edition and which he considered useful to include for his educated readership.

The same A-ALW sample returned the following results when Johnson's revision of his definitions was analysed:

Table 2 Sample analysis of revisions of definitions in A-ALW entries

Fully omitted definitions (4)	Abject *adj*., To Accompany *v.a*., etc.
Partially omitted definitions (26)	Abacus, To Ablegate, Abridgement, To Alien, etc.
Fully added definitions (47)	Abortive *adj.*, Abstracted, To Abuse, To Agree *v.n.*, etc.
Partially added definitions (99)	Abandoned, To Abbreviate, To Abjure, Agriculture, etc.
Moved definitions, from an entry to another (13)	To Account *v.a./v.n*., To Act *v.a./v.n*., etc.
Moved definitions, in the same entry (4)	Aberring, Aggregation, Air (2)
Merged definitions (2)	To Air (2)
Split definitions (1)	To Alarm
Formally modified definitions (19)	Abalienation, Abrasion, Abridgement, Acanthus, etc.
Semantically modified definitions (8)	Above *prep*., Acetose, Act, Adherence, etc.

The following three examples will suffice to highlight how Johnson adapts and rewrites his definitions.

D1775: Abject. *adj*. [*abjectus*, Lat. thrown away as of no value.]
1. Mean, or worthless, spoken of persons.

That rebellion
Came like itself in base and *abject* routs,
Led on by bloody youth goaded with rage,
And countenanc'd by boys and beggary. *Shakesp. Hen*. IV.

Honest men, who tell their sovereigns what they expect from them, and what obedience they shall be always ready to pay them, are not upon an equal foot with such base and *abject* flatterers; and are therefore always in danger of being the last in the royal favour. *Addison's Whig Examiner.*

2. Contemptible, or of no value; used of things.

I was at first, as other beasts that graze
The troden herb, of *abject* thoughts and low.
Milt. Paradise Lost, b. ix. l. 571.

3. Without hope or regard; used of condition.

The rarer thy example stands,
By how much from the top of wond'rous glory,
Strongest of mortal men,
To lowest pitch of *abject* fortune thou art fall'n.
Milton's Samson Agonistes.

We see man and woman in the highest innocence and perfection, and in the most *abject* state of guilt and infirmity.
Addison. Spectator, N° 273.

4. Destitute, mean and despicable; used of actions.

To what base ends, and by what *abject* ways,
Are mortals urg'd thro' sacred lust of praise?
Pope's Essay on Criticism.

The rapine is so *abject* and profane,
They not from trifles, nor from gods refrain.
Dryden's Juvenal, Sat. 8.

In the 1773 revision, the first definition of Abject is expanded to "Mean; worthless; base; groveling: spoken of persons, or their qualities", so that it can include the quotation from *Paradise Lost* and, consequently, the second definition is deleted; the original third and fourth definitions, now second and third, are slightly modified to "Being of no hope or regard; used of condition" and "Mean and despicable; used of actions" respectively; finally, the quotations under the last definition are swapped around, so that Dryden's precedes Pope's, because it was part of Johnson's methodology to list illustrative examples relating to a given meaning in chronological order.

D1755: Abridgment. *n.s.* [*abregement,* French.]

1. The contraction of a larger work into a small compass.

Surely this commandment containeth the law and the prophets; and, in this one word, is the *abridgment* of all volumes of scripture. *Hooker, b. ii.* § 5.

Myself have play'd
The int'rim, by remembering you 'tis past;
Then brook *abridgment*, and your eyes advance
After your thoughts, straight back again to France?
Shakespeare's Henry V.

Idolatry is certainly the first-born of folly, the great and leading paradox; nay, the very *abridgment* and sum total of all absurdities. *South's Sermons.*

2. A diminution in general.

All trying, by a love of littleness,
To make *abridgments*, and to draw to less,
Even that nothing, which at first we were. *Donne.*

3. Restraint, or abridgment of liberty.

The constant desire of happiness, and the constraint it puts upon us, no body, I think, accounts an *abridgment* of liberty, or at least an *abridgment* of liberty, to be complained of. *Locke.*

The most evident change in the 1773 Abridgment entry is the addition of a fourth definition "4. Restraint from any thing pleasing; contraction of any thing enjoyed" with its own illustrative quotation: "It is not barely a man's *abridgment* in his own external accommodations which makes him miserable, but when his conscience shall tell him that it

was his sin and his folly which brought him under that *abridgment. South"*. At the same time, since any additions should be balanced by deletions so as not to increase the size of the revised dictionary, the quotation from Shakespeare's *Henry V* is removed. Two further improvements are introduced in this entry: the first definition is rephrased as "The epitome of a larger work contracted into a small compass; a compend; a summary", substituting *contraction* with three different and better equivalents of the entryword; also, the third definition is replaced by "Contraction; reduction" because the phrase "abridgment of liberty" is found in the quotation from Locke, so that defining *abridgement* with abridgement is of course unacceptable.

D1755: ACCORDING. *prep.* [from *accord*.]

1. In a manner suitable to, agreeably to, in proportion.

   Our churches are places provided, that the people might there assemble themselves in due and decent manner, *according* to their several degrees and orders. *Hooker, b. v.* § 13.

   Our zeal, then, should be *according* to knowledge. And what kind of knowledge? Without all question, first, *according* to the true, saving, evangelical knowledge. It should be *according* to the gospel, the whole gospel: not only *according* to its truths, but precepts: not only *according* to its free grace, but necessary duties: not only *according* to its mysteries, but also in commandments. *Sprat's Sermons*.

   How much more noble is the fame that is built on candour and ingenuity, *according* to those beautiful lines of Sir John Denham, in his Poem on Fletcher's works. *Addis. Spect*.

   A man may, with prudence and a good conscience, approve of the professed principles of the one party more than the other, *according* as he thinks they best promote the good of church and state. *Swift on the Sentiments of a Church of Engl. man.*

2. With regard to.

   God made all things in number, weight, and measure, and gave them to be considered by us *according* to these properties, which are inherent in created beings. *Holder on Time*.

Finally, Johnson's rewriting of the entry ACCORDING shows evidence of other kinds of revisions. The word's etymology is now added to a grammatical usage note – "from *accord*, of which it is properly a participle, and is therefore never used but with *to*" – and, as a consequence, the preposition *to* after *according* is now systematically printed in italics. The quotation from Addison's *Spectator* is shortened to "Noble is the fame that is built on candour and ingenuity, *according* to those beautiful lines of Sir John Denham", most probably to make room for another relevant change in this entry: the quotation from

Swift is removed from the first section of the entry and given both a new section and a mark of wrong usage: "3. In proportion. The following phrase is, I think, vitious".

2.2 Further 'Full' Editions of Johnson's *Dictionary*

Between 1755 and the end of the century, apart from the 1773 edition revised by Johnson, a number of 'full' (i.e., unabridged) editions of the *Dictionary* were published, most of them in London and two in Dublin:[5] these editions, apart from the correction of obvious typographical errors, did not introduce any changes. Instead, a further London edition, Harrison's of 1786 (Harrison being the publisher, not the editor) is peculiar in more than one way, because the usual paratextual elements of the *Dictionary* (Johnson's *Preface*, *History of the English Language*, and *Grammar of the English Tongue*) are preceded by an 18-page *Life of Johnson* – the lexicographer had died two years before – and *The Editor's Preface*, as well as Johnson's *Plan of an English Dictionary*, originally published in 1747, where Johnson had detailed his ideas on how a new dictionary should be compiled.[6]

Two passages from *The Editor's Preface* are particularly relevant to the topic of adaptation in lexicography. The 1786 publication

> comprehends the Genuine Original Edition, printed verbatim, without the hosts of typographical inaccuracies multiplied in subsequent impressions: and retains some hundred elucidations injudiciously struck out from all other editions; while it furnishes, in a Supplement of barely three pages, the boasted additional words, not only in the copy bequeathed to Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose name has been so shamefully prostituted on the occasion, but in all the other editions taken together. (Johnson 1786, *The Editor's Preface*, n.p.)

5 1st edn: 1755, J. & P. Knapton et al.; 2nd: 1755-56, J. & P. Knapton et al.; 3rd: 1765: A. Millar et al. (reissued in 8° format, as smaller and more affordable); 4th: 1773, W. Strahan et al. (revised by the Author); 4th: 1777, J. Mifflin (a copy of the former); 5th: 1784, W. Strahan et al. (published shortly before Johnson's death on Dec. 13); 6th: 1785, J.F. & C. Rivington et al. (4° format); 7th: 1785, J.F. & C. Rivington et al.; 1786, John Jarvis & John Fielding (4°). The Dublin pirated editions were published by Thomas Ewing (4th, 1775) and R. Marchbank (8th, 1798, 4°). For a census of the editions of Johnson's *Dictionary*, Alston 1966, 30-41, is still invaluable.

6 As every scholar of English lexicography knows, the *Plan* documents Johnson's 'dream' of regulating the language in all its aspects, while the *Preface*, written at the conclusion of nine years of work on the dictionary, documents the impossibility of completely ordering the nature of language and codifying it fully in a dictionary, as "these were the dreams of a poet doomed at last to wake a lexicographer" (Kolb, DeMaria 2005, 100).

In other words, Harrison's edition is said to have adapted Johnson's original work in two different ways: on the one side, errors to be found in the "impressions" or reprints following the first 1755 edition are corrected by referring back to the first edition; on the other side, all the available additions to Johnson's original wordlist are printed "in a Supplement of barely three pages", thus contributing to the future life of Johnson's masterpiece. The *Supplement*[7] comprises 321 entries, the following ones among them:

> Abstractness. *n.s.* [from *abstract*.] Subtilty; separation from all matter of common notion.
>
> I have taken some pains to make plain and familiar to your thoughts, truths, which established prejudice, or the *abstractness* of the ideas themselves, might render difficult. *Locke*.

> Deflux. *n.s.* [*defluxus*, Latin.] Downward flow.
>
> Both bodies are clammy, and bridle the deflux of humours, without penning them in too much. *Bacon*.

> Fluently. *adj.* [from *fluent*.] With ready flow; volubly; readily; without obstruction or difficulty.

> Hawthorn fly. *n.s.* An insect.
>
> The *hawthorn fly* is all black, and not big. *Walton*.

> Nymphish. *adj.* [from *nymph*.] Relating to nymphs; lady-like.
>
> Tending all to *nymphish* war. *Drayton*.

> Rolling-press. *n.s.* A cylinder rolling upon another cylinder, by which engravers print their plates upon paper.

> Stopgap. *n.s.* [from *stop* and *gap*.] Something substituted; a temporary expedient.

> Wellfare. *n.s.* [*well* and *fare*.] Happiness; prosperity.
>
> They will ask, What is the final cause of a king? and they will answer, The people's *welfare*. Certainly a true answer; and as certainly an imperfect one. *Holyday*.

Another passage from *The Editor's Preface* to Harrison's edition is worth quoting because it suggests that the practice of adapting,

7 The full title of the *Supplement*, which is printed at the very end of the second volume, is *Supplement of Additional Words, Introduced by Dr. Johnson, Subsequent to His Original Edition, from which the Foregoing Work Has Been Literally Reprinted.*

rewriting and publishing new editions of texts "with additions, corrections, and improvements" may only have economic motivations, which are moreover dishonest, if "variations are made merely for the sake of creating a new sale":

> The very common trick of lessening the value of a first edition, by immediately publishing a new one, "with *additions*, *corrections*, and *improvements*," is at best a dishonourable practice, where the *alterations* really deserve to be so called; unless presented gratis, as *Errata*, to the original encouragers of the work, who have even then sufficient difficulty, should their books happen to be bound: but where *variations* are made merely for the sake of creating a new sale, and thus raising fresh contributions on an author's best friends, the first purchasers, it is at once disingenuous, and dishonest, in a very high degree. (Johnson 1786, *The Editor's Preface*, n.p.)

2.3 Manuscript Additions to and Revisions of Johnson's *Dictionary*

An above-quoted sentence from *The Editor's Preface* to Harrison's edition refers to a copy of the *Dictionary* bequeathed to Sir Joshua Reynolds. This is the copy that Johnson in his old age – after the publication of the 1773 revised edition – kept at home to include his own further annotations, comments and additions. After inheriting it on Johnson's death, Reynolds was ready to give it to the publishers of the 1785 sixth edition of the dictionary, the closest competitor of Harrison's edition published in the following year. This copy, therefore, does not only provide evidence of Johnson's never-ending work on the dictionary, but it may also introduce another chapter in the history of the adaptations and rewritings of Johnson's dictionary, that is to say annotated copies. In fact, educated people in those days were ready to read a dictionary from page to page, all the more so if, like Johnson's, it included quotations that could teach and entertain at the same time; some of these readers added marginal comments and notes, often disagreeing with or correcting what the lexicographer had written. Such material can be very interesting because it reveals the dictionary-users' point of view (as opposed to the lexicographer's) in linguistic, literary and cultural matters – something that is often not very easy to access nowadays.

A dozen of these annotated copies remain today.[8] One of them, now in the British Library, was owned by the scholar and mathematician Samuel Dyer and the famous statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke. The largest number of Dyer's notes (90 out of 237) aim at correcting or adding to Johnson's etymologies, i.e. what the lexicographer himself and his critics judged the weakest point in the dictionary:

Jo.: Storied. *adj.* [from *story*.] …
Dy.: Storied. *adj*. From y^e^ Italian *Istoriato*, which signified y^e^ same thing.

Jo.: Battledoor. *n.s*. [so called from *door*, taken for a flat board, and *battle*, or *striking*.] …
Dy.: Battledoor. *n.s*. Probably a Corruption of y^e^ Spanish word *Batador*.

Jo.: Burly. *adj.* [*Junius* has no etymology; *Skinner* imagines it to come from *boorlike*, clownish.] …
Dy.: Burly. Spelt by S^r^ Thomas More *Boorely*, which confirms Skinner's Etymology. V. More's *Life of Rich. III*.

Other annotations add new meanings or even new entries to the *Dictionary*:

Jo.: Speculum. *n.s.* [Latin.] A mirrour; a looking-glass; that in which representations are formed by reflection…
Dy.: Speculum. Also a Surgeon's Instrument for probing Ulcers &c.

Dy.: Catgut. A String made of y^e^ Intestines of Animals.

Dy.: Tundish. n.s. A provincial word for a Funnel: "Why should he die? / For filling a bottle with a Tundish." Shakesp. *Measure for Meas*.

Unlike Dyer, what Burke was most interested in was the current usage of words, not their history. As a consequence, he often labels Johnson's entries with the abbreviation "n.i.u.", for not in use:

Jo.: To Mucker. v.n. [from muck.] To scramble for money; to hoard up; to get or save meanly:
a word used by Chaucer, and still retained in conversation.
Bu.: n.i.u.

8 See Considine 2021. The following examples of Dyer's, Burke's and Malone's annotations are taken from Iamartino 1995 and 2018, which can be referred to for a more detailed discussion.

Also, in a fairly large number of cases, Burke adds Johnson's entries a usage note expressing disapproval: for example, Lorn is labelled as "obsolete", Moraliser as "doubtful", Citess as "bad", Moneyworth "low style", and To reduce. *v.a.* 5 as "not a good usage".

On Burke's death, the Dyer-Burke's copy was given to Edmond Malone, the Shakespearian scholar, who also annotated his own copy of Johnson's dictionary[9] between 1808 and 1811. Malone's notes were meant to improve or correct Johnson's spellings, etymologies, or definitions, add more pertinent quotations, etc. Malone's work is not unlike Dyer's and Burke's, but it is much more extensive: all in all, nearly 3,000 notes. The following examples show how Malone copied but also added to Dyer's and Burke's notes (Catgut), improved on Johnson's entries by modifying definitions (Candlewaster) or providing an earlier first quotation (Amenity, Comfortable), and also added new entries (Chopper):

Dy.: Catgut. A String made of y^{e} Intestines of Animals.
Ma.: Catgut: n.s. 1. A string made of the intestines of animals. 2. A species of linen with wide interstices.

Jo.: Candlewaster. *n.s.* [from *candle* and *waste*.] One that consumes candles; a spendthrift. […]
Ma.: Perhaps rather a drunkard; one who passes the night in drinking & thus consumes candles.

Jo.: Amenity. *n.s.* […] Pleasantness; agreeableness of situation.
If the situation of Babylon was such at first, as in the days of Herodotus, it was a seat of amenity and pleasure. Browne.
Ma.: The word is older than Browne. It is found in the Astrologyster, by J. Melton, 1620: "the amenitie, neatness, elegance and splendour of the place did so tickle and delight my senses, &c".

Jo.: Comfortable. *adj.* […] 3. Dispensing comfort; having the power of giving comfort.[…]
Ma.: Be comfortable to my mother, your mistress. Shakspeare. A. Well

Ma.: Chopper: n.s. A butcher's cleaver: now more frequently used than cleaver.[10]

9 It was a copy of the three-volume Dublin quarto edition of 1775.

10 This is one of Malone's annotations that Henry John Todd included verbatim in his 1818 revised edition of Johnson's *Dictionary*. In the *Introduction* to his edition, Todd acknowledges his debt to Malone (Todd 1818, 1, iii), as he had been given Malone's annotated copy of the *Dictionary* by James Boswell the Younger – a further instance of the never-ending story of rewrites and adaptations in lexicography.

2.4 Abridged and Miniature Editions of Johnson's *Dictionary*

The editions of Johnson's masterpiece referred to and commented on so far – usually published as two folio volumes and sometimes as quartos – are 'full' because they include all the quotations – well over 100.000 – that Johnson listed to document the evolving meaning and usage of words. But these editions were very expensive – the first one cost £ 4.10 – thus out of most readers' reach. That is why, alongside the publication of the 'full' editions, an even bigger number of abridged or "abstracted" editions came out – a very clear instance of adapting a text to the cultural needs and economic possibilities of a lower but wider target readership, i.e. less educated and less well-off dictionary-users. If the ECCO (*Eighteenth-Century Collection Online*) database is to be trusted, a dozen abstracted 8° editions[11] and thirteen miniature editions of the *Dictionary* came out before the end of the century, quite often by the same firms that published the full editions.

In order to understand how the big, learned *Dictionary* was adapted for different readerships, both quantitative and qualitative analyses must be carried out, because the reduction and compression of the lexicographical text can be achieved in different ways, as a comparison between its first and last abridged editions published in the eighteenth century will clearly show. The first abridged version of the *Dictionary* was edited by Johnson himself and published as a single volume, usually referred to as the "abridged octavo edition", in 1756, just one year after the original work; the last one was printed in 1799 as a joint undertaking by a large number of London booksellers.

A purely quantitative analysis of the first two pages of the original 1755 dictionary and the abridged editions of 1756 and 1799 shows the increased number of entries in the latter editions – obviously, the result of a reduction of some kind:

> Jo.1755: (folio edn, first 2 pages) from A to Abatement, 27 entries
> Jo.1756: (abstracted 8° edn, first 2 pages) from A to Abjectedness, 61 entries
> Jo.1799: (abstracted 8° edn, first 2 pages) from A to To ablactate, 69 entries

11 The London editions "Abstracted from the Folio Edition" in ECCO (see Gale Cengage Learning, at `https://www.gale.com`) include the following: 1756, J. Knapton et al.; 2nd: 1760, J. Knapton et al.; 4th: 1770, W. Strahan et al.; 5th: 1773, W. Strahan et al.; 6th: 1778, W. Strahan et al.; 7th: 1783, W. Strahan et al.; 8th: 1786, J.F. & C. Rivington et al.; 9th: 1790, J.F. & C. Rivington et al.; 8th: 1792, A. Millar et al.; 10th: 1794, T. Longman et al.; 11th: 1799, J. Johnson et al. To these, three editions published in Scotland must be added: 8th: 1792, T. Brown et al. (Edinburgh) and W. Anderson (Stirling); 10th: 1792, James Duncan & Son et al (Glasgow); 11th: 1797, Tho. Brown et al. (Edinburgh). For a comment of the abstracted editions, and especially the first one of 1756, see Dille 2005; see also Hailey 2005.

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Comparing the entries Abject in the 'full' 1755 edition (transcribed in 2.1 above) and in the later abridged editions clarifies what the adaptation procedure basically consists in:

> Jo. 1756: Abject. a. [*abjectus*, Lat.]
> 1. Mean, or worthless. *Addison*.
> 2. Contemptible, or of no value. *Milt*.
> 3. Without hope or regard. *Milt*.
> 4. Destitute, mean and despicable. *Dryd. Pope*.
>
> Jo. 1799 Abject. a. [*abjectus*, Lat.]
> 1. Mean; worthless; base. *Addison*.
> 2. Being of no hope or regard. *Milt*.
> 3. Mean and despicable. *Dryd.*

Both abridged editions dispense with illustrative quotations, only the authors' names are retained. The reason why is explained in Johnson's *Preface* to the 1756 *Dictionary* – a completely different text from the original one:

> VII. To the words, and to the different senses of each word, are subjoined from the large dictionary the names of those writers by whom they have been used; so that the reader who knows the different periods of the language, and the time of its authors, may judge of the elegance or prevalence of any word, or meaning of a word; and without recurring to other books, may know what are antiquated, what are unusual, and what are recommended by the best authority. (Johnson 1756, *The Preface*, n.p.)

The first two paragraphs of the same text make clear the rationale for the adaptation and rewriting of the folio edition for a different readership:

> Having been long employed in the study and cultivation of the English language, I lately published a dictionary like those compiled by the academies of Italy and France, for the use of such as aspire to exactness of criticism or elegance of style.
>
> But it has been since considered that works of that kind are by no means necessary to the greater number of readers, who, seldom intending to write or presuming to judge, turn over books only to amuse their leisure, and to gain degrees of knowledge suitable to lower characters, or necessary to the common business of life: these know not any other use of a dictionary than that of adjusting orthography, or explaining terms of science or words of infrequent occurrence, or remote derivation. (Johnson 1756, *The Preface*, n.p.)

Johnson argues here that he is the right person to compile the abridged dictionary adapting it to the needs of "the greater number of readers" exactly because he authored a dictionary that could compete with the famous Italian and French models. Then, after briefly commenting on the defects of the existing dictionaries of "common" readers, Johnson concludes:

> For this reason a small dictionary appeared yet to be wanting to common readers: and, as I may without arrogance claim to myself a longer acquaintance with the lexicography of our language than any other writer has had, I shall hope to be considered as having more experience at least than most of my predecessors, and as more likely to accommodate the nation with a vocabulary of daily use. I therefore offer to the publick an abstract or epitome of my former work.

Relying on his experience as a lexicographer and man of letters, and now focusing on "a vocabulary of daily use", Johnson renounces entries describing less common or obsolete words. Thus, from the section corresponding to the range from A to Abatement in the first edition, the following entries disappeared from the 1756 abridged dictionary: Ab, Abacke, Abactor, Abaisance, To Abalienate, Abalienation. To Aband, To Abandon over, Abandoning, Abannition, Abarcy, Abased, and To Abate [in horsemanship]. Johnson's selective approach was usually adopted verbatim by the editors of all subsequent eighteenth-century "abstracted" dictionaries, with the sole exception of the 1799 edition. Indeed, the 69 entries in the first two pages of this latter work are not numerically very different from the 61 entries in the 1756 edition, but they are the result of a completely different adaptation process: while all the illustrative quotations are removed in the 1799 edition as well, it retains all the entries from the 'full' 1755 *Dictionary*, even those eliminated by Johnson himself in the 1756 *Dictionary* and, accordingly, by the other editors in the following abridged editions; instead, some space is saved by reducing a few definitions and explanations here and there. Therefore, although this work is advertised on the title page as "The Eleventh Edition, corrected and revised; With considerable Additions from the Eight Edition of the Original", this claim actually conceals a process of 'mechanical' adaptation, that neglects the choices made by Johnson to adapt his masterpiece to a new type of dictionary users, and is limited to purely formal interventions.

The 'physical shrinking' of the dictionary as a book – from folio to quarto to octavo – and of its contents – focusing on the basic linguistic information – is further carried out in the so-called miniature editions, whose book format is duodecimo. By cross-referencing the bibliographic data contained in Alston (1966, 37-8), with the editions

reproduced in the ECCO database, two conclusions can be drawn: first, Johnson's miniature editions are a publishing product that appeared in the last decade of the eighteenth century;[12] second, the lexicographical tradition of these works is difficult to reconstruct because they are texts of poor quality and economic value, and therefore not worth treasuring from one generation into another.

The title-page of the earliest among the available miniature copies of Johnson's dictionary, published in1795,[13] announces what the reader will find in it:

> Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language in Miniature. To which Are Added, An Alphabetical Account of the Heathen Deities; and A List of the Cities, Boroughs, and Market Towns in England and Wales. Embellished with a Portrait of Dr. Johnson. Second Edition. London: Printed under the Inspection of the Literary Association, and Sold by John Creswick, and Co, Agents to the Society. 1795.

However absurd the joining of a small lexical dictionary with such encyclopedic material as a list of heathen deities and cities and market towns, with their distances from London, may seem,[14] two paragraphs from *The Advertisement* make clear the adapting and rewriting process carried out to compile this miniature dictionary and also highlight its main target readership:

> Small as it appears in Compass, this little Dictionary contains in Substance the quintessence of Lexicography; it is, in fact, Johnson's Dictionary in Miniature, adapted for every Purpose as a Book of Reference. It is copious in Contents, though small in Volume. Its component Materials are judiciously selected, and accurately arranged; with this superior Advantage – that the more obsolete Excrescences of Johnson, and other eminent Lexicographers, are here exchanged for many additional scientific and literary Terms not current in their Time.
>
> The Size of this Dictionary renders it peculiarly adapted for the Pocket; and as every Word that might give Offence to Delicacy has been omitted, it will be found particularly acceptable to Female Readers. (Johnson 1795, *Advertisement*, n.p.)

12 More are found in the nineteenth century, as shown in Vancil 2006.

13 Alston (1966, 37) mentions a London edition of 1794 because it was listed in Lichfield library catalogue but it could not be found and examined by him. From 1795 to 1800 a miniature edition of Johnson's *Dictionary* was published in London every year.

14 The 1797 edition of the miniature dictionary compiled by the Rev. Joseph Hamilton, M.A. Master of the Academy of Hemel Hemsted, Herts, even includes "a concise Epitome of the most remarkable Events during the French Revolution" (Hamilton 1797, title page).

2.5 Johnson's *Dictionary* and Pronouncing Dictionaries

Johnson's *Dictionary* could do very little to keep under control and guide the pronunciation of the language. Since the days of his *Plan* he had become very well aware of this, as attested in a couple of passages from the *Preface*:

> In settling the orthography, I have not wholly neglected the pronunciation, which I have directed, by printing an accent upon the acute or elevated syllable. It will sometimes be found, that the accent is placed by the authour quoted, on a different syllable from that marked in the alphabetical series; it is then to be understood, that custom has varied, or that the authour has, in my opinion, pronounced wrong. Short directions are sometimes given where the sound of letters is irregular; and if they are sometimes omitted, defect in such minute observations will be more easily excused, than superfluity.
>
> […] sounds are too volatile and subtile for legal restraints; to enchain syllables, and to lash the wind, are equally the undertakings of pride, unwilling to measure its desires by its strength. (Kolb, DeMaria 2005, 79, 105)

It is therefore almost paradoxical that Johnson's work provided the foundation and material for the later dictionaries of William Perry (ca. 1747-ca. 1808), a relevant figure in the British tradition of pronouncing dictionaries.[15] His *Royal Standard English Dictionary* of 1775 had a wordlist of more than 28,000 entries, largely based on Johnson's. Over the next three decades, apart from further editions of this dictionary, Perry also published other dictionaries, typologically different but still somehow related to Johnson's masterpiece. In fact, his 1795 pocket dictionary called *A General Dictionary of the English Language; To which Is Prefixed a Comprehensive Grammar* was later reprinted twice without any changes except for the title

15 On Perry's life and works see Sturiale 2006, 2014 and 2023. Although the first dictionaries indicating the pronunciation of sound (rather than simply marking accentuation) were all published after 1755, none of them shares Perry's reverence for Johnson. Yet, late in the century, in both Britain and North America, some dictionaries were compiled by merging together lexicographical materials from Johnson's and the most successful pronouncing dictionaries. This is best seen in Thomas Browne's 1800 compilation – a lexicographical adaptation to the highest degree: *The Union Dictionary, Containing All That Is Truly Useful in the Dictionaries of Johnson, Sheridan, and Walker, the Orthography and Explanatory Matter Selected from Dr. Johnson, the Pronunciation Adjusted according to Mr. Walker, with the Addition of Mr. Sheridan's Pronunciation of Those Words Wherein these Two Eminent Orthoepists Differ. The Whole Designed to Present to the Reader, at One View, the Orthography, Explanation, Pronunciation, and Accentuation of All the Purest and Most Approved Terms in the English Language*. For a useful survey of early pronouncing dictionaries, see Beal 2009.

page, which redefines the pocket dictionary as *Dr. Johnson's General Dictionary of the English Language. Enlarged by the Addition of Several Thousand Words, Selected from the Most Approved Authors: To which is prefixed A Comprehensive Grammar* (Perry 1802 and 1806) – Johnson's name being nothing more than a promotional tool and a quality guarantee. More interesting is Perry's final work as a lexicographer, *The Synonymous, Etymological and Pronouncing English Dictionary* of 1805,[16] as the first two paragraphs of its *Preface* do not only reiterate Perry's debt to Johnson but they also show how tradition and innovation, copying and adapting, are part and parcel of the history of lexicography:

> The following sheets, containing the only synonymous vocabulary ever offered to the public, would have possessed superiour excellence, and have insured general approbation, if, fortunately, they had been undertaken and executed by that luminary of learning, the late Dr. Samuel Johnson, from whose folio Dictionary of the English language, we are proud to acknowledge, the materials for this arduous undertaking have been purposely selected.
>
> To the philological, critical, and other interesting observations of the above learned author, we have superadded two exclusive advantages to our publication; the one – as a *synonymous*, the other – as a *pronouncing* nomenclature. The *former* is new and unique; the *latter* is on an approved plan, effected by characteristic types, after the manner of the Royal Standard English Dictionary, published by the author upwards of twenty years since, which has passed through ten editions, each consisting of ten thousand copies. (Perry 1805, v)

16 The full title runs as follows: *The Synonymous, Etymological and Pronouncing English Dictionary; In which the Words Are Deduced from their Originals. Their Part of Speech Distinguished, their Pronounciation Pointed out, and their Synonyma Collected, which Are Occasionally Illustrated in their Different Significations, by Examples from the Best Writers; Extracted from the Labours of the Late Dr. Samuel Johnson; Being an Attempt to Synonymise his Folio Dictionary of the English Language. To which Is Prefixed an English Grammar.*

2.6 Johnson's *Dictionary* as a Source for Bilingual and Trilingual Dictionaries

The last type of the ways in which Johnson's masterpiece was adapted to new uses and users concerns the cases in which his monolingual dictionary was used to help compile bilingual or trilingual dictionaries.[17]

The first example of such an adaptation dates back to 1760, five years after the publication of Johnson's *Dictionary*, when Giuseppe Baretti published his bilingual Italian-English and English-Italian dictionary in London.[18] As a matter of fact, this dictionary is not an original compilation, but the revised and corrected edition of Ferdinando Altieri's bilingual dictionary of 1726-1727 in the version edited by Evangelist Palermo and published in 1749. For the English-Italian section of his work, Baretti uses Johnson's *Dictionary* to adapt, correct and supplement Altieri's entries and wordlist, as the following examples show:

Al. 1749: Piazza, s. [a broad, open place, as a market place] *piazza*, s.f. *luogo spazioso circondato d'edifici*.
Jo. 1755: *Piazza*. *n.s.* [Italian] A walk under a roof supported by pillars. […]
Ba. 1760: Piazza, s. [A walk under a roof supported by pillars.] *portico da passeggiarvi sotto; voce pretta Italiana, addattata* [sic] *stranamente dagl'Inglesi.*

Al. 1749: Salmagundy, s. [an Italian dish of several sorts of good meat] *intingolo*, *manicaretto*, s.m.
Jo. 1755: Salmagundi. *n.s.* [It is said to be corrupted from *selon mon gout*, or *sale à mon gout*]
A mixture of chopped meat and pickled herrings with oil, vinegar, pepper, and onions.
Ba. 1760: Salmagundy, s. [a mixture of chopped meat and pickled herrings with oil, vinegar, pepper, and onions] *strana vivanda usata in Inghilterra a* [sic] *fatta di carne cotta sminuzzata, di aringhe salate con olio, aceto, pepe, e cipolle*.

Jo. 1755: Arietta. *n.s.* [Ital. in musick] A short air, song, or tune.
Ba. 1760: Arietta, s. [in music] aria, arietta, canzone, di una strofa sola.

17 In a way, this procedure reverses what happened at the beginning of the century, when bilingual dictionaries could provide the basic wordlist of the first general dictionaries: see the end of section 1 above.

18 Critical analyses of this dictionary can be found in Iamartino 1990 and 2021, as well as in Iamartino, Berti 2023. The examples given here below are taken from these essays.

Jo. 1755: Cockfight. *n.s.* [*cock* and *fight*.] A battle or match of cocks. […]
Ba. 1760: Cock-fight, s. [a match of cocks] *Battaglia de' galli. Barbaro passatempo del* Popolaccio d'Inghilterra.
Jo. 1755: Tory. *n.s.* […] One who adheres to the ancient constitution of the state, and the apostolical hierarchy of the church of England: opposed to a whig […]
Ba. 1760: Tory, s. *colui che in Inghilterra aderisce o pretende aderire alle antiche leggi e all'apostolica Gerarchia della chiesa Anglicana. Il suo opposto chiamasi* Whig.

Due to the fame Johnson acquired with his lexicographical masterpiece, the example set by Baretti was followed by other compilers of bilingual dictionaries, in Europe and beyond, in the eighteenth and the following century.[19] The most relevant, eighteenth-century example is the bilingual English-German dictionary compiled by Johann Christoph Adelung (1732-1806) and published in 1783, limited to the section A-J, to be completed with the K-Z volume in 1796. The debt to Johnson is acknowledged on the title page and early in the preface or *Vorrede*, both texts specifying that the German lexicographer referred to the revised and corrected edition of 1773, although improvements of various kinds were derived from other sources:

> *Neues grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der Englischen Sprache für die Deutschen; vornemlich aus dem größern englischen Werke des hrn. Samuel Johnson nach dessen vierten Ausgabe gezogen, und mit vielen Wörten, Bedeutungen und Beyspielen vermerhrt*. Von A bis J. Erster Band ([Adelung] 1783, title page)

> Die Engländer besitzen ein sehr vollständiges Wörterbuch ihrer Sprache, mit welchem sie der noch lebende Hr. Samuel Johnson beschenkt hat, und von welchem die vierte vermehrte Ausgabe zu London 1773 heraus kam, die in zwen starken Bänden über 28 Alphabet in groß Fol. ausmacht. ([Adelung] 1783, iii)

One has to move back from Germany to England again to finally trace the use of Johnson's masterpiece for the compilation of a trilingual dictionary, and a pocket dictionary at that! As stated on its title page, Ferdinando Bottarelli's *The New Italian, English, and*

19 As they were published in the nineteenth century, two other bilingual dictionaries that refer to Johnson's masterpiece are not analysed here: the *Dictionnaire général Anglais-Français* by Alexandre Spiers published in Paris in 1846; and *A Dictionary in English and Bengalee* compiled by Ramkamal Sen (1783-1844), Treasurer of the Bank of Bengal and Secretary of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, who used Henry John Todd's 1818 revision of Johnson's *Dictionary*.

French Pocket-Dictionary of 1777 was "Carefully compiled from the dictionaries of La Crusca, Dr. S. Johnson, the French Academy, and from other dictionaries of the best authorities". A teacher of French and Italian in late eighteenth-century London, Ferdinando Bottarelli was able to 'squeeze' the biggest and most authoritative folio dictionaries of his day into three small duodecimo volumes, each of them having the wordlist in one language and the equivalents in the other two. This, as he affirmed in the *Preface* to *Volume 1. Containing the Italian before the English and the French*, "will sufficiently answer every purpose of the Traveller, or Student" (Bottarelli 1777, iii). It is appropriate and, arguably, significant, to conclude this overview of the various ways in which Johnson's folio masterpiece was adapted, during the eighteenth century, to the different needs of different categories of users with Bottarelli's triple compilation: on the one hand, it is probably the most extreme adaptation and rewriting of Johnson's masterpiece – from folio to duodecimo volumes, from a monolingual to a trilingual dictionary; on the other hand, it recognises and celebrates 'Dictionary Johnson' as the British counterpart of the Italian and French academics – the strongest reason why his very successful compilation could be adapted to serve a variety of educational and publishing purposes.

3 The Conclusion, in which Nothing is Concluded

Repeating here the title of the final chapter of Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* is not only a fitting tribute to the lexicographer who was also a literary critic, a poet and a writer, but also suggests that the art and craft of dictionary-making is a never-ending endeavour of rewriting and adaptation. This is true in general terms, and also with specific reference to Johnson's *Dictionary*, which was first revised and then replaced by other compilations in the nineteenth century, but continued to exert its influence by providing material for subsequent lexicographers, even though its methodology was criticised and at least partly superseded. As has been rightly highlighted,

> In the nineteenth century, Johnson's Dictionary was revised and somewhat enlarged by H. J. Todd in four volumes (1818), a version that, in its various editions, continued to prove popular; it was eventually enlarged further by Robert Gordon Latham as late as 1886-70. Only the dictionaries of Charles Richardson and Noah Webster (who both explicitly defined themselves against Johnson) competed effectively during this period with Johnson-Todd. (Reddick 2009, 171-2)

Despite these latter lexicographers' critical and ideological rejection of Johnson's work in the first half of the nineteenth century, and despite the fact that the 'founding fathers' of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) set out in the second half of the century to create an innovative dictionary based on scientific principles – indeed, it is no coincidence that the OED's original title was *A New English Dictionary*[20] – the influence of Johnson's *Dictionary* on the development of English lexicography has never waned, and it is still present in the online third edition of the OED, being currently revised. As a matter of fact, an automatic search on the OED website reveals that almost 1,200 quotations from Johnson's *Dictionary* still help to illustrate the meanings of as many words; in addition, over 600 definitions and over 250 etymological notes in the OED online refer in one way or another to Johnson's masterpiece. There is really no end to adaptation and rewriting in dictionary-making.

20 On the history of the OED see, among others, Mugglestone 2005, Gilliver 2016 and Ogilvie 2013. Richardson, Webster and the OED are focussed on by Michael Adams, Edward Finegan and Peter Sokolowski, and Sarah Ogilvie respectively in Ogilvie, Safran 2019.

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