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William Perry’s Synonymous, Etymological and Pronouncing English Dictionary (1805). An “attempt to synonymise” Johnson’s Dictionary

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1. Introduction and Background Information

The aim of this chapter is to focus on one of the first synonym dictionaries to be published in England, that is William Perry’s The Synonymous, Etymological and Pronouncing English Dictionary (1805). Little is known of Perry’s life (see Sturiale 2006: 144-150 and 2008: 183-187), but it can be claimed that he was one of the most prolific and active lexicographers of the second half of the 18th century, which marked the beginning of a “highly dictionary-conscious” period (Noyes 1951: 970).1 In thirty years, and to be precise from 1774 to 1808, i.e. the time span which separates his first2 and last publication,3 he released two manuals, one spelling-book, three dictionaries and one treatise, together with regular updates and revised editions of his dictionaries (see Sturiale 2008: 184-187).

---

1 In 1831 one Phineas Pica writing to the editors of the New England Magazine (1831: I, 108) defined Perry as “a manufacturer of dictionaries”.
2 The title is The Man of Business, Gentleman’s Assistant published by David Willison in Edinburgh. The book was well received as one can read in the first issue of the London Review of English and Foreign Literature (1775: 219): “On the whole, we venture to recommend this performance, not only as one of the best school-books we have met with; but as the best adapted to qualify grown persons, who have not been bred accomptants, for becoming men of business”.
3 Perry’s final authorial effort seems to be Philosophy for Youth, or Scientific Tutor, published in London in 1808. In the Preface, he defined it as “a useful manual” addressed to people who have left school and “entered into the busy world”, but it could also be used as a “general introduction to our numerous academies, boarding-schools, and other seminaries of learning” (Perry 1808: i). Perry could well rely on his past experience as a school teacher and, as stated in the title page, on his being the “author of the Royal Standard English and French Dictionaries and of the Synonymous Etymological and Pronouncing Dictionary” (Perry 1808: title page).
Perry was widely read and popular in Britain. His success and influence abroad, namely the United States (see Sturiale 2012), was due to his two books on pronunciation, i.e. *The Royal Standard English Dictionary* first published in 1775 – which “passed through ten editions, each consisting of ten thousand copies” (Perry 1805: v) – and *The Only Sure Guide to the English Tongue; Or, New Pronouncing Spelling-Book*, published in 1776. The editorial success of the latter, first published in America in 1785, is demonstrated by the fact that it reached its eighteenth edition there by 1801 (see Smith 1979: 37), and came out “revised and corrected” as late as 1832 (Alger 1832). Modern criticism on early American interest in codification and language norms (see, for example, Gibson 1937, Smith 1975 and 1979, Anson 1990, Green 1996: 237 and Micklethwait 2000: 133), often highlights the relevant role played by Perry’s works. For example, Allen Walker Read does not only underline the fact that Perry and Walker “superseded” Sheridan’s dictionary but, quoting John Pickering, “an observer of American English”, he even goes further to claim that “Perry’s dictionary had influenced the course of American pronunciation” (Read 1973: 71).


Unlike Perry’s previous publications, *The Synonymous, Etymological and Pronouncing English Dictionary* was not reprinted after 1805, and Gove (1984: 7a) informs us that “Chauncey Goodrich, Noah Webster’s son-in-law, referred to it in 1847 in his preface to the royal octavo volume of Webster as ‘entirely out of print’”, at least in the United States.

In the Preface – dated “London, July 1, 1805” (Perry 1805: xix) – the author claims that the planning and the actual making of the dictionary took him about “eight years” (Perry 1805: v). The compilation of his last lexicographic effort, unlike his previous works, proved to be very time-consuming having probably started in 1797, or thereabout, with Perry still serving in the Navy until 1801.
1797 can be assumed to be the starting year since it was then that *The Historical Account of the Embassy to the Emperor of China* by Sir George Leonard Stanton was published in London. The relationship between Perry’s dictionary and Stanton’s account is so explained by Perry in his Preface:

The author of the present production felt himself in this predicament about eight years since, when writing, *anonymously*, *An Abridgment of the Historical Account of the Embassy to the Emperor of China*, extracted from the papers of Earl Macartney, as compiled by the elegant writer, the late Sir George Staunton, Bart. Secretary to the Embassy. From that moment he determined, and actually began to compile this Synonymous Dictionary. Its progress, however, was slow for the first four years, as he was again called into his Majesty’s service; but quitting the Navy at the close of 1801, his whole time has since been occupied in bringing it to that state in which it is now humbly offered for public approbation. (Perry 1805: v-vi)

As for the exact publication date of the dictionary, one can refer to an advertisement appeared on *The Morning Chronicle* of November 6, 1805 whose opening lines read as follows:

This day is published, in Royal Octavo, Price 16s. in Boards, THE SYNONYMOUS, ETYMOLOGICAL, and PRONOUNCING DICTIONARY [...] by William Perry (Anon. 1805).

What is known for sure is that Perry’s last dictionary was also widely used by Joseph E. Worcester, who published *A Universal and Critical Dictionary of the English Language* in 1828. Worcester acknowledged Perry’s synonym dictionary on several occasions together with other ‘authorities’ such as Enfield, Jameson, Knowles, Smart, Reid and Webster (see Anon. 1847: 189).

In her article on some 18th-century synonym dictionaries, Noyes defined *The Synonymous, Etymological and Pronouncing English Dictionary* as an “unusual hybrid” (Noyes 1951: 968), not being in line with other supposedly similar works such as John Trusler’s *The Difference between Words Esteemed Synonymous in the English Language* (1766), James Barclay’s *A Complete and Universal English Dictionary* (1774), Hester Lynch Piozzi’s *British Synonymy* (1794) and Benjamin Dawson’s *Philologia Anglicana* (1799).
Interestingly enough, as has already been pointed out by Gove (1984: 7a), Perry does not mention any of the three dictionaries published before his, and thus already available on the market, but in a typical 18th-century marketing strategy simply limits himself to present it as “the only synonymous vocabulary ever offered to the public” (Perry 1805: v). Indeed also the Rev. James Barclay had claimed in his preface that:

> The Synonimous part of our Dictionary we modestly assert to be entirely new; the use of which, both in speaking and writing, must at first view appear to every intelligent Reader; and we have endeavoured to execute it without running into any whimsical notions, or fantastic, affected niceties. (Barclay 1774: Preface)

What can be speculated here is that Perry – having left the country or being embarked for long periods of time – was not actually aware of those other similar dictionaries, since in his previous publications he had always acknowledged and referred to other published materials when presenting or commenting on his (see Sturiale 2006 and 2008). This time, instead, both Perry and his printer did want to market a new work very much.

However, it has recently been stated that William Perry, in explaining “words meanings simply by placing them in the context of synonyms, brings us methodically to Roget’s doorstep” (Hüllen 2004: 6).

In the Preface to his 1805 Dictionary Perry writes as follows:

> 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. (Perry 1805: v. Emphasis mine)

So, in Perry’s view his dictionary – despite the aforementioned earlier works – constituted a first, being “the only synonymous vocabulary ever offered to the public”.

This last concept is further highlighted in what he claimed afterwards:

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)

The synonymous dictionary, described by Hüllen as “a monumental work” (2004: 245), has about 42,000 entries, whereas Perry’s pronouncing dictionary contains only about 28,000 (see Sturiale 2006: 154). Quantity, however, is not the real issue here. Hüllen may well appreciate that Perry’s dictionary has “the dimensions of Dr. Johnson’s dictionary, and indeed it is this unique achievement of English lexicography which William Perry wanted to produce again with a different profile” (Hüllen 2004: 245); but when compiling The Synonymous, Etymological and Pronouncing English Dictionary, Perry had different and very specific goals in mind so that, as I will show in this chapter, he did not rely on his original source as faithfully and mechanically as one might imagine.

Following the fashion of 18th-century dictionary-making, and Perry’s own previous lexicographical works, his 1805 dictionary opens with “A grammar of the English language” (Perry 1805: xx-xlviii). Unlike his previous works, instead, there is no dedication.

---

4 The copy used for the present study is available at the British Library, London (shelf-mark: 12983g.21). Its 718 pages are not numbered, except for “The preface” (pp. v-xix) and “The grammar” (pp. xx-xlviii). A one-page list of “Explanation of the abbreviation and marks” used precedes the dictionary proper. Each page contains about 60 entries. An “Appendix”, with 276 entries in alphabetical order (A-Z), is at the end of the book together with a single-page errata corrige. It appears that Hüllen’s calculation is clearly wrong or the result of a typo when he claims that: “The folio-sized book is a monumental work having an average of sixty entries per page which amount to some 24,000 entries in all” (Hüllen 2004: 245). As previously said, though unnumbered, the dictionary is made up of 718 pages.
3. The Methodology and Structure of the Dictionary

The nature and functions of the dictionary are clearly explained by the title itself and in the following subsections it will be shown how and to what extent Perry closely ‘followed’ or ‘improved on’ Johnson’s dictionary.

3.1. Synonymy

Perry was the first to introduce the definition of “radical” synonyms. As for the method used in selecting and organising his dictionary entries, we are well informed by Perry himself who, in the Preface, writes that:

[W]e by no means contend, that the whole of the explanations collected under such initial words as are printed in large capital letters, which we call RADICALS, are all strictly synonymous; neither, on the other hand, can we agree with those who roundly assert, that there are not two words in the whole English language of precisely the same signification; but this we take upon us to say, that we have no less than Dr. Johnson’s authority for their selection and disposition as explanatory of their meaning; and they are such as, in the common acceptation of the word, are deemed synonymous, being all applicable to the radical, notwithstanding each cannot always be substituted for the other with equal force and accuracy of language. (Perry 1805: vi)

In the “Explanation of the general plan, and execution of the work”, Perry first deals with “Synonyma” and he warns the reader that “words which have their various significations printed uniformly in the same type, contain all their synonyma” (Perry 1805: vii) as in the examples below:

A-bäft’, ad. (a sea term, Sax. Abaftan behind) in the hinder part, or between the main mast and the stern of a ship, aft.

and

Āb-brève-i-a’tion, s. (French) the act of abbreviating; ABRIDGMENT; the means used to abbreviate; words contracted; any mark to contract.
Perry was fully aware of the fact that he could not have reproduced Johnson’s entire wordlist and definitions, or his work would have grown beyond control: something had to be done, some methodological decision had to be taken in order to reduce the size of the book itself. He makes it clear that:

As the insertion of the whole of the synonyma to each word in their alphabetical order would have swelled the book to an enormous size, to prevent this we have adopted the mode of printing one of the explanatory words in SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS, by reference to which as the RADICAL of the synonyma, its various significations will be seen at one view. (Perry 1805: vii)

And he keeps on warning his readers that, in order to understand the method used in the dictionary, and as a consequence to consult it profitably, it will be necessary to follow the instructions/examples carefully.

As pointed out by Hüllen (2004: 249), “This method can be understood as a mere typographical device to save space. Indeed, it avoids repeating (polysemous) words over and over again”. So, whereas Johnson faced the problem of synonymy by means of quotations (i.e. by using them to distinguish synonyms and near-synonyms), Perry “pruned his predecessor’s dictionary of all these quotations – merely retaining the names of the authors, if that – and thus arrived at a potentially complete alphabetical dictionary of a whole language” (Hüllen 2004: 245). Here follows an example taken from the entry for TO ABATE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Johnson (1755)</th>
<th>Perry (1805)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To ABA'TE. v. a. [from the French <em>abbatre</em>, to beat down.]</td>
<td>A-bāte`, <em>v. a.</em> (Fr. <em>abattre</em> to <em>beat down</em>) to lessen, to DIMINISH; to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. To lessen, to diminish. [...] Davies, Shakesp., Locke</td>
<td>assuage, to ALLEVIATE; to deject, or depress the mind (<em>Shak. Dryden</em>); to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To deject, or depress the mind. [...] Spens., Shakesp., Dryden</td>
<td>let down the price in selling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In commerce, to let down the price in selling, sometimes to beat down the</td>
<td>A-bāte`, <em>v. n.</em> to grow less. “His passion <em>abates</em>”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>price in buying.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
as, his passion abates; the storm abates. It is used sometimes with the particle *of* before the thing lessened. \[...\] *Dryden*

Thanks to his new system which consisted of “lexemes with longer or shorter chains of other lexemes and brief defining phrases between them” (Hüllen 2004: 245), Perry managed to create an easy, ready-for-reference, and user-friendly dictionary. A perfect word finder for any sort of users.

As shown in the above example, lexemes or phrases are separated by a semicolon, or on other occasions by a hyphen, whereas lexemes or phrases belonging to the same group are separated by a comma, as in:

*Cóm-būs’tī-ón, s.* (French), a *burning*, conflagration, consumption by fire; *tumult*, hurry, hubbub, bustle, hurly burly.

Colons are used “where a subsequent definition or quotation applies to several preceding lexemes or phrases” (Hüllen 2004: 248) as in, for example, *abomination* here given together with Johnson’s entry:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Johnson (1755)</th>
<th>Perry (1805)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABOMINATION. s.</td>
<td>A-bōm’i-nā’tion, s. Abhorrence, detestation, HATRED: as, every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians (<em>Genesis</em>); - pollution, defilement (<em>Revelations</em>); WICKEDNESS, hateful or shameful vice (<em>Sh.</em>); the cause of pollution. 2 <em>Kings</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Hatred, detestation. [<em>...</em> Swift <em>Genesis</em>]</td>
<td>2. The object of hatred. [<em>...</em>]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The object of hatred. [<em>...</em>]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Pollution, defilement. [<em>...</em>] <em>Shakes.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The cause of pollution. [<em>...</em>] 2 <em>Kings</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2. Etymology

As for the “Etymology”, Perry declares to follow Johnson’s *Dictionary*:

The etymology and derivation of the words have generally been copied from Dr. Johnson’s dictionary, in the execution of which it has been deemed proper to give the *modern* in lieu of the ancient
orthography to such as are of French original. In some other cases, where that learned author has quoted etymologies from three or four different languages, we have adopted sometimes but two, and occasionally but one; especially when this seemed to us not only sufficient for the purpose, but the most pertinent and satisfactory. (Perry 1805: ix)

However, it is important to note here that etymology is to be intended not just as the origin of the word, but also as its morphological status since words can be classified as being “primitives” or “derivatives” or compounds. In this case Perry informs his readers that:

> It is necessary to remark, that many words appear without having their derivations noticed, only because they are self-evident. Such are words beginning with the privative or negative particles in and un; – likewise compound words, which do not require the repetition of their simple terms to be, in this respect, understood. (Perry 1805: ix-x)

The following examples show how Perry presented lemmas according to the primitive/derivative distinction, for which he was also indebted to Johnson (cf. Johnson 1755: Preface, sig. B). The lemmas chosen are the derivates of HAPPY:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primitive</th>
<th>Derivative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hăp, s. (Welsh anhap misfortune) chance, fortune; that which happens by chance or fortune; accident, CHANCE, casual event; misfortune. Fairfax</td>
<td>Hăp’pi-ly, ad. (happy), fortunately, luckily, successfully; addressfully, gracefully; without labour; in a state of felicity: as he lives happily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hăp’-py, a. (hap) enjoying felicity, enjoying that state in which the desires are satisfied: lucky, fortunate, SUCCESSFUL, addressful, ready in reply, Swift.</td>
<td>Hăp’pi-nĕss, s. (happy) bliss, felicity, state in which the desires are satisfied; good luck, good fortune, weal, welfare, prosperity; fortuitous elegance, unstudied grace. Pope. Den.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ūn-hăp’, s., ill luck, mishap, mischance, ill fortune, misfortune. Shak.</td>
<td>† Ūn-hăp’pi-ĕd, p.a., made unhappy. Shak.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Here, as in the rest of the dictionary, the indications offered to the readers were closely respected. Indeed, the same is true of Perry’s statement that “The etymology and derivation of the words have generally been copied from Dr. Johnson’s dictionary” (Perry 1805: ix). Perry’s definition of HAPPINESS, which is his longest entry for a derivative word, can usefully illustrate this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Johnson (1755)</th>
<th>Perry (1805)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HA’PPINESS. n.s.</td>
<td>Hăp’pi-nĕss, s. (happy) bliss, felicity, state in which the desires are satisfied; good luck, good fortune, weal, welfare, prosperity; fortuitous elegance, unstudied grace. Pope. Den.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Felicity; state in which the desires are satisfied. Happiness is that estate whereby we attain, so far as possibly may be attained, the full possession of that which simply for itself is to be desired, and containeth in it after an eminent sort the contentation of our desires, the highest degree of all our perfection. Hooker b.i. Oh! happiness of sweet retir’d content, To be at once secure and innocent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Denham.
The various and contrary choices that men make in the world, argue that the same thing is not good to every man alike: this variety of pursuits shews, that every one does not place his happiness in the same thing. Locke.
2. Good luck; good fortune.
3. Fortuitous elegance; unstudied grace.
Certain graces and happinesses, peculiar to every language, give life and energy to the words. Denham.
Some beauties yet no precepts can declare;
For there’s a happiness as well as care. Pope on Criticism.

This example can be generalized to argue that the Perry’s entries are clearly indebted to Johnson’s, although the younger lexicographer was independent enough to ‘pick and choose’ what he thought best in Johnson’s dictionary entries, and even provide new material: such synonyms as “bliss”, “weal”, “welfare” and “prosperity” are original additions by Perry, and his 1805 entry is much richer than the corresponding ones in his previous dictionaries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perry 1775</th>
<th>Perry 1793</th>
<th>Perry 1795b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hăp’pî-něss, s. good luck, břessdeness, content.</td>
<td>Hăp’pî-něss, s. good luck, břessdeness.</td>
<td>Hăp’pî-něss, s. felicity, good fortune.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3. Pronunciation

As can be expected, the most original part of Perry’s dictionary, if compared to Johnson’s, is the section on pronunciation. In the Preface to his dictionary, Johnson had clearly explained his modus operandi:
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. (Johnson 1755, sig. Ar)

Pronunciation was not Johnson’s main concern. In the same preface he explained why he decided against marking it:

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. (Johnson 1755, sig. Cv)

In the last quarter of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, however, orthoepy emerged and developed. As far as marking pronunciation was concerned, Perry was a very experienced lexicographer, so that by the time \textit{The Synonymous Dictionary} came out, he was self-confident that “the mode […] adopted for this purpose has already been marked with public approbation” (Perry 1805: x). In fact, Perry first elaborated his system of diacritic marking (i.e. resorting to graves and acutes to mark accentuation and to italics to denote mute vowels) in his \textit{The Royal Standard English Dictionary} even though he improved on it during his lifetime and in all his later publications, i.e. \textit{A General Dictionary of the English Language} and \textit{The Standard French and English Pronouncing Dictionary}, both published in 1795 (Sturiale 2008). However, as I have claimed elsewhere (Sturiale 2006: 157), his suggestions for a correct pronunciation are not always easily followed and his introductory notes are thus an indispensable guide.
In the Key each vowel sound is marked by a superscripted number, even though it is not then reproduced in any of the dictionary entries. As pointed out by Beal:
The numbers are intended merely to indicate that there are, for example, six ways of pronouncing the letter <a>; the different diacritics (accents) and fonts distinguish these from each other. (Beal 2009: 164)

As shown in the various examples given above, Perry’s “mode”, unlike the systems devised by his fellow orthoepists (see Beal 2009), consisted in leaving the orthography of lemmas mainly unchanged but for the use of simple diacritics such as graves and acutes. The following table shows the different systems devised and reproduced in the two most important 18th-century pronouncing dictionaries, by Sheridan and Walker respectively. For convenience (i.e. a comparison with Johnson’s and Perry’s entries quoted above), HAPPINESS has been chosen as an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sheridan 1780</th>
<th>Walker 1791</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HAPPINESS, h₄p’p’yⁿ-s’s. Felicity, state in which the desires are satisfied; good luck, good fortune.</td>
<td>HAPPINESS, h₄p’p_eⁿᵉ’s’s. Felicity, state in which the desires are satisfied; good luck, good fortune.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sheridan and Walker appear to be very dependent on Johnson’s selections of lexemes and phrases to define HAPPINESS, whereas already in his 1775 pronouncing dictionary and later in his synonym one, Perry clearly shows, as said above, some clear signs of originality. As for pronunciation, the two abovementioned dictionaries made use of a system of diacritics which Perry simply explained in his introductory Key section but actually never used for marking sounds.

4. The Wordlist

As stated by Perry, and as has already been said, the lexicon of The Synonymous, Etymological and Pronouncing English Dictionary is largely Johnson’s. However, Perry was also able to go his own way, as the following examples will show.

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6 Beal (2004: 65-66), following Mugglestone (1995), has pointed out that it was common practice among 18th-century lexicographers to use Johnson’s words and
It is true that Perry usually followed Johnson’s procedure to exclude adverbs from his wordlist, and the reason is obvious; they would have occupied much space to little purpose; and their omission can be supplied, without the least inconvenience, by referring to the radical adjective, by applying the above well-known general rule. (Perry 1805: vii)

However, the adverb *HAPPLY* was included (see 3.2 above), and this is not the only exception to the rule. A comparison between Perry’s and Johnson’s wordlists, can provide further insights in Perry’s methodology and use of Johnson’s dictionary as a source for his own. If one examines the very first entries under the letter “A” – from *A* to *TO ABATE* – in Johnson’s (1755) and Perry’s various dictionaries, i.e. those published in 1775, 1795a and 1805, it is possible to notice some differences. The table below compares the wordlists in Johnson 1755 and Perry 1775:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Johnson (1755)²</th>
<th>Perry (1775)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A, art.</td>
<td>A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>//⁹</td>
<td>Åa-bãm, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Åãm, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB.</td>
<td>Ab or Abs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>//</td>
<td>Ab-ãc’a, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABA’CKE. adv.</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>//</td>
<td>Ab’-ãco, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>//</td>
<td>Ab’a-côt, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>//</td>
<td>Ab-ãct’éd, part.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

definitions in order to focus on ‘correct’ pronunciation. See also Burchfield (1993: 117).

⁷ Johnson had similar claimed in the Preface that “Words arbitrarily formed by a constant and settled analogy, like diminutive adjectives in *ish*, as *greenish*, *bluish*, adverbs in *ly*, as *dully, openly*, substantives in *ness*, as *vileness*, *faultiness*, were less diligently sought, and many sometimes have been omitted, when I had no authority that invited me to insert them; not that they are not genuine and regular offsprings of *English* roots, but because their relation to the primitive being always the same, their signification cannot be mistaken” (Johnson 1755: sig. Bv).

⁸ The wordlist of the 1773 edition was also checked and no change was introduced here by Johnson.

⁹ The symbol // indicates ‘not recorded’.
To the twenty-five entries listed by Johnson correspond thirty-five in Perry’s 1775 dictionary. Some similarities may be noticed by comparing the corresponding sequences in Perry’s later dictionaries, *The Standard French and English Pronouncing*
Dictionary (1795a) and The Synonymous, Etymological and Pronouncing English Dictionary (1805):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perry (1795a)</th>
<th>Perry (1805)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A, art.</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ä-b’acöt, s.</td>
<td>Ä-b’acöt, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Äb’a-cüs, s.</td>
<td>Äb’a-cüs, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-bäd’dän, s.</td>
<td>A-bäd’dän, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>†A-bäissänce, s.</td>
<td>†A-bäissänce, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Äb-äl-îen-ate, v.a.</td>
<td>Äb-äl-îen-ate, v.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Äb-äl-î-en-ä’tion, s.</td>
<td>Äb-äl-î-en-ä’tion, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-bän’do’n-ér, s.</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>//</td>
<td>ABAN’DONED, A-bän’do’n-êd, a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-bän’do’n-îng, s.</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-bän’do’n-mënt, s.</td>
<td>A-băn’do’n-mënt, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-bår-tic-u-l ä’tion, s.10</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-bäse’mënt, s.</td>
<td>A-bäse’mënt, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-bâsh’mënt, s.</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indeed, Perry’s 1805 wordlist is very close to that of his previous dictionaries, and to Johnson’s of course, though the presence of ABACOT – already introduced in the second, revised edition of his pronouncing dictionary published in 1777– does provide evidence that he could be independent of his ‘model’. What is even clearer by comparing the wordlist sections in Perry’s first and last dictionaries is that he reduced the number of his entry words by almost the fifty per cent.

10 Interestingly enough this lemma, already recorded in Johnson (1755), is introduced by Perry only in his bilingual dictionary.
Going back to the analysis of Perry’s debt to Johnson, a different sampling – the first fourteen entries in Johnson and Perry 1805 – provided evidence of a new, important detail:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Johnson (1755)</th>
<th>Perry (1805)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA'BULAR. adj.</td>
<td>Păbú-laŕ, a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PABULA'TION. n.s.</td>
<td>Păb-u-lă-tion, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA'BULOUS. adj.</td>
<td>Păbú-l-oùs, a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA'BULUM. n.s.</td>
<td>Păb'u-lűm, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACE. n.s.</td>
<td>Păče, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO PACE. v.n.</td>
<td>Păče, v.n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA'CED. adj.</td>
<td>Păcěd, a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA'CELER. n.s.</td>
<td>Păče'r, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACIFICA'TION, n.s.</td>
<td>Păc-ĭ-fi-că-tion, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACIFICA'TOR. n.s.</td>
<td>Păc-ĭ-fi-că-to'r, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA'CIFICATORY. adj.</td>
<td>Pa-cĭ-fi-ca-to-ry, a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA'CIFICCK. adj.</td>
<td>Pa-cĭfic (this Perry's spelling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACIFIER. n.s.</td>
<td>Păcĭfĭer, s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACK. n.s.</td>
<td>Păck, s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lemma *PABULUM* was included in neither Johnson 1755 nor in any of Perry’s previous dictionaries. Therefore, in compiling the *Synonymous, Etymological, and Pronouncing Dictionary*, Perry must also have made use of Johnson’s 1773 revised fourth edition.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has tried to provide Hüllen with an answer to his claim that:

A thorough investigation of Perry’s work would be needed to find out how far it deviates from Johnson’s model, which he acknowledged in his title. (Hüllen 2004: 253)

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11 This is a new entry in Johnson 1773.
Far from being “a thorough investigation”, this study has at least managed to point out the fact that Perry, thanks to his past experience as a lexicographer and scrupulous scholar, was able to improve on the work of his great predecessor, as far synonymy and pronunciation were concerned. He did use Johnson’s wordlist and material, but he was also able to contribute something new to the description of the English language. Like most good lexicographers, he was both a follower and an innovator; and he deserves a place in the history of English lexicography, as his dictionaries brought “the phenomenon of synonymy from the area of style […] to the area of lexical semantics” (Hüllen 2004: 249).

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Dawson B. 1799, *Philologia Anglicana; Or, A Philological and Synonymical Dictionary of the English Language*, Jermyn, Ipswich.


Perry W. 1805, *The Synonymous, Etymological and Pronouncing English Dictionary; In Which the Words are Deduced from Their Originals, Their Part of Speech Distinguished, Their Pronunciation 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, T. Gillet, London.


