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Lindsay Rose Russell

WOMEN IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DICTIONARY

Lindsay Rose Russell

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Reading Committee:

Anis Bawarshi, Co-Chair
Colette Moore, Co-Chair
Candice Rai

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Department of English

University of Washington

Abstract

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Lindsay Rose Russell

Chairs of the Supervisory Committee:
Professor Anis Bawarshi and Associate Professor Colette Moore
Department of English

“Women in the English Language Dictionary,” is at once a historical account and rhetorical analysis of how women have been involved in the English dictionary from its bilingual beginnings in the early modern period to its present-day array of instantiations. Departing from well-worn accounts of the English dictionary as a series of more-or-less discrete texts created by more-or-less famous men to constitute a near-neutral record of the entire language, “Women in the English Language Dictionary” conceives, instead, of the English language dictionary as a rhetorical genre, the form, content, audience, exigence, and cultural consequences of which are gendered and gendering. As a focused analysis of the emergence and evolution of a genre, “Women in the English Language Dictionary” finds that women—as an abstract construction and as a social collectivity—were integral for the framing of early dictionaries’ exigencies and for the fashioning of audiences invoked by the genre. Women signal major shifts in the genre’s purposes and participants, shifts heretofore neglected in favor of generic phases delimited by changes in form and content. The project fills a gap in language scholarship which has inadequately accounted for the presence of women in English dictionaries: as pupils and patrons who modeled reader roles, as primary audience signaling

transforming exigences, as volunteers and staffers who both supported and critiqued the work, and as authors and editors who have modeled and remodeled the shape, content, and consequences of the genre. The project also contributes to rhetorical scholarship, by modeling generic historiography and suggesting the value of theorizing rhetorics of reference. As a genre that testifies to shared meaning, dictionaries can and should be understood as important scenes of rhetorical education, contention, and resistance. The term sleeping dictionary is used to describe a woman with whom a man sleeps in order to learn her language, but it also signals the untapped potential of reading dictionaries as they register, reinforce, and reinvent social relations.

Table of Contents

	Table of Contents	PAGE I
	List of Figures	PAGE II
	Acknowledgements	PAGE III
	Dedication	PAGE VI
INTRODUCTION	To Wake a Sleeping Dictionary: The English Language Dictionary and Gender	PAGE 1
CHAPTER 1	The English Language Dictionary as a Rhetorical Event and a Social Action	PAGE 25
CHAPTER 2	Gentle Readers and Generic Expectations: Women as Audience and Exigence for the Emerging Dictionary Genre, 1500–1700	PAGE 67
CHAPTER 3	Absent Authors, Brazen Borrowers, and the Edge of English: Dictionaries Attributed to Women, 1600–1900	PAGE 127
CHAPTER 4	Contributions from the Parlor: Women as Participants in and Critics of Large-Scale Dictionaries, 1700–1900	PAGE 162
CHAPTER 5	Wymyn, Websters, and Genre Benders: Feminist Lexicography, 1970–2010	PAGE 214
CONCLUSION	The Waking Dictionary: The Genre of the English Language Dictionary Reimagined	PAGE 250
	References	PAGE 256
	Cirriculum Vitae	PAGE 284

List of Figures

FIGURE 1.1	Aspects of a Genre	PAGE 55
FIGURE 1.2	Landau's <i>Dictionaries</i> (1984)	PAGE 56
FIGURE 1.3	Aspects of an Emerging Genre	PAGE 58
FIGURE 2.1	Dictionaries of English and Another Vernacular, 1500–1700, Cited in Murray (1900)	PAGE 74
FIGURE 2.2	Tudor Women and Early Modern Bilingual English Dictionaries	PAGE 92
FIGURE 2.3	Stuart Women and Early Modern Bilingual English Dictionaries	PAGE 93
FIGURE 2.4	Monolingual English Dictionaries, 1600–1700, Cited in Murray (1900)	PAGE 95
FIGURE 2.5	Murray's Phases of Evolution in English Lexicography	PAGE 125
FIGURE 3.1	English Dictionaries Attributable to Women, 1486–1900	PAGE 135
FIGURE 3.2	Timeline of Dictionaries Attributable to Women, 1486–1755	PAGE 155
FIGURE 3.3	Timeline of Dictionaries Attributable to Women, 1755–1800	PAGE 157
FIGURE 3.4	Timeline of Dictionaries Attributable to Women, 1806–1830	PAGE 158
FIGURE 4.1	Women Contributors to the First and Fourth Editions of A <i>Dictionary of the English Language</i> : Household Members, Friends, and Paid Staff	PAGE 170
FIGURE 4.2	Women Contributors to the First Edition of the <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> : Readers	PAGE 192
FIGURE 4.3	Women Contributors to the First Edition of the <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> : Unpaid Subeditors	PAGE 193
FIGURE 4.4	Women Contributors to the First Edition of the <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> : Unpaid Assistants	PAGE 193
FIGURE 4.5	Women Contributors to the First Edition of the <i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> : Paid Staff	PAGE 195
FIGURE 5.1	Feminist Dictionaries, 1970–2006	PAGE 224

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In my first year of graduate school, Colette Moore, with characteristic clarity, told me that to pursue academic work, I should “find an interesting archive and ask smart questions of it.” Her elegant advice became, for me, an invitation and a challenge. It was leave to look for and think about what I found inherently interesting in the world, and it was a continual encouragement to ask better, brighter questions—first the friendly ones and then the critical kind. The answers I have found in this project owe much to her superior abilities of inquiry and interrogation.

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might a feminist rhetorical project look like? Is there a creative, productive, generative type of feminist rhetorical theory that has a different aim than critique or resistance?” After many airy answers, I hope to have touched ground with this project. Candice’s encouragements toward careful precision and practical focus have been instrumental to my methodology.

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for my mom
a waking dictionary
who opened my eyes to the world of words
even though I was a fussbudget loath to accoutrements

Introduction

TO WAKE A SLEEPING DICTIONARY: THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DICTIONARY AND GENDER

DICTIONARY

The term *dictionary* is thought to have entered the English language as early as the fifteenth century. It was then, and for a long time after, used to describe a wide range of textual products. In fact, so many kinds of texts counted as dictionaries, it was often difficult to find the common denominator among them. Consequently, and as the *Oxford English Dictionary's* citation from the sixteenth century suggests, a dictionary was not much if at all different from a book of any variety:¹

1580 EDINB. TEST. VIII. f. 109, in *Dict. Older Sc. Tongue at Dictionar(e)*,
Certane bukes bund & vnbund, sik as ane dictionar in latyne & inglis.
(*OED Online*, third edition November 2010, online version December 2011)

A pile of paper (sheets, quires, codices), perhaps held together (with thread, glue, clasps, leather). A dictionary, as an inanimate object, takes on a kind of austerity—a severe simplicity that suggests some separation between it and the social world. And of course the dictionary is

¹ Throughout this project, dictionary citations appear, as much as possible, in the form in which they appear in their original sources.

a material object, but this project will suggest that the dictionary is a deeply social and dramatically gendered object also.

WALKING DICTIONARY

It is not long after the word *dictionary* enters the English language that its social contexts and gendered participations become plain in extended use. By the seventeenth century, the term *dictionary* is used to describe not only books but people.

The *OED* dates first attestation of the term *walking dictionary*, “Referring to a person who has great stores of knowledge at his or her command,” to this time:

1609 G. CHAPMAN *Euthymiae Raptus* sig. C3, Let a Scholler, all earths volumes carrie, He will be but a walking dictionarie: A meere articulate Clocke, that doth but speake By others arts. (*OED Online*, third edition September 2009, online version December 2011)

Early print instances of the term, such as this one, suggest a significantly less generous definition of *walking dictionary* than that provided by today’s *OED*. All of the following quotations, none of which appear in the *OED*, plainly disparage the (walking) dictionary

[...] such Fools as value themselves upon Languages, never consider Language is but a Trunk to convey our meanings by; for ought I know Welch is as good as Hebrew; a Dictionary is no wise book, nor a walking Dictionary a wise man. (Newcastle 1677, 11)

Yes, a walking Dictionary! Words in all Languages, and sense in none. (Cooper 1735, 30)

The walking Dictionary, and the brutal Pedant, make learning itself disgusting, and rob truth of its lovely appearance. (Combe 1781, 109)

[...] he is a rank pedant—a walking dictionary, and a mere vocabulary of empty words. (Eyre 1791, 6)

All five of the above first instances of *walking dictionary* gender it masculine. Three (Newcastle, Cooper, and Eyre) place the phrase in the mouth of a woman disparaging a man—for draining words of sense, for brutalizing conversation, for boring her.²

Early in its life then, the word *dictionary* takes on gendered valences. *Walking dictionary* shows that the lexicon is embodied by a man. Likewise, men are the ones fascinated by dictionary making, interested in compiling and describing the lexicon (no matter how irritating either activity may prove to be in social contexts); and women are set opposite this project—accosted, annoyed, and unamused by it. *Walking dictionary* thus suggests how dictionaries functioned in social contexts—to privilege certain knowledges, appeal to certain persons and alienate others, and to secure gendered and gendering effects.

SLEEPING DICTIONARY

The density with which gendered roles and relations map onto and out of the dictionary project is more striking still when an animate dictionary is accorded feminine pronouns. The term *sleeping dictionary* refers to a woman who teaches her native language to a man in the context of having sex with him.

The *OED* offers a rather tortuous definition of the phrase (“a foreign woman with whom a man has a sexual relationship and from whom he learns her language”) and dates first use to the twentieth century:

² The corpus thus suggests that a *walking dictionary* is, in fact, *not* a great store of knowledge but an indiscriminate store of words in many languages; *not* a command of information but a foolish excess, a violent pedantry, a showy emptiness. It is not until the nineteenth century that the term *walking dictionary* ameliorates and comes to signify some sort of impressive and positive human capacity for knowledge. The term’s amelioration follows on its specification as a dictionary not of words and meanings but of proverbs, anecdotes, quotations, or phrases. It is perhaps not until the twentieth century that the term is as comfortably applied to women as men.

1928 J. B. WHARTON *Squad 21* We picked up two beauties...Oo-la-la—I've learned French out uv a sleepin' dictionary—dat's what dey're called. (*OED Online*, second edition 1989, online version December 2011)

But, *sleeping dictionary* can be found in print at least fifty years earlier. For example, in the nineteenth century we see:

[...] he told me, when I reached Santa Fe, to procure at once *una diccionaria dormiente*—"a sleeping dictionary" (Beadle 1873, 446)

[...] after all, Madame Waipaha was not quite the intellectual fall-back-upon to satisfy him. He did not now require a sleeping dictionary to learn Maori from. (Campbell 1881, 128-129)

The term *sleeping dictionary*, rooted as it is in the colonial work of the British Empire, likely circulated long before sentences such as the above were published. Given the colloquial nature of the term and the indelicacy of its referent, *sleeping dictionary* may have taken a particularly long time (longer than, say, *walking dictionary*) to find its way into print.

The sleeping dictionary is, to me and to this project, more than a word and a meaning, more than a feminine personification of an otherwise neutral object or masculine vanity, more than another indication that the dictionary is indeed a gendered and gendering endeavor. The sleeping dictionary represents a word, an idea, a social milieu that allows an idea to take shape in a definable piece of the language, a definition that survives in today's *OED*, and a phrase that circulates in today's English. As all of these things, the sleeping dictionary signals the particularly complicated relations that exist between women and language, women and the English language, and women and dictionaries. In teasing out these complicated relations between women and dictionaries, I will show their implications for language, English, and dictionaries more generally.

The sleeping dictionary at once acknowledges and denies women's linguistic competencies. The term deftly sets a passive sexual body in the place of a language teacher, in

part by registering her fluency as foreignness. Contrary to the *OED*'s definition of the term, the woman, in the moment that she acts as a sleeping dictionary, is not foreign at all. She is, in fact, *at home*—geographically and linguistically (she is likely native to and living in the scene of “sleep”—the American West, an Auckland island, a French outpost of the British army) as well as metaphorically (she is at home in the bed of a traveling man). This intimacy with her language and her learner is precisely what makes her “dictionary material,” and yet that intimacy both manifests as radically other (she is, to her sexual partner/language learner, exotic) and compromises her authority (she is, ancillary benefits withstanding, just a loose woman).

In addition to alienating women from general linguistic competence, the idea of the sleeping dictionary alienates women from the English language more specifically. For part of what makes a sleeping dictionary foreign within the context of the *Oxford English Dictionary* is that she is not and does not speak *English*. English remains, instead, *his* language, and Englishwomen remain safely removed from the scenarios requiring sleeping dictionaries.³ Centuries of English language ideology would have rendered a sleeping dictionary *of the English language* something of an oxymoron. Beginning in the fourteenth century, English speakers insist that English-speaking women are either linguistic Madonnas or linguistic whores (Baron 1986). Their competencies in the language conflate with their purities in person such that a woman's spotless soul/English would prevent her from engaging in casual sexual-*cum*-educational relationships with foreigners or her loose morality/English would, within the corruption of sex, permit only the transmission of a corrupted English. The sleeping dictionary

³ Of course, women *were* a part of colonial work; see, for example Ann Laura Stoler's (2002) *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* which argues that colonial distinctions between ruler and ruled were significantly constructed through (hetero)sexual and affective domestic relationships.

thus firmly establishes a contrary and simultaneous sort of closeness and distance between women and English.

That same paradox of proximity emerges in the sleeping dictionary's portrait of women in relation to the dictionary project. The term at once foregrounds and downplays women as important to lexicographical work. Again, their passive sexual bodies take the place of published authors, compilers, and editors. Women are prominently named and yet immediately displaced, as in the *OED*'s definition: "a foreign woman with whom a man has a sexual relationship and from whom he learns her language." The phrasing bends around itself such that the woman, who is the thematic head of the sentence, is object of the primary verbs while the man is the subject. The syntax ensures "a foreign woman" just passively *is*; while an unspecified "he" actively "learns," notably without anything (especially *anyone* foreign, female, or both) coming in between the two; no one, for example, explicitly "talks" to or "teaches" him. The idea of the sleeping dictionary makes clear that the dictionary is rather more about a man who learns than a woman who knows, speaks, or instructs.

The phrase *sleeping dictionary* thus affirms and extends what was suggested by *walking dictionary*: Even when the lexicon is not embodied by a man, it belongs to him. *Sleeping dictionary* tells us that Englishmen own English as much as they own dictionaries of English and sleeping dictionaries of any language *other than* English. *Walking dictionary* suggests that the impulse to make a dictionary and the practices of lexicographical collection and description belong to men, but *sleeping dictionary* emphasizes that the product that emerges and the benefits that accrue from these impulses and practices *also* belong to men, no matter the strange (and prominent) imbrications of women, women's bodies, women's competencies, and women's investments.

SLEEPING HISTORY

Histories and theories of the dictionary do not mention sleeping dictionaries, only “Johnson’s *Dictionary*,” “Webster’s dictionaries,” “Murray’s *OED*.” Lexicons of the English language are known and distinguished in this way—by virtue of belonging to particular men. And so women tend to fade into the background, to become, if not invisible, obscured.

For example, it takes a near archeological effort to excavate women from the title of what is widely accepted as the first monolingual dictionary of the English language, Robert Cawdrey’s 1604 *A Table Alphabeticall, conteyning and teaching the true vvriting, and vnderstanding of hard vsuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French. &c. With the interpretation thereof by plaine English words, gathered for the benefit & helpe of Ladies, Gentlewomen, or any other vnskilfull persons. Whereby they may the more easilie and better vnderstand many hard English wordes, vvhich they shall heare or read in Scriptures, Sermons, or elfwhere, and also be made able to vse the same aptly themselues*. The projected audience of Cawdrey’s title gives us a detail that might seem and is often taken as incidental to understanding the English language dictionary (its history, its function, its future): Women were an integral part of the project from its very beginnings.

Indeed, naming women as primary patrons or likely readers is common practice in early dictionary titles, dedications, prefaces, and introductions beginning in the sixteenth century. We have the following bi- and monolingual English language dictionaries that mark themselves as “for” or “to” women—generally or by name, sometimes alone and sometimes alongside men:

1533 Giles Du Wés’ *An introductorie for to lerne to rede, to pronounce, and to speake Frenche trewly compyled for the right high, excellent, and most vertuous lady, the lady Mary of*

- Englande, daughter to our most gracious souerayn lorde kyng Henry the eight*⁴, including a dedication “To the lady Mary.”
- 1598 John Florio’s *A vvorlde of wordes*, including a dedication “To the Right Honorable Patrons of virtue, Patterns of Honor, Roger Earle of Rutland, Henrie Earle of Southampton, Lucie Countesse of Bedford.”
- 1604 Robert Cawdrey’s *A Table Alphabeticall [...] for the benefit & helpe of ladies, gentlewomen, or any other unskilfull persons. [...]* including a dedication “To the right honourable, Worshippfull, virtuous, & godlie Ladies, the Lady Hastings, the Lady Dudley, the Lady Mountague, the Ladie Wingfield, and the Lady Leigh, his Christian friends”
- 1611 John Florio’s revised edition of *A vvolde of wordes, Queen Anna's nevv vworld of words*, including a dedication “TO THE IMPERIALI MAIESTIE of the Higheft-borne Princes, ANNA of Denmarke, by God’s permission, Crowned QVEENE of England, Scotland, France & Ireland, &c.”
- 1616 John Bullokar’s *An English expositor teaching the interpretation of the hardest words vsed in our language*, including a dedication “To the right honorable and vertvovs, his singlar good ladie, the ladie Iane Vicountesse Mountegaue, all honour and happineffe.”
- 1623 Henry Cockeram’s *The English dictionarie: or, An interpreter of hard English vvords Enabling as well ladies and gentlewomen, young schollers, clarkes, merchants, as also strangers of any nation, to the vnderstanding of the more difficult authors already printed in our language, and the more speedy attaining of an elegant perfection of the English tongue, both in reading, speaking and writing. [...]*
- 1639 Giovanni Torriano’s *New and easie directions for attaining the Thuscan Italian tongue [...] Set forth for the especiall use of such as are desirous to bee proficients in the said language. By Gio. Torriano, an Italian, and professour of the same within the city of London*, including a dedication “Alla nobilissima et eccelentissima dama, Madama Elizabeta, Contessa di Kent, Vero Specchio d’ Onore, Virtù, Nobiltà”
- 1656 Thomas Blount’s *Glossographia: or A dictionary, interpreting all such hard vvords, whether Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, Teutonick, Belgick, British or Saxon; as are now used in our refined English tongue [...]*, which “is chiefly intended for the more-knowing Women, and lefs-knowing Men; or indeed for all such of the unlearned, who can but finde in an Alphabet, the word they understand not”
- 1702 John Kersey’s *A New English Dictionary: Or, a Compleat Collection Of the Most Proper and Significant Words, Commonly used in the LANGUAGE With a Short and Clear Exposition of Difficult Words and Terms of Art. The whole digested into Alphabetical Order; and chiefly designed for the benefit of Young Scholars, Tradesmen, Artificers, and the Female Sex, who would learn to spell truly, being so fitted to every Capacity, that it may be a continual help to all that want an Instructor.*

It is hard to know what we can make of these women, appearing as they do entangled in and nearly eclipsed by early modern title profligacy and patron obligations, but it is nevertheless

⁴ James Murray attests to a 1527 version of this text (1900, 24).

clear that, at a rather crucial moment for the British Empire, the English language, and the English dictionary, women were repeatedly fashioned as students in, muses for, and keepers of the language and its lexicons. Just because women nearly fade into the wallpaper, we cannot neglect the fact that they are coming out of the woodwork.

For it was not only early on that the English dictionary was anchored in women’s names and women’s interests. Even after the fashions of dedicating dictionaries to women and naming women as intended audience had fallen from favor (sometime at the end of the seventeenth century though the practices survive, in not-so-isolated incidents, into the present day), women were important to lexicographical work. As early as the fifteenth century, women’s names appeared on title pages as authors and editors of dictionaries. The following are instances of lexicographical work attributed to women:

- 1486 Dame Juliana Berner’s “The boke of hawkyng, and hyntyng, and fysshing” containing a vocabulary of hawks, fauna, flora, and meat carving.
- 1677 Hannah Woolley’s *The Gentlewomans Companion; or, A Guide to the Female Sex Containing Directions of Behaviour [...] With Letters and Discourses Upon All Occasions. Whereunto Is Added, a Guide for Cook-Maids, Dairy-Maids, Chamber-Maids, and All Others That Go to Service [...]*, including a glossary of forms of address and greeting as well as the terminology of meat carving
- 1690 Mary Evelyn’s “The Fop-Dictionary,” including terms of the ladies’ dressing room
- 1753 Mary Johnson’s *The Young Woman’s Companion; or the Servant-Maid’s Assistant; Digested Under Several Heads Hereinafter Mentioned* including *A Compendious English Spelling Dictionary [...]* *The Whole Compiled by Mary Johnson, for Many Years a Superintendant of a Lady of Quality’s Family in the City of York*
- 1799 Lady Charlotte Murray’s *The British Garden. A Descriptive Catalogue of Hardy Plants, Indigenous or Cultivated in the Climate of Great Britain [...]*
- 1828 Eliza Robbins’ *Primary Dictionary, or Rational Vocabulary, Consisting of Nearly Four Thousand Words, Adapted to the Comprehension of Children and Designed for the Younger Classes in Schools [...]*
- 1856 Sarah Josepha Buell Hale’s *A Complete Dictionary of Poetical Quotations*
- 1873 Sue Law McBeth’s “Dictionary and Grammar of the Nez Perce Language”
- 1883 Adele Marion Fielde’s *A Pronouncing and Defining Dictionary of the Swatow Dialect Arranged According to the Syllables and Tones [...]*

Modern and early modern dictionaries that are attributed to women register the vibrant array of lexicographical work taking place over this period, and some allow unusual access to semantic content rooted in women’s work and women’s social contexts.

Women’s labor, both in the home and later in professional workspaces, was vital to the most famous male-attributed dictionary projects of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Both Samuel Johnson and James Murray, for example, worked from home-offices, where women managed spaces, visitors, and lexicographical responsibilities.

In the twentieth century, feminist critiques of commercial powerhouse dictionaries, feminist revisions of dictionaries, and feminist reinventions of the dictionary were all popular, as the following titles attest:

- 1974 H. Lee Gershuny’s “Sexist Semantics in the Dictionary”
- 1983 Janet Whitcut’s “Sexism in Dictionaries”
- 1985 Cheris Kramarae and Paula A. Treichler’s *A Feminist Dictionary*
- 1989 Jane Miller’s *Womanwords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Patriarchal Society*
- 1989 Kate Musgrave’s *Womb with Views: Contradictionary of English Language*
- 1992 Hannah S. Russell and Delbert W. Fournier’s “A Study of Sex-Role Stereotyping in the Oxford English Dictionary 2E”
- 1999 Sabine Prechter’s “Women’s Rights – Children’s Games: Sexism in Learners’ Dictionaries of English”

But women’s names, interests, and contributions—as patrons, readers, researchers, lexicographers—are few and far between in today’s histories of lexicography. Impressive multivolume works such as the *Oxford History of English Lexicography* (Cowie 2010) and *A History of Cant and Slang Dictionaries* (Coleman 2004a; 2004b; 2009; 2010) largely repeat and thus help to normalize the erasure of women from the history of English dictionaries, and it is this erasure that this project will seek at once to read and redress.

In waking the sleeping history of the English language dictionary, I will document women’s consistent participation in dictionary production from the sixteenth century onward,

not only in relation to dictionary making men (as wives, daughters, sisters, and friends) but also, and importantly, as themselves active in dictionary making (as patrons, readers, amanuenses, office managers, volunteers, contributors, subeditors, compilers, critics, and authors). And I will consider what we lose in understanding the dictionary *without* women. From its emergence and into the present day, the gendered generic requirements of the dictionary have influenced individual dictionary projects as well as popular and scholarly conceptions of what “the dictionary” is and can be.

The Scholarly Conversation: Gender, Language, and Dictionaries

While indexes to book-length dictionary scholarship are highly unlikely to contain the words *sex*, *gender*⁵, and/or *women* (e.g., Béjoint 2000; Béjoint 2010; Coleman 2004a; Coleman 2004b; Coleman 2009; Coleman 2010; Cowie 2009; Green 1996; Hartmann 2001; Hausmann et al. 1989-1990; Jackson 2002), indexes to book-length language and gender scholarship consistently contain the word *dictionaries* (e.g., Cameron 1985; Cameron 1990; Frank and Treichler 1989; Miller and Swift 1976; Pauwels 1998; Sunderland 2006; Thorne and Henley 1975). The indexes reference anything from chapter-length discussions of how dictionaries perpetuate sexist stereotypes (e.g., Thorne and Henley 1975) to subsections that treat the role of dictionaries and other language reference works as means for spreading linguistic change (e.g., Pauwels 1998) to brief commentary on the power of dictionaries to serve as cultural authorities (e.g., Cameron 1985).

⁵ The indexes for some lexicographical texts reference treatments of linguistic gender but not of anatomical or cultural gender.

Language and gender scholars⁶ are thus interested in the dictionary as a linguistic tool but one that has (non-neutral) extralinguistic functions with (again, non-neutral) gender implications. The dictionary does not “simply” describe English usage, it marshals authority and thereby authorizes (in the senses of creating *and* affirming) linguistic and extralinguistic values. Deborah Cameron offers an example that at once isolates and ties together these threads, showing how “descriptive” dictionaries covertly rest on values rather than facts:

The personal authority of, say, Dr Johnson, whose judgements one trusts to the extent that one trusts him as a model of learning, taste and correct form, is transformed by descriptivism into a “scientific” authority, to be respected for its ability to collect, synthesize and adequately present “the facts of usage.” (1995, 50)

The authority of Samuel Johnson’s (linguistic) dictionary is, then, inextricably if confusingly bound up in the (extralinguistic) privileging of personal prominence, elite education, social grace, scientific discourse, and evolving epistemological practice. And of course these seats of authority were differently available to Dr. Johnson than they would have been to Mrs. Johnson.

Not only does the dictionary register the authority that accrues to its male author, it perpetuates these dense and gendered systems. According to Paula Treichler, a dictionary is “a set of interpretive practices that becomes, itself, interpreted” (1989, 197). Dictionary makers and users both participate in “practices that systematically form the objects of which they

⁶ Theorizations of language and gender date back further than most calendars; folk wisdom is rich with untraceably ancient proverbs about men’s mouths and women’s tongues (Sunderland 2006). Recent scholarly attention to the matter seems to have surged in the 1970s and continued into the present, though emphasis has increasingly shifted from gender to sexuality. This body of work focuses on an array of topics: women’s language(s) (e.g., Lakoff 1975), men’s language(s) (e.g., Spender 1980), the history of sexist language and language ideologies (e.g., Baron 1986), contemporary gendered language ideologies (e.g., Miller and Swift 1976), contemporary sexism in language (e.g., Cameron 1992), gender-differentiated language use (e.g., Coates 2008), feminist language reform (e.g., Pauwels 1998), and language and sexuality (e.g., Baker 2008), to name a few.

speak” (Foucault 1972, 49). The dictionary speaks from masculine privilege and it inscribes feminine absence and inferiority. According to Treichler:

dictionaries have generally excluded any sense of women as speakers, as linguistic innovators, or as definers of words. Whatever the editors’ aims, dictionaries have perpetuated the stereotypes and prejudices of writers, editors, and language commentators, who are almost exclusively males. At no point do they make women’s words and women’s experiences central. Thus, despite the unique scholarly achievements and undeniable wit of many of these dictionaries, they have been produced within a social context that is inhospitable to women. (1989, 204-205)

Dictionary research has confirmed this broad statement.⁷ H. Lee Gershuny (1974; 1975; 1977; 1978; 1980) has found that female-associated words are consistently defined in terms of women’s sexual relationships to men, that women are rendered linguistically invisible by so-called generic terms, that female markers such as *-ess* commonly serve to flag women’s achievements as deviant, and that illustrative quotations under neutral headwords often reinforce stereotypical sex-roles. Sabine Prechter (1999) documents sexist stereotypes in the introductions, definitions, and examples of learner’s dictionaries of English. Virginia Braun and Celia Kitzinger (2001) argue that dictionary definitions of *vagina* and *clitoris* reinforce (hetero)sexist assumptions about female sexuality as passive and women’s genitals as absent. Katherine Connor Martin (2005) describes how assumptions about slang as occurring primarily or exclusively within subgroups with strong associations of masculinity (e.g., “football players”) have eclipsed research into historical and contemporary slang with associations to femininity (e.g., “caregivers”).

While this scholarship has done much to show how prominent contemporary dictionaries (like those produced by American Heritage and Random House) encode gender

⁷ While linguistic narrations of gender often cast dictionaries as villains, they also hold them as potential heroes. According to Anne Pauwels, dictionaries can begin and spread linguistic change (1998, 206-207).

ideologies and biases, it has not usually traced the long history of gender in dictionary work. It has detailed how gender animates individual dictionary projects, but it has not considered how those individual projects conform to and affirm the generic requirements of the dictionary which are deeply gendered and gendering. And while scholars of language and gender have deepened our understanding of dictionaries that are attributed to men and intended for general audiences, they have not considered how dictionaries attributed to women and intended for either general audiences or audiences of women participate in the gender work of lexicography. This project aims to diversify the archive of and add historical and generic perspective to the work described above.

The Scholarly Conversation: Feminist Historiography

A project that both revises and reads the absence of women from the story of dictionaries participates in feminist historiography, a body of work that grows out of a number of political and scholarly investments and takes a number of theoretical and methodological forms. The critical approach of feminist historiography is part feminist, part historical, and part historiographical. That is, it combines feminist investments in women with historical recovery of women and historiographical critique and revision of masculinist narratives. In the discussion that follows, I would like to piece out these three components as they facilitate my own work and suggest how this project will contribute to enactments and theorizations of feminist historiography by at once writing and reflecting on narratives of history from a feminist perspective. The stakes are political and ideological, relevant to women, history, lexicography, and the English language.

Feminist: Figuring Women into and out of the Dictionary

As a method, feminist historiography holds tenets common to other feminist endeavors. Most fundamentally, feminism⁸ is interested in the category of “women”—not only as a social and political collectivity born of biological and experiential difference but as an abstract construction created and inhabited by embodied individuals in the lived experiences of everyday life. Denise Riley has emphasized that “both a concentration on and a refusal of the identity of ‘women’ are essential to feminism” (1988, 150). Thus feminist work might seem bound up in paradox: fascinated with the familiar, bent on destabilizing it; certain of differences and inequalities in the material reality of individuals, and certain also that those differences and inequalities are rooted not in individual material reality but in social and linguistic constructions. For many feminist projects, these principles are not contradictory but instead ensure simultaneous aims, political and intellectual, to expose operations of power and explore the ways in which oppression has been and can be perpetuated and/or resisted.

My own project accordingly works on two levels; it focuses on women both as a discursive construction and as a material reality. In seeking to describe and theorize discursive constructions, I am less interested in “real women” than in projections of women onto and out of the pages of dictionaries, that is, how they are described within dictionaries and what those descriptions assume or enable in the world external to the dictionary. But because the category of women is both constructed and *lived*, this project will also seek to support “the full humanity of women” (Cameron 1992, 4) by recognizing their presence in the field of lexicography. The

⁸ I use the singular *feminism* here rather than the vogue plural *feminisms*. The singular term itself encompasses the multiplicities and contradictions of feminist work, as this section argues, and it, like most every term in the English language, has multiple meanings that do not thereby necessitate transformation into a count noun.

rejection of a worldview wherein the standard of human value is set by the male gender requires that we revisit conceptions of the past that absent women.

This twofold approach accords nicely with shifts in the field of history that have distinguished between the past (“the totality of humanity’s previous experiences”), history (“the story or narrative ordering of that past”), and historiography (“ongoing critical rethinking” of the discourses of history) (Morgan 2006, 2-3). In the next two sections, I’ll explore how these categories, combined with feminism, motivate the project at hand.

History: The Presence of Women in Dictionary Past

In demanding recognition of the full humanity of women, feminism assumes that women were present and participating in the previous experiences of humanity, regardless of whether they have figured into narratives of it. That is, women may be absent from history but they were present in the past. Much of the feminist work of the last four decades has therefore been to uncover women of the past and restore them to history (e.g., Kelly-Gadol 1976).

This project is, in some ways, precisely that—a work of discovery and restoration. It seeks out individual women at work on individual dictionary projects and the collective category of women as aligned with the genre’s emergence and success over time. The project seeks to answer the following questions about the past: What roles have women played in relation to dictionaries (as readers and makers, most obviously, but perhaps also as domestic, administrative, or “ancillary” dictionary workers)? How did the involvement of women affect the kinds of dictionaries that could be produced and thus the ways in which the genre was conceived?

But because “women” may be inaccessible as a reality and constructed as a category, this project will also be a work of interpretation and theorization. It will investigate the

invocation and construction of the category of “women” by lexicographers and metalexicographers of the past; in dictionary titles, prefaces, illustrative quotations, and authorial attributions as well as in dictionary theories. Who is included in the category, who excluded, and to what theoretical, lexicographical, and political effect? When is the category of “women” treated as semantic material to be described and classified in the dictionary and when is it treated as an assemblage of agentive persons to be called to action by the dictionary? How do lexicographical texts constitute the category of “women” in relation to the category of “men”?

This work therefore compliments other projects that have either discovered and recovered “real” women in the lexicographical past or interpreted and theorized representations of women in dictionary pages. Alicia Rodríguez-Alvarez and María Esther Rodríguez-Gil (2006), for example, participate in a project of recovery in their presentation of the case of Anne Fisher’s 1773 dictionary. Jonathon Green’s (2005) “Dick-tionaries” both restores women to the history of lexicography (as familial support to male editors and as creators and editors themselves) and interprets their chronically negative representation in slang dictionaries. Green’s work—alongside that of Cameron (1992), Prechter (1999), Braun and Kitzinger (2001), and Martin (2005)—extends critiques of the representation of women in dictionaries first forwarded by Gershuny throughout the 1970s and echoed throughout the 1980s and 1990s by feminist dictionaries (e.g., Kramarae and Treichler 1985).

This body of work has only begun to reveal women—real or represented—as an important part of the history of dictionaries. This project argues that their concealment has been detrimental not only to women specifically and humanity generally but to the potential of lexicography, the theorization of the genre, and the fullness of the English language.

Historiography: The Absence of Women in Dictionary History

Just as feminism can be understood as a concentration on and refusal of the category of “women,” historiography can be understood as a concentration on and refusal of history as a flow of time or a string of causalities. That is, historiography is at once invested in understanding histories that turn to causal chronology as the only mode for producing the past and in imaging and enacting alternative modes for producing a *useable* past. The critical concentration on grand narrative histories is not only descriptive and discrediting, it is also interpretive and constructive, seeking to explain what versions of the past reveal about the potentials and limitations of human thought in a given moment.

Feminist historiography may often begin by uncovering and cataloguing the deficiencies of extant histories. Lana F. Rakow argues that that this kind of project can:

help us see the deficiency of history-making (telling narratives about history) that hides gender at the same time that gender systems and gender meanings serve a fundamental organizing role in most societies; the deficiency of history-making that valorizes history made “from the top” and history made by “great men”; the deficiency of history-making that assumes a grand narrative of progressive and linear development of events, epics, and consequences; and the deficiency of history making that reifies structures of power and domination through an acceptance and valuation of the public over the private, the expert over the amateur, the episodic over the everyday. (2008, 114-115)

But, importantly, feminist historiography does more than descry deficiency, it theorizes it. The critical question is not “What’s wrong with this history?” but “Why does this history look the way it does and to what effect?” The latter concern prompts additional considerations of what is lost and gained in the presentation of the past as a chronological march of extraordinary men toward greatness; and what narratives of the past support or require the erasure of gender as a fundamental organizing principle in society.

Women, gender, sex, sexism, and androcentrism tend to be absent from the history of the dictionary as told by English language scholars as well as dictionary makers, theorists, and historians. As feminist historiography, this project argues the importance of making sense of that absence as signaling important limitations to how we can conceive not just of the dictionary genre but of the theories of language and meaning that dictionaries confirm, construct, and disseminate. The project seeks to answer the following questions about dictionary histories: What gendered attributes are part and parcel of the causal chronological version of dictionary history? Why and how are women absented from contemporary lexicographical or metalexicographical versions of dictionary history? What does the absence of women tell us about the limits of how we can conceive of the dictionary genre and the English language more broadly?

The Scholarly Conversation: Historiographies of Language, English, and Dictionaries

This project's use of feminist historiography is aligned with a number of other historiographical projects that have upset familiar linear narratives (of language, English, and English grammars and dictionaries) and expanded narrow canons (of dictionaries, rhetorics, and women's writing).

A number of language scholars, for instance, have lately turned to historiography to suggest that anthropomorphic family trees are inappropriate models for understanding the rich history of English, the development and propagation of Standard English, or unconscious language practices (e.g., Watts and Trudgill 2002, Watts 2011, Wright 2000). Particularly noteworthy among this body of language historiography are Dennis Baron's (1986) *Grammar and Gender*, which traces the persistence of sexism in language histories, theories, and reference works as far back as the fourteenth century, and John Considine's (2010) collection

Adventuring in Dictionaries, which uncovers, revisits, and retheorizes dictionaries from the sixteenth century onward as intensely human activities.

Since the 1990s, a great number of rhetorical scholars have relied on feminist historiography to critique narrow and linear histories of rhetoric. This scholarship has not only pointed out the limitations of valuing only some theorists of language to the exclusion of others, it has produced feminist historiographical projects of recovery and revision (e.g., Enoch 2008, Glenn 1997, Jarratt 1991, Lunsford 1995), and methodological manifestos about feminist historiography (e.g., Bizzell 2002, Jarratt 2000, Royster 2000, Schell and Rawson 2010). This project is notably coincident with Jane Donawerth's work on women's conduct books, elocution guides, and letter-writing manuals, which she argues stood in for the formal rhetorical education women were systematically denied between 1600 and 1900 (especially 2012; but also 1997; 2000; 2002). Dictionaries may have fulfilled a similar function.

THE SHAPE OF THIS PROJECT

This project argues that *sensing* women's presence throughout the history of English language lexicography signals a need to *make sense* of their presence, to ask how and why women have been involved in dictionary production and why and to what end their involvement has, by and large, been forgotten. The absence of women, gender, sex, sexism, and androcentrism in contemporary lexicographical scholarship signals important limitations to how we can conceive not just of the dictionary genre but of the theories of language and meaning that dictionaries confirm, construct, and disseminate.

Because the scholarly tendency to disregard gender in English language dictionary projects is inextricable from current modes of describing the genre, the first chapter, "The Dictionary as a Rhetorical Event and a Social Action" suggests both language studies and

rhetorical studies are necessary to the construction of the history of lexicography. This blended approach productively pulls focus from dictionaries as single texts (often understood as unimpeachable heroic efforts) and brings to light emerging and evolving patterns in the genre as it takes and shifts shape, as its typified forms of communication guide our mental and historical perceptions of the world inviting and discouraging certain actions within it. An attentiveness to dictionaries as rhetorical acts and to women as active participants disrupts the master narrative of the genre which discounts the complex collective labor of dictionary making (not limited to lexicographical work), establishes what “counts” as legitimate enactments of the genre, and misses important shifts in the genre’s audience, exigence, production, and variation.

“Gentle Readers and Generic Expectations: Women as Audience and Exigence for the Emerging Dictionary Genre, 1500–1700,” the second chapter, looks to some of the earliest bilingual and monolingual English language dictionaries (Blount 1656; Boyer 1694; Bullokar 1616; Cawdrey 1604; Cockeram 1623; Dunton 1694; DuWés 1533; Evelyn 1690; Florio 1598; Florio 1611; Kersey 1702; Palsgrave 1530) to explore how and to what generic effect these sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts name women as primary patrons, pupils, and audience members for their dictionaries. Women were clearly important to articulating the exigence of the genre; they catalyzed the work as students of dictionary makers, supported production and popularization as patrons of individual dictionaries, and shaped generic roles and expectations as an audience addressed that defines the possible roles for the audience invoked by the genre. Looking to the place and purpose of women in dictionaries at the point in which the genre is emerging shows that the phases of early English lexicography are marked not only by shifts in form and content but also and importantly by shifts in purpose and audience.

After the initial stabilization of the English language dictionary genre, the practice of identifying women as primary audience falls from favor. Major dictionaries of the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries rarely address themselves to women, but women were nonetheless actively involved in the genre. The third chapter, “Absent Authors, Brazen Borrowers, and the Edge of English: Dictionaries Attributed to Women, 1600–1900” considers dictionaries (and other forms of lexicographical thought) authored and edited by women (e.g., Bryan 1797; Fielde 1878; Fisher 1773; Genlis 1799; Palmer 1839; Piozzi 1794; Tuthill 1848; Woolley 1673) of this period. Rarely considered in lexicographical scholarship, dictionaries by women were many in number and varied in focus; there were bilingual Christian missionary dictionaries, British dialect dictionaries, mixed-genre technical lexicons, vocabulary lists in etiquette guides and domestic handbooks, and fully-fledged general-purpose dictionaries of English. A closer look at these texts and their authors as working at the margins of English lexicography reveals the way in which dictionary work was increasingly hostile not only to women (often uneducated and undertaking dictionary writing and editing alongside other employments) whose work was dismissed or disparaged but also to certain semantic fields, Englishes, or English speakers which women dictionary makers were more willing or at least more likely to record than their male counterparts.

“Contributions from the Parlor: Women as Participants in and Critics of Large-Scale Dictionaries, 1700–1900,” the fourth chapter, documents the domestic and professional contributions of women to large-scale male-attributed dictionary projects of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Taking Johnson’s (1755) *A Dictionary of the English Language* and Murray’s (1884–1928) *Oxford English Dictionary* as case studies, this chapter rewrites the roles of women in dictionary work. While lexicographical histories often cast women as distractions to

or destructive of dictionary work, this chapter argues that their labor, often secured by virtue of dictionary production within domestic space, was vital to the success of dictionary making. Not only did women play important roles as personal supports and intellectual peers of dictionary-making men, they also contributed directly to the management of dictionary-making spaces and the practice of dictionary making itself. Often, women who came into contact with dictionary work were not ignorant of the ways in which the genre itself was gendered masculine; in various forms of lexicographical thought (dictionaries, lexical descriptions, and commentaries on dictionaries), women show that masculinization of the genre often entailed the masculinization of English itself and allowed women to participate in dictionary production only at great personal expense (e.g., Piozzi 1794 and Harraden 1906).

Feminist dictionaries of English (published throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and the first decade of this century) extended critiques of the dictionary as androcentric and sexist, at the same time attempting to center the marginalized work of women dictionary makers. The fifth chapter, “Wymyn, Websters, and Genre Benders: Feminist Lexicography, 1980–2010,” explores how late twentieth-century and early twenty-first century feminist dictionaries of English problematize long-standing methodological tenets of “general-purpose” lexicography as well as the androcentric lexicons those methods tend to produce. Feminist dictionaries remodel the dictionary genre by foregrounding the material and personal circumstances of dictionary production, fostering opinionated and exploratory dictionary consumption, and highlighting meaning as personal, contextual, and contested.

In considering the ways in which women have shaped and reshaped what dictionary projects look like and do, this project speaks to a lacuna in language scholarship. It opens the dictionary and other rhetorics of language description to rhetorical analysis, indicating that

generic shifts cannot be understood without consideration of gendered and gendering participants and purposes. As a rhetorical critique of historical to contemporary dictionaries alongside lexicographical historiography, the project is an argument for reading genre texts, guides, descriptions, and histories as performing genre theory and informing generic expectations and possibilities.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DICTIONARY AS A RHETORICAL EVENT AND SOCIAL ACTION

MORE THAN MATERIAL OBJECTS

Like the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s 1580 citation of dictionaries as “Certane bukes bund & vnbund” (*OED Online*, third edition November 2010, online version December 2011), Samuel Johnson's 1755 definition of *dictionary* roughly equates the project to its material manifestation:

DICTIONARY. *n. f.* [*dictionary*, Lat.]

A book containing the words of any language in alphabetical order, with explanations of their meaning ; a lexicon ; a vocabulary ; a word-book.

Some have delivered the polity of sprits, and left an account that they stand in awe of charms, spells, and conjurations ; that they are afraid of letters and characters, notes and dashes, which, set together, do signify nothing ; and not only in the *dictionary* of man, but in the subtler vocabulary of Satan.

Brown's Vulgar Errors.

It is such a fault to translate simulaera images? I see what a good thing it is to have a good catholick *dictionary*.

Stillingfleet.

An army, or a parliament, is a collection of men ; a *dictionary*, or nomenclature, is a collection of words.

Watts.

Dictionary definitions of *dictionary*, from Johnson's time and long after, tend to be rather unenlightening in this way—a dictionary is a book, a list, a book that lists words with meanings. Not only are gendered bodies and ideologies absented from such a portrait of the project, so too are intentions and interpretations, causes and consequences. That is, the focus on the

inanimate object of the dictionary underwrites a notion of it as rhetorically and socially neutral, neither of which it is or can ever be.

In this chapter, I would like to argue for a theory and history of the dictionary that, instead of understanding dictionaries as discrete neutral texts within a lineage of other discrete neutral texts, attends to dictionary projects as rhetorical events and social actions. To do this, I will not argue for the superiority of rhetorical studies to language studies as a lens for understanding the dictionary but rather for the necessity of marrying both modes of scholarship. Language studies has helped to historicize dictionary work, to survey the impressive range of dictionary formats, and to connect lexicographical trends to sociolinguistic ones. I will show how these findings are valuable to a rhetorical analysis of dictionaries which seeks to understand how they are situated and socially consequential. I will likewise suggest that rhetorical studies can help us to make sense of why dictionaries were both written and read. The rhetorical positions and generic participations of dictionaries over time signal major shifts in the projected potentials of English language users.

Language scholars' histories of the dictionary genre have tended to organize around description of individual texts and individual (male) authors; in so doing, this work has encouraged the artificial absenting of women (and marked gender) from our current understanding of dictionary making and thereby limited our conception of who participates in English dictionaries, how they participate, why, and to what end. Attending to the dictionary project in the terms of rhetorical studies (and the subset of rhetorical studies that is genre theory) allows many of these aspects to come clear: We have a sharper notion of how the dictionary genre emerged, who its audiences were and became, how collaborative composition enabled and affected the work, why some forms of lexicography and lexicographical thought

were and continue to be marginalized, why certain revisions to lexicographical method might be productive for the future. Emergence, audience, composition, marginalization, and method—all of these *rhetorical* and *generic* aspects of the English language dictionary are, as I will show, gendered. And the stark gendering of lexicographical work into the present is linguistically, rhetorically, socially, and politically relevant.

In their own ways, each of these fields of study insists on the value of reading the dictionary as a social, political, and ideological project. Combined, they suggest the value of reading the dictionary as a gendered project also. To understand the persistent presence of women's names, the category of women, women authors, women workers, and feminist lexicographical interventions we will need the historical specificity and the contexts of linguistic ideology offered by language studies, but we will need also the theories of exigence, *kairos*, constraint, audience, authorship, and genre offered by rhetorical studies. This project is at once indebted and contributing to the historical and theoretical perspectives of the language and rhetorical scholarship from which it draws.

THE HISTORY OF THE DICTIONARY

Language scholars conceive of dictionaries—what they are and what they do—in a number of ways: By explicitly defining and describing the concept of the dictionary, by compiling bibliographies and biographies of individual dictionary projects, by constructing technical typologies of lexicographical works based on various classifying features, by setting the dictionary within sociohistorical formations such as nation, and by creating narratives of the dictionary's history. I'd like to dwell for a moment on this latter conceptualization: histories of the dictionary because histories tend to affect all of the former conceptualizations.

Dictionary histories may seem rather innocuous endeavors, of little real impact upon theories of the dictionary and practices of dictionary production. But dictionary histories have a powerful effect on both theory and practice, as well as on popular (or vernacular) notions of what the dictionary is and does. That is, histories create a narrative of lexicographical work that has shaped how we think of the dictionary project within the academy and beyond. As I'll show, these narratives tend to privilege male authors of large-scale dictionaries, excluding women workers, women's dictionaries, and women's commentary on lexicographical production and consumption.

Many book-length treatments of lexicographical criticism or practice include in early pages some sort of "brief" history of dictionaries or lexicography (e.g., Atkins and Rundell 2008; Béjoint 2010; Cowie 2009; Landau 1984; McArthur 1986; Svensén 1993; Zgusta 1971). The brevity of these sections varies, but their content is more or less the same and it typically serves to frame what follows as participating in and advancing an oft rehearsed lineage.

That lexicographical criticism is especially rooted in dictionary history is apparent in the common effort to trace similarities between an earlier dictionary and a later one. The landmark *The English Dictionary from Cawdrey to Johnson, 1604-1755* by DeWitt T. Starnes and Gertrude E. Noyes (1946) establishes a near genetic relation between a number of dictionaries (Coote 1596 and Cawdrey 1604, for example), and those bloodlines are cited *ad infinitum* in subsequent scholarship. The tradition of criticism that is comparison of a new or unknown dictionary to a darling of dictionary history is visible in John Damaso's (2005) argument that the online Urban Dictionary, launched in 2002, continued the vein of "populist" lexicography begun with Johnson in 1755. In these instances, dictionary history is the archive, method, and content of dictionary theory.

Of late, dictionary histories are the stuff of successful nonfiction. The story of the making of the *OED*, for example, became an unlikely popular interest in 1998 when Simon Winchester's history of the dictionary became an international bestseller. Titled *The Surgeon of Crowthorne: A Tale of Murder, Madness, and the Love of Words*, in Britain, and *The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary*, in America, the film rights were supposedly acquired by Luc Besson and Mel Gibson was in the running to star (as professor or madman we do not know) (Jury 1998).⁹ Just a few years later, Winchester reprised the same basic tale in the slightly more scholarly and slightly less popular *The Meaning of Everything: The Story of the Oxford English Dictionary* (2003). Histories like Winchester's support a popular conception of lexicographical work not as harmless drudgery (a portrayal dictionary makers and critics loudly bemoan) but as heroic effort (a portrayal largely uncontested by dictionary makers and critics with the possible exception of Considine 2008). Dictionary history here animates vernacular notions of the genre which, as I will argue in greater detail below, are reliant upon gendered bodies and competencies.

Dictionary histories are therefore important to consider *rhetorically*—as a scene in which the gendered past of the English language dictionary constructs its gendered present. I'd like, therefore to review this impressive, nearly biblical, dictionary lineage as it tends to unfold in histories of the English language dictionary in particular (e.g., Béjoint 2010; Cowie 2009; Landau 1984; Murray 1900).

The Story of Dictionaries

Here is how the story goes: Dictionary making can be traced as far back as Sumerian wordlists inscribed on clay tablets, but the tradition of dictionary making *in English* did not likely begin

⁹ As of 2012, no progress on production of the film seems to have been made.

until the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Monolingual general-purpose dictionaries containing words from the English language lexicon are descendants of bilingual glossaries, ones meant to aid monastic work in Latin or courtly diplomacy in French, Italian, Spanish. The first monolingual English language wordlists appeared as parts of larger works related to teaching—pedagogical treatises, educational workbooks, and early English grammars.

These wordlists were often “borrowed” into subsequent texts. For example, a collection of “words, which we commonlie vse in our hole speche” appears at the end of Richard Mulcaster’s 1582 *The First Part of the Elementarie*; Edmund Coote’s 1596 *The English Schoole-Maister* includes a similar appendix, one that reproduces Mulcaster’s collection of words wholesale and expands it to include definitions of each word. Mulcaster’s words and Coote’s definitions appear, reproduced almost wholesale and only slightly expanded, in Robert Cawdrey’s 1604 *A Table Alphabetically, conteyning and teaching the true writing, and vnderstanding of hard vsuall English wordes*. But Cawdrey’s *Table*, prefaced only by a dedication and notes to the reader, marks the point at which the lexicon, in well-worn terminology, at last “breaks free” and “strikes out” on its own. For this reason, Cawdrey alone is credited with the first monolingual English language dictionary.

Early seventeenth-century dictionaries like Cawdrey’s are “hard word dictionaries,” meaning they contain or describe only difficult or specialized terms; it is not until the latter half of the seventeenth century that common words, slang, and dialect terms were to be included in dictionaries and not until the eighteenth century that dictionaries attempted and boisterously claimed to document *all* words of the English language. John Kersey’s 1702 *A New English Dictionary* included “all the most proper and significant English Words, that are now commonly us’d either in Speech, or in the familiar way of Writing Letters, &c.” and Nathaniel

Bailey's 1721 *Universal Etymological English Dictionary* contained "many thousand Words more than [...] any English Dictionary before Extant." But it is Samuel Johnson's 1755 *A Dictionary of the English Language* that is often credited as cementing certain notions of what a dictionary should be, specifically "a scholarly record of the whole language," derived from a corpus more literary than technical and assuming "an authoritarian and normative function" (Osselton 1983, 17).

These hallmarks of the dictionary purportedly come to fruition in works such as Noah Webster's 1828 *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, James Murray's 1884-1928 *A New [Oxford] English Dictionary*, and Philip Gove's 1961 *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*. These dictionaries of the English language are general at both the macrostructural level, in attempting to represent the entire lexis of the language, and the microstructural level, in attempting to furnish readers with a range of information about each word (definitions, illustrative quotations, pronunciation guides, etc.) (Béjoint 2010, 46-47).

The history of the English language dictionary tends to unfold this way, as a chronology that shades into a registry of related masterworks, identified and distinguished by the polymathic geniuses who oversaw their production and who collectively secure a scientific status for lexicography in the end. Obviously, women and women's work have no part in such a history of English dictionaries.

The Biography of Dictionaries

I've already explained how material manifestations of the dictionary commonly enough pull the focus of dictionary history and theory, but biography is just as likely to do so. Both achieve similar effects: eclipsing a nuanced day-to-day sense of dictionary making as a collaborative and consequential activity with a more fantastic narrative of individual success. Titles of

contemporary dictionary histories testify to the way in which the story of a dictionary can be and is made into the story of a man who makes meaning, against all odds:

Defining the World: The Extraordinary Story of Dr. Johnson's Dictionary (Hitchings 2005)
Lexicography and the OED: Pioneers in the Untrodden Forrest (Mugglestone 2000)
The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary. (Winchester 1998)
Chasing the Sun: Dictionary-Makers and the Dictionaries They Made (Green 1996)
The Story of Webster's Third: Philip Gove's Controversial Dictionary and Its Critics (Morton 1994)
Caught in the Web of Words: James A.H. Murray and the Oxford English Dictionary (Murray 1977)

In titles such as these, and in subsequent scholarship which makes use of their work, lexicographical history blurs with lexicographer biography. It is sometimes unclear which stands in for the other. Though, in most cases, biographical details—Johnson's sickly childhood, Murray's relocation to London for his wife's health, Gove's frustration with teaching undergraduates—tend to be constructed as events that either support or hinder dictionary production; and, so, the personal life is subordinated to the professional achievement, and the professional achievement is credited to a single man. (Chapter 4 returns to this idea, considering how the biographies of Johnson and Murray, in particular, structure gendered notions of dictionary making.)

Michel Foucault (1969) argues that this is characteristic of other forms of writing, specifically literature: "we are accustomed to presenting the author as a genius, as a perpetual surging of invention," even though, authors function primarily as ideologies that helpfully limit the proliferation of meaning (119). The shorthand of the author pushes us to ask some questions ("Who really wrote this dictionary? With what originality?") and distracts us from others ("Where has the dictionary been used, how can it circulate, and who can appropriate it for themselves?") (119-120). Scientific discourses, on the other hand, eschew Foucault's

“author-function”: “in the anonymity of an established or always redemonstrable truth[,] their membership in a systematic ensemble, and not the reference to the individual who produced them, [stands] as their guarantee” (109).

Dictionary histories play to both ends of this spectrum. The history of the dictionary genre becomes the story of *a man, a text, a triumph*. Dictionaries are rendered intelligible by authors but also by scientific truth. Taken together, the men, their texts, and their triumphs, all contribute to the larger project of producing that “scholarly record of the whole language”—itself an objective endeavor toward the redemonstrable truth of the English language. The future seems to hold a consolidation of authority, in which one dictionary might achieve incontestable lexical coverage and scholarly perfection. Narrative histories of the dictionary genre thus end up producing an anomalous kind of “genre,” a group that is just one text (a point I’ll return to below in connection to Anis Bawarshi’s (2000) notion of the “genre-function”).

Regardless of whether we use the paradigm of the literary *bildungsroman* or the scientific treatise to understand the dictionary, we end up with portraits of production and consumption that are far from nuanced. Constrained and governed by a patrilineal master narrative of achievement and progress, the dictionary becomes an end product without ends. That is, the story is resolved or the truth is revealed in a finished product that seems to have no subsequent users or uses, no motivations or implications. We may glimpse heroes heading up hives of lexical activity, but the mixed methods and motivations of the collective persons—women and men—involved in dictionary production and consumption are subordinated to the motivation and method of the editor/author-in-chief, whose investments ostensibly end when the project of writing does. Whatever modes of existence there are for the dictionary

afterwards are rendered invisible, as are the positions it enables and constrains for gendered bodies who bring the dictionary into existence or determine its use thereafter.

Precisely because these biographical histories of the dictionary tend to flatten our understanding of the genre, in part by absenting the many women working at the centers and margins of lexicographical endeavors (as authors, researchers, and other kinds of laborers), I'd like to explore the critical terminology that would animate a *rhetorical* and *generic* history of the dictionary, such that texts, participants, motivations, and implications could be considered in greater nuance than has hitherto been possible.

THE RHETORICAL DICTIONARY

The lens of rhetorical theory allows us to take the dictionary off of the mahogany bookstand it occupies in countless libraries, to undo its abstraction and elevation in the popular imagination, to get past the biographical imperatives of bestselling dictionary histories, and to shift focus from the practical concerns of dictionary making necessarily privileged by lexicographers. Attending to the dictionary as a genre and to individual dictionary instantiations as rhetorical, we can begin to see how both the idea and instantiations of the dictionary have taken shape within, are shaped by, and in turn shape certain material, historical, cultural, social, and personal contexts in which women and the idea of women are fundamental organizational categories.

To claim that the dictionary is rhetorical is to insist that individual dictionaries are more than the material manifestations (e.g, books, databases, websites) that make them visible as rhetoric in the first place, more than the authors who wrote them, and more than the truths they establish. Certainly we can analyze a material dictionary to learn something of its “internal” composition—its aesthetic features, its suasive strategies—but to understand a

dictionary rhetorically means also to explore how the material product connects to “external” influences and interpretations.

Taken rhetorically, a text is both an instrument and an effect. As an effect, a text is conceived of as a *product* of its environment, the peculiar confection of individual, social, historical, ideological, and technological circumstances that obtain in a given moment. As an instrument, a text is simultaneously perceived as *producing* an environment, influencing those selfsame circumstances by reproducing or altering them. As a mode of critical inquiry, rhetorical analysis does not just describe the makeup of a text, it makes legible what precedes and is precipitated by a given text. At the same time, rhetorical analysis reads or at least suggests *intentions*; that is, it helps us to understand how texts attempt to persuade, how they carry bias and elicit consequence, how they are rarely “only” descriptive, objective, neutral.

When dictionaries have been taken up by scholars in the field of rhetoric, it is most often in relation to composition—where there is a long tradition of undergraduate scholars in writing instruction classrooms using, making, and critiquing dictionaries (e.g., Coard 1956; Curzan 2000; Gove 1964; Hallmundsson 1976; Kehl and Jacobson 1969; Lane 2004; Mathews 1955). There are also a number of rhetorical analyses of the particular sociolinguistic climate that preceded and was bolstered by *one* dictionary, Samuel Johnson’s (e.g., Borkowski 2002; Pearce 2004). But certainly the power of dictionaries to rhetorically construct a certain linguistic (and thus also a certain social and political) world is at play well beyond the space of the classroom or the instance of Johnson.

While dictionaries are not typically read as theories or practices of rhetoric within rhetorical scholarship, they are both. That is, dictionaries *practice* rhetoric by performing as “partisan, meaningful, and consequential” texts (Blair 1999, 18) and they *theorize* rhetoric by

mapping the possibilities for meaning, allowing and disallowing certain statements and ideas to circulate in, explain, and account for the world. As such, they have been underconsidered in rhetorical scholarship. In the discussion that follows, I'd like to isolate what it means to read a dictionary text as rhetorical, by understanding it as situated and motivated, and how language studies can help us to understand those situations and motivations. I also hope that the complex rhetorical instance of dictionaries will help to complicate and refine aspects of rhetorical theory, especially as they inform genre emergence and a rhetoric of reference works.

The Dictionary as Kairotically Situated: The Right Moment for the English Language

It is tempting to understand a text as a product of chronological progress, the result of what came before and the cause of what comes after. And indeed, many of the dictionary histories I've described above do just that, positioning dictionaries as building from one to another over time. To conceive of time in this way, as characterized by sequential relation, is to engage what the ancient Greek rhetoricians termed *chronos*. The *chronos* assumes similarity and continuity over time, enabling contemporary diachronic rhetorical methodologies that connect a text to a string of events that follow on one another, often within systems of cause and effect. The story of the English language dictionary I rehearsed above tends to work in this way, positioning an earlier dictionary as leading more or less directly to a later one or a dictionary maker's life events as leading more or less directly to a finished dictionary.

But the ancient Greeks were also attentive to an alternative conception of time. *Kairos*—from the Greek *καίρος*—is often translated as “the right moment” or “in due measure.” From this vantage point, a moment is characterized by its qualitative particularity rather than its sequential relation. The *kairos* assumes that some moments are themselves “special,”

substantively different from other moments and characterized by a particular amalgamation of qualities that make *that* moment uniquely “right.” Contemporary rhetorical theorists have found *kairos* useful for acknowledging points of difference and discontinuity in time and space, encouraging a more synchronic methodology that isolates a text in its given context.

Understanding dictionaries kairotically, rather than chronologically, will allow us to appreciate the instances that were uniquely right for the emergence of individual unique ventures, the constitutive elements of one moment as they are encoded in individual and influential texts, and the effect of transporting those elements through space and time through a genre’s structure. I’ll show in Chapter 2 that women patrons and readers were an important part of the *kairos* of the earliest English dictionaries, and, in Chapter 4, I’ll explore how the domestic labor of women was an important component of the *kairos* of the large-scale comprehensive scholarly dictionaries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, before considering how gendered ideologies kairotically informed certain dictionary projects, it will here be important to consider how gendered ideologies kairotically informed the *preconditions* of the dictionary genre.

The English language existed for some time without dictionaries as we know them, and speakers and writers of the past were not terribly upset by this fact. When we today reference “the dictionary,” we rely on calcified conceptions not only of the genre but, more specifically, of the English it encodes. Any sort of solid sense of “English,” and especially of English as stable, orderly, and valuable, is a relatively recent development in the long history of the language and its users—one that is perhaps already dead. In this section, I would like to suggest that the rhetorical notion of *kairos* can help us to understand the ideological and political preconditions of the dictionary. That is, for dictionaries to emerge, certain notions of

English as a language (as well as its ability to promote personal erudition, national harmony, and international glory) need to obtain.

English Stability from Variation

In the context of global communications and economies, we are increasingly conscious of the “fracturing” or “branching out” of English into what we now term “World Englishes.” This suggests that, even though the twenty-first century seems marked by awareness of multiplicity, we begin with and rely on an understanding of English as having the potential to be whole, to have a single root. This now pervasive notion is relatively recent in the history of English.

The speakers of Old and Middle English do not seem to have held the same ideas about English as a coherent and stabilized language. In particular, Middle English, which approximately dates from the 1066 Norman Conquest to the 1476 establishment of Caxton’s London printing press, is widely understood as a period of rich variation and diversity in dialect, spelling, and grammar. Middle English users existed within a dense weave of linguistic difference, in which speakers used different Englishes in accordance with their regional and social positions and altogether different languages (chiefly, French and Latin) for different situations and audiences. English language users of this time were not only cognizant of linguistic differences; they were also unlikely to document negative attitudes concerning linguistic difference or chaos in public or private writing. And many of these ideologies held into the early modern period (Hope 2010).

Seventeenth-century dictionaries came into being at a time of considerable institutional, commercial, didactic, and political change: The Royal Society formed a committee for improving the English language in 1664; the first English language newspaper,

The London Gazette, began distribution in 1665; John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* was published in 1678; the Glorious Revolution secured parliamentary power and eliminated the absolute monarchy in 1688. These broad moves both to and from consolidation of power and communicative control suggest precisely the kind of ambivalence present in eighteenth-century dictionary projects—to the point that we don't know whether to read Jonathan Swift's (1712) *Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue* as the great classic of complaint that expounds the undesirability of language change (Milroy and Milroy 1985, 161) or as a satiric political commentary that plays on the current fashions of language change (Watts 2011, 174); nor can we reconcile the judgmental erudition of Johnson's (1747) "The Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language" with the democratizing lexicography of his *Dictionary* (Hudson 1998).

The eighteenth century, cast as formative for the English language dictionary genre, was thus characterized by both push and pull as regards the formation of a coherent English. Linguistic consolidations were persistently countered by imperial expansions: Johnson published his *Dictionary* in 1755; Robert Lowth published his grammar in 1762; and Thomas Sheridan published his elocution lectures in the same year. But Robert Fergusson argued for the primacy of Scots English in 1773; American colonists won what they called the War of Independence in 1776; Sierra Leone was established as a settlement for freed American slaves speaking an English-based creole in 1780; and the first Australian penal colony was populated by Cockney and Irish English speakers in 1788.

English Order from Disorder

Certain technological innovations have made present-day English significantly more orderly than it has been in the past. Computers and mobile telephones often manage aspects of

spelling and grammar for us. Microsoft Word famously sets red squiggles under unfamiliar words and spellings and green squiggles under unfamiliar grammatical structures; various software programs will suggest changes and sometimes enforce them by “autocorrecting.” In the end, we’re likely to produce documents marked by internal consistency and adherence to external rules of grammar and spelling.

But in earlier eras, spelling was largely a matter of dialectal approximation and personal prerogative. The first arguments for spelling reform did not appear until the sixteenth century, and the first grammar of the English language in English (the earlier grammars having described English in Latin), William Bullokar’s (1586) *Pamphlet for Grammar*, is itself tolerant of grammatical variety.

Perhaps the first call for a monolingual English dictionary appears in *The first part of the elementarie vvhich entreateth chfeleie of the right writing of our English tung, set furth by Richard Mulcaster*. As I’ve already mentioned, Mulcaster’s (1582) Isocratean pedagogical treatise features an appended wordlist without definitions. By way of introducing this “generall table, wherein [he has] gathered the most of those words, which we commonlie vse in our hole speche” (163), Mulcaster writes:

It were a thing verie praiseworthy in my opinion, and no less profitable if praise worthy, if som one well learned and as laborious a man, wold gather all the words which we use in our English tung, whether naturall or incorporate, out of all professions, as well learned as not, into one dictionarie, and besides the right writing, which is incident to the Alphabete, wold open vnto us therein, both their naturall force, and their proper use: that by this honest trauell we might be as able to iudge of our own tung, which we haue by rote, as we ar of others, which we learn by rule. (166)

Here, Mulcaster’s suggestion for the collection of all English words into one place privileges rule adherence to rote experience. The call for order is simultaneously a call for conscious

understanding and reflection. Importantly, Mulcaster himself positions order as external to English; in applying order to the language, its speakers know it as they know foreign languages.

English Worth from Pejoration

Mulcaster and others of the later sixteenth century ushered in an era of increasing attentiveness to the English language, its “naturall force” and “proper use.” But, importantly, texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (including most of the dictionaries published at this time) were rather differently ideologically loaded in their calls for documentation of a “naturall” and “proper” English. That is, their aim was to set natural and proper English level with natural and proper Latin and Greek and not, as we might assume today, to set natural and proper English opposite to unnatural and improper English. The sixteenth century saw the first translation of the Bible into English (Tyndale 1534), and the seventeenth century saw the publication, in Latin, of thirty-two nonprescriptive English grammars. Texts such as these were picking a fight *for* English not *within* it.

Indeed, English language dictionaries are often cited as the private commercial equivalent to the national institutional agencies responsible for linguistic regulation in many European countries: Italy founded its Accademia della Crusca in 1582 and France its Académie Française in 1634. The idea of the English language as worth describing at length in dictionaries was necessitated in a climate of competing empires.

The Right Moment for the English Lexicon

What is clear throughout this history is that the idea of and need for a dictionary was not something “apparent” to English language users for many centuries. It was an idea and an investment that was rhetorically constructed over time. And its rhetorical construction was

dependent not just on texts that called for or planned or critiqued dictionaries but also on the pervasiveness of certain beliefs and attitudes about English as affording some kind of coherence in the face of fractured and classed speakers, as requiring some learned rule adherence, and as elevating the empire.

Women were uniquely positioned within this moment of the English language, especially as the language was then articulated to class, education, and nation. Women often represented internal strength, consistency, and “natural” innocence as mothers of the burgeoning nation-state and as speakers of an English gaining in prestige. Untested in travel and unsullied by education, women were home(land) and mother(tongue), and as such they often required protection from political and linguistic forces that threatened wreck and ruin from within or beyond British borders.

The Dictionary as Kairotically Motivated: The Right Measure of English Management

The gloss of *kairos* as “in due measure” emphasizes that right moments are not simply encountered, they can be created. Neutral and natural time is inflected with opportunism and art. By this definition, *Kairos* is less like “time” and rather more like “timing.” It is a sense, a sensibility, and a skill. Bruce McComiskey offers a useful specification of *kairos* as “a qualitative sense of time as opportunity, plagued by change yet empowered by possibility” (2002, 109). Thus the *kairos* characterizes not only abstract time but embodied people. Kairotic rhetors are attuned to opportunities and able to take advantage of them with an embodied adeptness of timing and force—similar to “the weaver’s ability to thrust a thread through a momentary opening in the loom and the archer’s ability to exploit the miniscule opening in space that would guide an arrow to its target” (McComiskey 2002, 93).

For rhetorical theorists, this agentic edge of *kairos* suggests the importance of attending to rhetors as actively managing time, space, measure, and context. Rhetorical products are designed to participate in weaving a particular fabric or striking a particular target. But, importantly, the rhetor's actions are constrained and responsive; the weaver follows an established grain, and the archer tracks a moving mark. Above I've suggested that dictionary creators are often making and marking English as a stable, orderly, and worthwhile concept, but below I'll show that dictionary creators are also making and marking uniformity and normativity. That is, they are taking advantage of and helping to create environments that value uniformity and normativity, and they often do so by making gendered appeals.

In 1747, Johnson famously made a plan for an English dictionary, and, by 1860, Richard Chenevix Trench publicly descried the deficiency of English dictionaries. The two men signal an interest in English language uniformity and normativity that escalated exponentially over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Not only did it seem that the time was repeatedly right for a newer, better dictionary, but dictionary-minded rhetors were continually marking the need for new measures to be taken in dictionary research and production.

Dictionaries signal the human interest in cataloguing and describing the English language, but they also signal the human interest in creating a "right" kind of English language. In bringing "proper English" to the page, dictionary makers are thus kairotic agents who play to ideas about authority, legitimacy, correctness, and prestige in language and society as they decide which words and meanings *should* and *should not* be counted in the lexicon.

Regularity in and Regulation of Language

Language scholars typically trace the human tendency to comment on, regularize, and regulate language back much further than the human tendency to produce wordlists. It might be that,

since “the dawn of time,” humans have favored and sought uniformity in language (Cameron 1995, 2).

Language scholars have imagined a number of preconditions to language normativity; they have aligned it with a number of concomitant theories (of language change, management, and ideology), and they have given it a number of names. When James and Leslie Milroy describe the “attempt to keep the notion of a standard language [a set of abstract norms to which actual usage may conform to a greater or lesser extent] alive in the public mind” (1985, 18), when Deborah Cameron discusses “the urge to meddle in matters of language” (1995, vii), and when Jeremy Smith contrasts “focused usage—tendencies among speakers to a normed, ‘colourless’ usage” with “fixed usage—choices made for communicative and sociolinguistic advantage” (1996, 76), the same, similar, or at the very least related linguistic phenomena are being considered under different names—prescriptivism, verbal hygiene, and standardization respectively. Each concept carries within it a fundamental sort of fuzziness about language regularity: Is it a *notion* about norms or an *attempt* to norm? Is it the *urge* to meddle or the *meddling* itself? Is it a *tendency* or a *choice*? Rhetorically speaking, we might ask, is it *time* or *timing*?

In defining and connecting the array of inclinations, attitudes, and enforcements that constitute or bolster a more regular language, scholars are constantly working through binary tensions. Language norms can be characterized as:

language internal	or	language external,
linguistic	or	cultural,
natural	or	artificial,
unconscious	or	conscious,
inclinations	or	attitudes,
a process	or	an ideology.

Some scholars apply the term *standardization* to the left-hand column and *prescriptivism* to the right, separating the instinctual drift toward regularity from the intentional articulation and enforcement of regularity. But terms like Cameron's (1995) *verbal hygiene* and books like Richard Watts' (2011) *Language Myths and the History of English* work to connect and/or blur the distinction between regularity and regulation in the language. Many scholars insist that language users are not simply unwittingly normative because there is some greater force of nature and culture at work on them but that language users are also consciously normative because there are clear communicative and social advantages to be had in paying attention to, commenting on, and controlling language varieties.

Regularity in and Regulation by Dictionaries

Within more traditional models of "the process of standardization" (itself understood most strictly as an unconscious linguistic trend toward uniformity), regularity in language unfolds in four more or less distinct phases: selection, elaboration, codification, and acceptance. More specifically, first, a variety of language will be selected and marked with overt prestige; second, its functions will multiply or elaborate across spheres; third, its "proper" features and use will be codified through overt institutional regulation or instruction; and, finally, it will be accepted as the form of the language most functional across settings and least variable in form (Haugen 1972).

Historians of the English language tend to figure dictionaries into the third stage, codification, as tools that stand in for an official language academy's lexical rulings and as part of the official educational apparatus that participates in enforcement of a single variety of English. By this model of standardization, English language dictionaries can only come into existence within a language system that, cognizant of multiple Englishes, marks one as

prestigious and functional across a range of situations. Dictionaries are thus always participating in a cultural agenda of prestige and specifically a prestige that is *not* limited to particular or private spheres. Importantly, this not only disrupts but disallows any distinction between “descriptive” and “prescriptive” dictionaries. Systematic collection is never neutral. Codification is attendant with proscription (Mugglestone 1995, 12).

Histories of “practices of prescriptivism” (themselves most strictly defined as overt attempts to regulate “correct” language use) tend to locate its English language advent or heyday around the later eighteenth century when people become highly restrictive, normative, and codifying about a linguistic norm (Standard English) that was only emergent within an array of unpejorated variations throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Mugglestone 1995, 11-12). Indeed, the eighteenth century saw an unprecedented boom in the commercial publication of Standard English self-instruction aides—dictionaries, pronouncing guides, grammars, style handbooks, and elocution manuals with a general audience. Watts (2011) argues that these language regulation tools were underwritten by old and new language myths, shared narratives that structure how speakers understand what English is and does. By the eighteenth century, English language users believed in linguistic homogeneity, immutability, legitimacy, perfection, purity, contamination, and decay (Watts 2011, 159), and these beliefs bolstered a sense that the language could and should be described, codified, and corrected. Inextricable from eighteenth-century mythologies of English was the ideology of politeness which insisted on the aesthetic and moral values of decorum, grace, beauty, symmetry, and order (Watts 2011, 199). The ideology of politeness initially held that these values were the birth right of persons of “good breeding”—those belonging to the landed gentry or upper aristocracy and “polished” by way of a classical education (the latter, by and

large, available only to men)—but the popularization of the ideology meant that at least one of the markers of politeness, “polite language,” could be “bought” by the middling orders of any gender—those willing to train themselves to speak and write “correctly” (Watts 2011, 171, 205).

The Right Measure for the English Lexicon

As I’ll show in later chapters, when women are included in analysis of dictionary history and practice, claims about the scholarly prescriptivism of the eighteenth century are disrupted. That is, many of the ideologies Watts describes as congealed in the eighteenth century can be seen as actively constructed throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century in explicit relation to women patrons and audiences who were described as either demonstrating polished English or interested in acquiring it (cf. Chapter 2). And dictionaries made by women between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries consistently work at the edges of polished English, describing regional and marginal Englishes rather than a strengthening standard (cf. Chapter 3). Dictionaries addressed or attributed to women are most certainly extant within systems of prestige and supported by certain configurations of social and economic class. But dictionaries themselves are not always and only registries of “legitimate language” meant to forward “a highly valued, officially sanctioned linguistic code” to be bought and sold (Watts 2011, 198).

If we understand dictionary makers as each constructing the “appropriate measure” of the dictionary, then the research from language studies has overlooked the way in which women early on constituted the appropriate measure for male lexicography and the way in which legitimate language was not always the appropriate measure for female lexicographers.

The Dictionary as Rhetorically Motivated: Exigence for English Language Dictionaries

Exigence—from the Latin *exigere* meaning, roughly, “to drive out”—is, as the etymology would suggest, a term useful for understanding drives, motivations, pressures, needs, and demands. Rhetoricians understand a text to be both driven and driving, compelled and compelling. Hence, the exigence of a written text is comprised of both its reason(s) for being written and its reason(s) for being read.

The definition of exigence has been mapped out in a now famous exchange among rhetorical theorists Lloyd Bitzer (1968), Richard E. Vatz (1973), Scott Consigny (1974), and Barbara Biesecker (1989), to name a few. These four were primarily involved in drawing distinctions and connections among components of “the rhetorical situation,” especially the texts, rhetors, audiences, objects, events, and exigences that create and obtain persuasion. In summarizing their exchange below, I hope to show that exigence itself has been increasingly inseparable from other rhetorical elements, which suggests not only the salience of exigence to understanding rhetorical events but also the importance of understanding exigence as bound up with concerns of rhetor, audience, environment, and *kairos*.

For Bitzer, exigence was part of a larger “rhetorical situation” that summoned objects, person, events, and relations to action. According to Bitzer, exigence is necessarily problematic in nature and rather totalizing in effect. He writes, “Any *exigence* is an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be,” and exigence thereby comes to act as “an imperative stimulus” that “rules” the utterances it elicits. “In any rhetorical situation there will be at least one controlling exigence which functions as the organizing principle: it specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected” (Bitzer 1968, 5-7). Injurious actions and polluted air are example exigencies that might be positively modified by rhetorical

intervention; if the right words are crafted for the right people and suggest the right modifications, injurious actions will become less injurious and polluted air will become less polluted.

While Bitzer's sense of exigence usefully suggests that rhetorical events are called for and constrained by external circumstances, it is also commonly disparaged for annihilating agency and contingency. In a revision of Bitzer, Vatz suggests that the rhetor and the rhetorical text might play a significant role in creating exigence, not just reacting to it. For Vatz, all facts and events are first, choices and, second, interpretations of meaning—the rhetor selects from an infinite array of elements and then creatively communicates those elements in a process that is necessarily a reinterpretation (1973, 228). Vatz defines rhetoric as “the art of linguistically or symbolically creating salience” and rhetor as one whose “responsibility [for choosing what to make salient] is of supreme concern” (229-230). Vatz's version of exigence is thus something molded by the choices and interpretations of the rhetor.

While Vatz's sense of exigence usefully recuperates agency and performativity, it perhaps exaggerates the creative freedom of rhetors. Consigny reigned in Vatz's model by suggesting that “the rhetor cannot create exigencies arbitrarily” but rather the rhetor's aim is to “discover and manage the particular exigence of the situation” (Consigny 1974, 176, 183). Consigny's exigence is thus related in some ways to *kairos*—rhetors, acting within the constraints of their moment in time and space, braid available strands into appropriate exigence.

Biesecker points out that, within this conversation, “the concept of audience itself receives little critical attention: in most cases, audience is simply named, identified as the target of discursive practice, and then dropped” (1989, 122). What role audience is allowed to

play in Bitzer, Vatz, and Consigny is constraint; the *a priori* identities of audience members determine what they are willing and able to hear. But it is precisely this notion of subjectivity that Biesecker argues undermines a more meaningful understanding of audience. According to Biesecker, who draws heavily from Derrida, “If the subject is shifting and unstable (constituted in and by the play of *différance*), then the rhetorical event may be seen as an incident that produces and reproduces the identities of subjects and constructs and reconstructs linkages between them” (126). This construction and reconstruction is, then, part of the exigence of a rhetorical situation; the articulation of provisional identities within economies of difference drives the rhetorical event.

Biesecker’s claim that audience is often underconsidered will be affirmed by Chapter 2, which shows the ways in which women—“real” historical figures as well as the social construct—are often dismissed as the primary audience of dictionaries, though they inspire the rhetor, inform the exigence, register the *kairos*, and indeed drive the rhetorical event.

Charles Bazerman (1999) mobilizes a complex version of exigence to argue that, before Thomas Edison could invent the electric light bulb materially, he had to invent it rhetorically in the minds of potential investors and buyers. Edison “invented” electric light by “coordinating desire” for it. He discovered and managed the exigence for his work by connecting it to other desires of the time, marshaling otherwise unrelated preoccupations and priorities (legible in newspaper features, patent applications, home decorating catalogues) to explain and support his own project. This project will work similarly, showing how early instantiations of the dictionary attempted to coordinate desire for their own product by discovering and managing exigence on the basis of contemporaneous but unrelated preoccupations and priorities, many of which were gendered. Later dictionaries were

markedly *less* interested in coordinating desire for the product among women readers, and, accordingly titles and content shifted, not to a generic audience and universal English but to a ethnocentric male audience and an English of arts and sciences.

Exigence for the English Dictionary

Dictionaries are importantly tied up in large-scale historical and cultural developments, primarily national, imperial, ethnic, and educational. Language scholars have been particularly attentive to dictionaries as products of nation; their titles, dedications, and other prefatory material commonly invoke a country, its ruler, its people, its glory. Johnson's (1755) preface declares "[...] I have devoted this book, the labour of years, to the honour of my country, that we may no longer yield the palm of philology to the nations of the continent"; Webster's (1828) preface to *An American Dictionary of the English Language* argues that "It is not only important, but, in a degree necessary, that the people of this country, should have an American Dictionary of the English Language"; the *Oxford English Dictionary* (the first fascicles of which were dedicated to Queen Victoria) was proposed by the Philological Society (1859) because "England does not possess a Dictionary worthy of her language."

Scholars who frame dictionaries as projects of nationalism tend to arrive at or support that conclusion by looking to the political context that gave rise to organizing and financing large-scale lexicographical projects, the personal investments and beliefs held by key persons instrumental to securing support or completion of certain dictionaries, the "national literary tradition" called forth and/or cemented in dictionary citations and semantic fields, and analyses of the ethnocentrism of certain definitions. John Willinsky (1994), for example, argues that *A New English Dictionary* came into being alongside a number of other "scientific" monuments to Britain (including Stephen's [1885–1900] *The Dictionary of National Biography* and

Macaulay's [1848–1861] *History of England* in four volumes), all of which helped to cement the collective political identity, shared national history, and communal pride of achievement characteristic of a successful empire. Within this milieu, a dictionary would “propound a science of language that, in its capacity to provoke the wonder and truth of language, was a testimony to God and a warrant for empire” (Willinsky 1994, 20). In sociohistorical terms such as these, we must understand the English language dictionary as both an instrument and effect of the developing British imperial nation-state. But, as the term *sleeping dictionary* suggests, women's work within the empire is often very different from if intimately connected to men's work, and the way in which the dictionary participates in the gender work of empire is as yet unclear. (Chapter 3 returns to this issue, considering the place of colonial dictionaries attributed to women.)

Dictionaries are also frequently understood as extant within emerging modes of professional and amateur education. Again, dictionaries themselves invite this sort of analysis. Early wordlists were often made by schoolmasters and educators (e.g., Thomas Cooper, John Minsheu, and Elisha Coles were all teachers) and part-and-parcel of other educational materials (e.g., Mulcaster's 1582 *Elementarie* and Coote's 1596 *English Schoole-maister* append lexicographical work to general educational texts). Slightly later dictionaries often identify their intended audience as auto-didactic or overtly align themselves with particular prestigious seats of higher education (e.g., the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*). Few considerations of the dictionary in relation to formal and informal education adequately consider the institution as highly restricted by gender, and so rarely make explicit that dictionaries have tended to commemorate and further the education of (wealthy) men and

boys. (Chapters 2 and 3 will consider how the education of women and girls was commemorated and furthered by dictionaries from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth.)

Within the fields of language studies, attempts to make sense of dictionaries within academic institutions are curiously underdeveloped. The word “scholarly” is regularly employed to indicate, rather vaguely, the training and method of particular dictionary makers; while, the word “collegiate” typically appears in subsections of book-length or multivolume introductions to dictionary making (e.g., Béjoint 2010; Jackson 2002; Landau 2009) and focuses exclusively on the American desk-sized dictionaries labeled as “collegiate” and marketed primarily to high school and undergraduate students. Béjoint devotes a chapter to “the British tradition of scholarly dictionaries” and acknowledges that they “are all different, but they share some characteristics—although no dictionary has them all and no single characteristic is present in all dictionaries” (2010, 127-128); in the list of nine characteristics he goes on to offer (e.g., “a descriptive, detached attitude to usage” and “a focus on the use of the dictionary as an aid in reading, and very little help provided for expression”), none necessarily pertain to scholars or scholarship. Discussions of the American tradition of collegiate dictionaries tend to emphasize their commercial strength; they “sell well” to the American public at large including its English language learners. And so the common invocation of “scholarly” and “academic” dictionaries rarely leads into developed accounts of the way the genre has shaped and been shaped by parochial education, self-instruction, and academy membership or exile (DeMaria 1986 and Morton 1994 are possible exceptions). (And yet, as Chapter 3 will show, the claim that dictionaries attributed to women are not scholarly has been grounds for their neglect.)

These sociohistorical accounts suggest that the dictionary genre produces and is produced by certain ideas and pressures of nation and institution, but they ignore both the

nation and the institution as notoriously gendered and gendering. We do not as yet understand the role dictionaries, authored for or by women, have played in perpetuating women's systematic exclusion from formal education nor do we understand how the emphasis on male-dominated domains of knowledge that are sanctioned by formal education come to inform the "whole" of the English language as it is documented in dictionaries.

THE DICTIONARY AS A GENRE

A fruitful subset of rhetorical theory has focused on the concept of genre. Broadly speaking, if rhetorical analysis seeks to explain *a* text, singular, genre analysis seeks to understand texts, plural. Most fundamentally, genre theory insists that any single text exists not only in relation to other texts that are similar to it but also in relation to an immaterial social idea that structures expectations and actions. The idea of genre is important to a consideration of women in relation to the dictionary project because, while women were important to the production and rhetorical construction of many individual dictionary projects, they have also been influential in the construction and revision of the idea of the dictionary as a genre.

Dictionaries as Similar

The project of comparison has long been the focus of genre scholarship, the assumption being that a text will demonstrate stable characteristics similar to the characteristics demonstrated by a set of other texts. Accordingly, genre analysis often takes the form of description and classification, attempting to organize individual texts into comparable "kinds" or "types" by virtue of stable characteristics. Wanda J. Yates and JoAnne Orlikowski (2002) suggest one rubric for naming the aspects that might hold across an array of texts and thus constitute a genre: purpose, content, form, participants, time, and place (Figure 1.1).

Descriptive and comparative work has been and continues to be a priority for much of the dictionary scholarship conducted in language studies. Dictionary histories and definitions work to constitute a coherent sense of “the dictionary” by highlighting similarities in form and content that have been stable over time in a wide array of texts. As I’ve indicated above, the struggle to accommodate variation within dictionary definitions of *dictionary* in particular often results in vague, abstract, and attenuated conceptions of the project: the pattern in content is usually but not always words; the pattern in form is usually but not always alphabetical list. There is little sense of *who* makes or uses the dictionary; *when*, *where*, or *how* the list is produced or consumed; or *why* people are motivated to catalogue the lexicon in the first place and consult it thereafter (all salient rhetorical considerations for Yates and Orlikowski).

1.1. Aspects of a Genre

Genre Characteristics
1. Why (purpose)
2. What (content)
3. How (form)
4. Who (participants)
5. When (time)
6. Where (place)

(Yates and Orlikowski 2002)

Metalexigraphers, the people who research and write books *about* dictionaries, tend to have more space to define the dictionary genre than lexicographers do. Their definitions often unfold through some combination of the following: discussions of projects “like” dictionaries but *not* dictionaries, catalogues of the kinds of information dictionaries may or may not offer under each headword or phrase, “brief” histories of dictionaries or dictionary makers, more or less technical typologies into which dictionary texts can be sorted, a consideration of users and uses of dictionaries, some attention to the future of dictionaries especially in relation to computerized production or use. A typical portrait of this kind can be seen in a (slightly abridged) version of the table of contents for Sidney Landau’s landmark *Dictionaries* (1984), shown in Figure 1.2.

The kind of dictionary that emerges from texts such as Landau’s is certainly more nuanced than that of dictionary definitions. There is a detailed sense, in terms of form and content, of *what* the dictionary is like and unlike (for Landau, it is like “glossaries” and “other language references”). We know there to be a range of information that can appear for each lexical item, what Landau describes as “key elements”: the entry term, alternate spellings, pronunciation and usage guides, illustrative quotations, etymologies, etc. (In the field of lexicography, this is known as the “microstructure” of dictionaries.) We also know there to be a range of ways dictionaries may organize the “key elements” of lexical information they contain—

alphabetically, thematically, etc. (In

the field of lexicography, this is known as the “macrostructure” of dictionaries.) There are

1.2. Landau's *Dictionaries* (1984)

Abridged Table of Contents	
Chapter 1	What Is a Dictionary?
	A Survey of Types of Dictionaries and Other Language References
Chapter 2	A Brief History of English Lexicography
	Latin and French Glossaries
	The Beginning of Modern Dictionary Practice: The Eighteenth Century
	Johnson’s Dictionary and Its Competitors
	Webster and the Nineteenth Century
	Modern Unabridged Dictionaries
Chapter 3	Key Elements of Dictionaries and Other Language References
	The Entry Term
	Alphabetization
	Grammatical Information
	Pronunciation
	Etymology
	Illustrations
	Front and Back Matter
Chapter 4	Definition
	The Principles of Defining
	Defining from Citations
	Deciding What to Put in the Dictionary
	The Definition of Names
Chapter 5	Usage
	The Kinds of Usage Information Given in Dictionaries
	Attitudes Toward Usage and the Notion of Correctness
Chapter 6	Dictionary Making
	Planning the Dictionary
	Writing the Dictionary
	Producing the Dictionary
	Revising a Dictionary
	Abridging a Dictionary
Chapter 7	Computer Use and the Future of Dictionary Making
	Current Computer Uses in Lexicography
	The Future of Dictionary Making
Chapter 8	A Miscellany
	Letters to the Editor
	Legal Considerations
	The Dictionary as a Reflection of Social Values
	Criticisms of Dictionaries

(based on Landau 1984)

hints here as to *who* makes dictionaries and *how* they are made (Landau specifies Johnson and Webster as responsible for “dictionary making”—“planning,” “writing,” “producing,” “revising,” “abridging,” and so on), but there is still not a clear sense of participants’ purposes or positions beyond the text of the dictionary. That is, we know little of the kinds of languages and language ideologies that motivate the production of lexicons, the social impact of such wordlists, the cultural projects in which they participate. These considerations of the sociocultural influence of the dictionary are commonly situated as ancillary afterthoughts, classed among “miscellany,” contextualized as related to but separate from structural details.

Definitions of the dictionary from lexicographers, metalexicographers, and historians of lexicography tend to underdevelop a sense of participants and purposes. The fascination with a solitary heroic dictionary maker has masked the assemblage of persons involved in dictionary making (many of whom are women) and nearly erased the wide assortment of people involved in dictionary use (again, many of whom are women). The similarities that hold across this more inclusive set of participants are unclear, as are the similarities that might hold in purposes among those participants. The complex and sometimes conflicting motivations and investments of dictionary makers and users are too often taken for granted or disregarded entirely.

Rhetorical genre theorists suggest that the attempt to produce generic similarity across a large set of texts is perhaps neither possible nor desirable. It tends to paper over variations and discontinuities significant to the genre’s emergence and evolution over time and space. In the case of dictionaries, gendered audiences, content, and purposes seem to be lost to the great detriment of our understanding of what the genre is as well as what it does in the world.

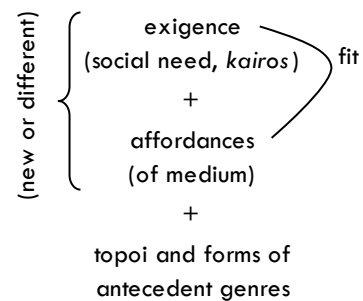
Dictionaries as Related

But what are genres if not sets of similarities? According to Carolyn Miller (1984), a genre is a social and pragmatic phenomenon. Genres represent typified rhetorical actions that are both intersubjectively perceived as recurrent and named in everyday language (Miller 1984). New genres emerge out of a particular confluence of exigences, affordances, and antecedent genres (see Figure 1.3); when a particular social need characterizes the *kairos*, when a particular environment makes certain modes of communication possible, and when particular *topoi* and forms from prior genres are (re)modeled, a new genre arises (Miller and Shepherd 2009). Genres are thus not stable similarities across texts but dynamic relations across social, technological, and textual forces.

To explain the dictionary in these terms would be to account for the peculiarities of exigence, affordance, and antecedent genre that have continually called the dictionary into being. What is the perceived social need for a dictionary? How do the environmental affordances of various dictionary media (e.g., books or CD-ROMs) allow and disallow certain modes of knowledge production? What genres seem to have influenced the *topoi* and forms of various dictionary instantiations? Dictionary typologies, the systems for the division or classification of actual or potential texts into types, commonly appear in scholarly and technical introductions to the history, theory, or practice of lexicography. Typologies can help us get at some of these nuances of exigence and affordance.

Posed as descriptive binary sets or related familial clusters, dictionary typologies are often formed on the basis of existing bibliographies of dictionary texts, and the typologies

1.3. Aspects of an Emerging Genre



(based on Miller and Shepherd 2009)

themselves can become the mechanism by which those texts are sorted into groups based on micro- and macrostructural traits or features external to the dictionary itself. Typologies can enrich our understanding of dictionary exigences by allowing a greater sense of the array of purposes for making and consulting dictionaries. An example of a dictionary typology would be L. V. Shcherba's (1940) set of binary characteristics:

- academic or informative dictionaries
- encyclopedic or general (linguistic) dictionaries
- concordances or ordinary (defining or translating) dictionaries
- ordinary (defining or translating) or ideological dictionaries
- defining or translating dictionaries
- non-historical or historical dictionaries

Typologies such as this one make clear that user priorities influence the scope of lexical material contained in different dictionary types; for example, users in search of a word's changing meaning over time require one kind of dictionary (historical), users in search of equivalent words across languages require another (translating). It becomes obvious that concerns about user needs motivate the methodological decisions of dictionary makers and those needs and methodologies produce dictionary objects strikingly different from one another. The dictionary genre, set in this frame, can look more like a constellation than a blood line and thus complicate our understanding of variation within and across the generic form to accommodate various participants, purposes, and contents.

But typologies can also support the simplification of the genre. Typologies have served to speciate the genre, creating subgenres that demonstrate stronger patterns in more of the characteristics Yates and Orlikowski (2002) cite. The purpose might be technical, the content might be etymological, the form electronic, the participants English language learners, the time the eighteenth century, the place the Caribbean. But the emphasis is always still on similarity across variety. Dictionaries addressed to women and authored by women tend to fall

to the margins of similarity, and so their importance in the construction and reconstruction of the genre over time is lost.

Perhaps the most enduring typological distinction between dictionary texts is general versus specialized. This distinction suggests that some dictionaries contain “general words,” “aimed at the native speaker adult user” (Jackson 2002, 24), “representative of the lexis of a language” (Béjoint 2010, 46), and “answering all sorts of questions about everything in the culture” (Béjoint 2000, 108); while other dictionaries contain “specialized” ones, “restricted” or “limited” to certain speakers, semantic fields, or purposes (Béjoint 2010, 46-47). This dichotomy might seem clear and is often invoked for its broad inclusivity, but it is in actuality quite murky and has historically served to enforce ethnocentrism and androcentrism (to name just a few relevant exclusions) in terms of audience, English, and semantic field. That is, as genre theory, dictionary typology has played a key role in creating categories into which dictionaries by and for women simply cannot fit.

Dictionaries as Constrained

According to Kathleen Hall Jamieson, rhetors perceive unprecedented situations through familiar genres that may impose severe constraints on rhetor and audience both. A text will “bear the chromosomal imprint of ancestral genres” (1975, 405, 414). By Jamieson’s model, early texts produced in an emerging genre will often be “manacled” to texts in antecedent genres, demonstrating characteristics that may seem more or less “appropriate” to the task at hand.

The idea of antecedent genres has been important to dictionary scholarship, which has often connected present-day English language dictionaries to ancient wordlists, medieval glosses, Latin grammars of the English language, bilingual word equivalency lists, and English

spellers. While this list of antecedent genres is indeed informative as to the constraints imposed on dictionary makers and users as the dictionary genre emerged and evolved, I would here argue that the list, built without attention to dictionaries by or for women, is far from complete. Not only have there been considerably more antecedent genres to the dictionary (e.g., housekeeping and cooking guides, as I'll suggest in Chapter 3), but the antecedent genre constraints at play on dictionary makers and users have been considerably more variable and complex across dictionary projects than a simple list can allow. Part of this project will illuminate how differently gendered audiences influenced the antecedent genres to which dictionary makers turned.

Dictionaries as Instantiations

As Miller's work would suggest, rhetorical genre scholarship has increasingly moved away from modes of classification which understand genres as similar forms with similar content and toward modes of theorization which understand genres as structuring knowledge, expectations, participant roles, and social actions (Barwarshi and Reiff 2010, 4). It is this pragmatic edge of genre scholarship that is necessary to afford access to women as key participants in the genre and to gender as a key concept in legitimating the knowledge and the English the genre produces.

Like genders, genres are dynamic entities that stabilize human experience. A genre builds on and out of constellations of events, environments, and antecedent texts in order to structure present possibilities and potentials. A genre is, thus, not a set of extant texts but an idea about the kinds of texts that could be. Not only do genres propose possible texts, they propose possible roles in relation to that text. In a revision of Foucault's "author-function," Barwarshi suggests that literary and nonliterary texts alike are animated by the "genre

function,” which inscribes “certain cultural values and regulate[s] users’ social positions, relations, and identities in certain ways”; we are allowed “to assume certain subject positions as readers of the discourse” and we assign certain roles to “the actors and events within the discourse” (2000, 338, 343).

So it is not only *like* gender, it is *concomitant with* gender that the scope of the dictionary genre’s content, the role of the dictionary genre’s user, and the authority of the dictionary genre’s maker is set and continually reproduced as culturally valuable. In the chapters that follow, I will show how these generic functions accrete differently over time. While the genre briefly designated active and linguistically competent women as culturally valuable early on, it began to privilege and encourage linguistically ambitious and educationally deprived women later. But the genre congealed around a set of functions that have allowed the English of elite education, the readership of alienated English speakers, and the authorship of heroic solo geniuses to hold cultural sway. These values aren’t simply the product of the dictionary; they are recreated in the day-to-day use of the dictionary. And so, while texts can themselves be idiosyncratic and innovative, genres exercise a structuring social power. Genres are constitutive and constraining, and texts enforce generic stability and introduce generic innovation.

As Bitzer suggests, genres arise when people create similar rhetorical responses to recurrent exigences; the similarities across texts in a genre help create and sustain stability in the face of recurring need. Miller famously rearranged Bitzer’s paradigm to suggest that genres create the occasion for texts by, themselves, reproducing an exigence that may no longer exist. That is, a genre may begin by responding to an external social need, but it might eventually come to encode and create a sense of need regardless of whether one is felt. This

theory suggests that early dictionary texts may have been responses to a felt social need—one anchored by women who required training in languages or women who lacked formal education—but that once the genre of the dictionary had been recognized, dictionary texts were produced to meet the need orchestrated and contained by the idea of the genre alone. Notably, “the idea of the genre alone” quickly dispenses with skilled and unskilled women and centers on men of average or above-average privilege. The fact of genre allows us to understand women as a cultural value and generic constraint that enabled the formation of the genre but became a liability as it “expanded” to describe the entirety of English and address a general audience. The abjection of women was thus a cultural value and generic constraint that enabled the continuation of the genre.

CONCLUSION

The vast cultural authority of the dictionary genre is at odds with any description of it as a book about words and meanings or even a set of books about words and meanings. It is precisely because the dictionary is simultaneously synonymous with authority and steeped in culture that we need to better understand it not only as a lexicographical product, a linguistic description, or a sociolinguistic phenomenon but also as a rhetorical event and a social action. Doing so opens onto a richer understanding of the dictionary and allows us to account for the consistent presence of women in relation to dictionary work.

Scholars in lexicography have taxonomized the practices of dictionary making and use and narrated the chronological progress of dictionaries toward an increasingly comprehensive record of the language. Accounts of the dictionary from within the fields of lexicography and metalexicography have tended to focus on common practices of production, material variations in product, or extraordinary characteristics of authors. Such a focus tends to miss

the aspects of dictionary making not controlled or controllable by the lexicographer: the complex collectivities of people alongside whom he (and sometimes she) works, the sociopolitical uses to which dictionaries are put, the kinds of lexicography offered by popular rather than professional author-editors, the infinity of lexical information and its imbrication in social hierarchies. Most importantly, in the grand narrative of dictionary history, women as patrons, readers, authors, collaborators, critics, and theorists are entirely absent, in spite of the fact that women seem to have fulfilled some or all of those dictionary-related roles from as early as the fifteenth century.

Scholars in linguistics have described the normative human language practices that favor dictionary making—the tendencies toward stability, regularity, and order. Sociolinguists have emphasized that these “natural human tendencies” are inseparable from cultural norms—hence the practices that favor dictionary making are tied to an interest in elevating a language and managing a language’s speakers. Such work reveals that lexicography participates in a number of motivated linguistic differentiations: Dictionaries offer semantic stability in the face of linguistic and social incoherence; they privilege educated rule adherence over egalitarian practice; they draw on seats of institutional authority; they enable social stratification; they secure the status of English as a language worthy of empire; they promise self-improvement and social mobility. A key differentiation that underwrites many of these other differentiations is that between men and women, masculine and feminine. But language scholars too frequently ignore this distinction as it plays out in and through dictionary work. Linguistic and sociolinguistic descriptions afford a sense of the cultural contexts of the dictionary project, but they neglect gender as a fundamental organizing principle of society and culture. Moreover, language studies approaches to the dictionary have tended to read

dictionaries as situated within or perhaps registering *extant* cultural contexts rather than helping to structure and secure those contexts. As this project argues, dictionaries are a part of the construction of gender as much as they rely on that construction for their existence.

Rhetorical studies helps us to understand dictionaries as rhetorical events; more than material objects of communication, dictionaries mark what precedes and is precipitated by material objects of communication. In drawing our attention to the circumstances of production—not only the practical labors of collection, definition, and citation but also the work of inspiration and invention, the decisions of scope or corpus, the necessities of administration, the performances of promotion, and the acts of circulation—rhetorical studies uncovers that vital presence of women that we could only dimly sense otherwise. Likewise, in attending to the circumstances of consumption—not only the passivity of reception but the activity of giving audience, of affirming exigence, of allowing and disallowing authority—rhetorical studies recognizes the participations of women in dictionary work where a strictly lexicographical approach would have rendered them unplaceable or unintelligible. These “surrounding” events, peopled by bodies gendered male and female and animated by ideologies which hierarchize men and women, are as important as material objects to understanding the overall project of the dictionary.

Rhetorical genre studies situates a text not just within its immediate contexts of creation and circulation, it also comprehends texts as they work together *as a genre* to structure knowledge, expectations, participant roles, and social actions.¹⁰ Genre theory encourages us to see dictionaries as they build on and out of constellations of events, environments, and antecedent texts in order to stabilize human experience and to structure present possibilities

¹⁰ A paraphrase, in pastiche, of a number of scholars. For a concise description of genre, see Bawarshi and Reiff (2010, 4).

and potentials. The dictionary genre is not a set of extant texts but an idea about the kinds of dictionary texts, Englishes, authors, and users that could be. Dictionaries embedded in larger reference works by women, dictionaries about women's words, dictionaries attributed to women, and dictionaries addressed to women (all throughout the long history of English lexicography) have, in contemporary scholarship, not been recognized as full participants in the genre, though all of these forms of lexicographical engagement powerfully re-envisioned the social world made possible by the dictionary. Attending to the discontinuities in participants, purposes, exigences, affordances, and antecedent genres as they were differently gendered by different dictionary makers in different moments is crucial to telling the story of the dictionary in a way that does not have to erase the consistent presence of women.

Scholars in lexicography, metalexicography, linguistics, sociolinguistics, and rhetoric all recognize that women were and are a part of the English language dictionary project. But none of these fields has successfully accounted for their material and rhetorical roles—historical, variable, marginal—in constituting the dictionary genre. Threading together language studies and rhetorical studies provides a more powerful method by which to read the dictionary as a rhetorical event and a social action, and thereby also a more powerful method for accounting for the consistent presence of women in relation to the English dictionary.

**GENTLE READERS AND GENERIC EXPECTATIONS:
WOMEN AS AUDIENCE AND EXIGENCE FOR
THE EMERGING DICTIONARY GENRE, 1500–1700**

James Murray, chief editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, delivered his 1900 Romanes Lecture entitled “The Evolution of English Lexicography” standing roughly at the center of Oxford’s semicircular Sheldonian Theatre. With all sight lines converging on him, Murray painted a sweeping portrait of the history of English language lexicography, in the process naming more than forty dictionaries, from the seventh century to the nineteenth, produced in what he describes as ten distinct phases. Simultaneously, Murray was promoting the convenient and purchasable reproductions of many of these texts by members of the Philological Society as well as the then-in-progress *Oxford English Dictionary*, itself positioned as the successful culmination of Murray’s historical trajectory and available to the consumer public in so many affordable fascicles and by subscription.

The lecture was thus part timeline and part sales pitch. But it was also part academic corrective to vernacular conceptions of the genre. Murray begins his lecture with an anecdote about members of the House of Commons scoffing at one among them who has asked for a definition of a term (*allotment*) in a proposed bill rather than simply looking the word up in

“the dictionary.” For the parliamentarians in Murray’s anecdote as well as many of the people in Murray’s late nineteenth-century audience, “the dictionary” would have been synonymous with *one* dictionary, Dr. Johnson’s. The British public at large tended to perceive his 1755 *A Dictionary of the English Language* as the *first* and perhaps *only* dictionary of English.¹¹ Its text was taken to be a complete and correct record of the language; its author was thought to have been an unflinching and autonomous specialist-hero; and its conception was assumed to have been almost immaculate, without method, labor, or fault. In relating this anecdote, Murray locates the humor not in the foolishness of the individual parliamentarian who forgets to consult Dr. Johnson but in the foolishness of the collective parliament that assumes Dr. Johnson defines *allotment*. He does not.

Murray thus begins his lecture with two quite disruptive statements about “the dictionary”: (1) it is incomplete, and (2) it was not invented by Johnson. He goes on to supplant any tidy understanding of lexicography with a multiple and variable picture of the developing genre. His lecture, rich with fine-grain detail about the scholarly scribbling of medieval glossators through to Enlightenment refinements in the function of quotation, paints a portrait of lexicography that is strikingly mundane, individual, and practical. His narrative insists that dictionaries are the imperfect and time-bound products of slow, painful, and *ad hoc* labor carried out by scores of more or less anonymous workers. Each, as Murray puts it, is only adding “stones to the lexicographical cairn.”

Throughout the lecture, and particularly with this metaphor, Murray is quietly chipping away at already-sedimented expectations of the dictionary genre. His version of the

¹¹ Noah Webster’s (1828) dictionary of American English would have been known to some and its gaining popularity in England had in fact helped those working on the *OED* to secure publishing contracts, but, in 1900, Johnson’s was still the definitive British dictionary.

English language dictionary is a radical one, both for its time and for today—at once suggesting that the work of the dictionary is to mark very local memories and boundaries of the English language rather than pronounce universal authority about its totality and positioning the maker of dictionaries as one among many who pile pebbles rather than a singular Hercules who holds aloft the stars, planets, and sky.

I begin this chapter with the Romanes Lecture because, just as Murray himself stood roughly at the center of the Sheldonian Theatre in 1900, his lecture stands roughly at the center of any present-day discussion of the history of women in dictionary projects. “The Evolution of English Lexicography” was then and is now one of the only substantive treatments to look to concerning the shadowy presence of women in the history of the genre. And yet, the lecture does not really shed light on that presence.

Women are tucked into the middle of the address; they bear mentioning precisely when their mention seems unlikely. Having traced nine centuries of early English lexicographical thought, Murray notes, “no one appears before the end of the sixteenth century to have felt that Englishmen could want a dictionary to help them to the knowledge and correct use of their own language.” Certainly they required dictionaries to learn, read, write, and speak *other* languages—Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Italian, Spanish—but English for Englishmen “was either an in-born faculty, or it was inhaled with their native air, or imbibed with their mothers’ milk; how could they need a book to teach them to speak their mother-tongue?”

Murray tells us that the realization that Englishmen could want a dictionary of their own language manifested itself at the turn of the seventeenth century as a realization that Englishwomen could want a dictionary of their own language. Early dictionaries were prepared as “a consideration of the educational wants of women,” to use Murray’s phrase. Among the

early dictionaries to imagine the genre's purpose through and for an audience of women is a dictionary I've already mentioned as holding the title of first monolingual dictionary of the English language: Robert Cawdrey's (1604) *Table Alphabeticall*, the full title of which both bears and buries mention of ladies and gentlewomen. Murray's lecture does the same. But in both, the appearance of women is significant.

After all, as Murray himself explains, many early English dictionaries were dedicated to, patronized by, or intended for women during what he calls "the most important point in the evolution of the modern English Dictionary." Women were thus not an anomaly in the history of the dictionary genre but rather a regular and influential feature of it. Murray points out, "all these references to the needs of women disappear from the later editions, and are wanting in later dictionaries after 1660." By Murray's observation, then, knowledge of English was suddenly, spectacularly, inexplicably, and only momentarily made over from a female birthright (the mother's milk, the mother tongue, the feminized vernacular—more on this in a moment) to a female deficiency precisely at what Murray calls "the most important point in the evolution of the modern English Dictionary."

Murray does little to explain the dramatic gendering of this crucial moment. He remains almost silent on the possible reasons women appeared in the seventeenth-century dictionary, crediting it to "a truism, that the higher position now taken by English studies, is intimately interwoven with the advances which have been made during the last quarter of a century in the higher education of women." And he offers only very tentative speculations as to the disappearance of women from dictionary projects thereafter: "whether this was owing to the fact that the less-knowing women had now come upsides with the more-knowing men; or that with the Restoration, female education went out of fashion, and women sank back again

into elegant illiteracy, I leave to the historian to discover; I only, as a lexicographer, record the fact that from the Restoration the dictionaries are silent about the education of women, till we pass the Revolution settlement and reach the Age of Queen Anne, when J. K. in 1702 tells us that his dictionary is ‘chiefly designed for the benefit of young Scholars, Tradesmen, Artificers, and the female sex, who would learn to spell truly.’”

Murray thus drops the matter almost as soon as he takes it up, dwelling long enough to suggest import but moving along swiftly enough to suggest mere interest. There is nothing in the overarching structure of the lecture or in Murray’s summary comments that would help connect his observations about gender to the broader historical, commercial, and theoretical aims of the lecture which I outlined at the opening of this chapter: Specifically, it remains unclear how women fit into Murray’s timeline of the ten phases of the emergence and evolution of English lexicography, what value women might have in a publishing market where the *OED* and dictionary reproductions by the Philological Society are being promoted, and whether or not the idea of women connects to Murray’s corrective conception of the genre as something other than an infallible and immaculate authority.

As strongly as Murray’s lecture seems to beg for further exploration of the role of women in the English dictionary, subsequent lexicographical thinkers have largely only retraced his steps, acknowledging some among the handful of early dictionaries that seem to have projected women within their front matter (in titles, dedications, prefaces, and reader notes) but inadequately addressing why and how women were invoked and what this meant in terms of the genre’s form and function as it was actively taking shape. More than a century past Murray’s Romanes lecture, it is time we make a historically and theoretically robust

attempt to document and understand the regular prominence of women at “the most important point in the evolution of the modern English Dictionary.”

In this chapter, I will therefore return to the moment when Murray remarks “a moving of the waters”: the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, when the tide of Englishmen-wanting-to-know-and-correct-English was joined by the tide of Englishwomen-in-want-of-instruction and what we accept as the first monolingual English dictionaries, ancestors of our awesomely authoritative present-day dictionaries, washed ashore. I will not only offer a more comprehensive and nuanced list of early English dictionaries that invoke women in their front matter than has been offered in related work, I will also trace what the invocation of women meant for emerging and evolving conceptions of the dictionary genre’s exigence, audience, form, function, and content. I argue that women (both flesh-and-blood individuals and the imagined social collective) played an array of roles in relation to the dictionary; they were pupils, patrons, dedicatees, promoters, immediate and imagined audiences, people who were themselves dictionary consumers and people on whose behalf dictionaries were consumed. Consistently, early modern women framed the exigence for dictionaries and modeled reader roles and relationships to a genre only then emergent. By virtue of this prominence, women are a necessary consideration in charting the shifting shape of generic exigence, marking major transitions from a genre of instruction and service to a genre of regulation and correction. In this process, I hope to prove some of the potentials unfulfilled in Murray’s lecture, to show the ways in which his implicit claim about the importance of gender is inextricably bound up in his explicit arguments about the dictionary’s history, economic desirability, and generic peculiarities.

FORKED TONGUE: WOMEN IN EARLY MODERN DICTIONARIES
OF ENGLISH AND ANOTHER VERNACULAR LANGUAGE

Women appear in relation to English lexicography alongside the advent of multilingual English dictionaries describing other vernacular languages. In early modern England, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew were increasingly the preserve of the most highly educated men. For a woman to have received training in classical languages would have indicated not only that she belonged to the uppermost echelons of social rank but also that she had received a most unusual education idiosyncratically crafted by her parents, administered in the privacy of her home, and likely to negatively rather than positively influence her marriage prospects. After learning classical languages, women could read and translate texts deemed appropriate to the fair sex, but their translations were mostly for private edification, and women were officially or implicitly barred from much of the academic and original work that their male counterparts might have undertaken in classical tongues. What fashion there may have been in women learning Latin and Greek had almost entirely evaporated by the seventeenth century (Pacheco 2002, 13).

Women's training in vernacular languages, on the other hand, grew in popularity throughout the early modern period. An education in modern languages other than English was still indicative of extreme privilege, but, unlike that in classical languages, the knowledge gained had practical potential in social settings where women's linguistic education marked a certain degree of "accomplishment."

Women are often thought to bear special relation to vernacular languages. The special relation is alive today in the phrase "mother tongue," which is often traced to Dante Alighieri's early fourteenth-century *De Vulgaria Eloquentia*. In celebrating the "vulgarem locutionem" (the vernacular), *De Vulgaria Eloquentia* casts the vernacular as a "maternam locutionem," a mother tongue superior to Latin precisely because it is innate and not learned (Allen 2006; Bonfiglio

2010). Women’s special relation to the vernacular was of course forged in the prohibition of women’s education (at a time when schooling was conducted by and large in classical languages), but it was burnished by the elevation of vernacular languages in erotic lyric poetry, which was often addressed to women who spoke no other language but their vernacular. These literary deployments of vernacular languages were eventually “discovered,” celebrated, and rebranded as national languages; gender thus plays a prominent role “in the construction of the national vernacular” (Fleming 1994, 292).

The appearance and prominence of women in early English lexicography would seem to confirm this peculiar relation. Of the eight dictionaries of English and another modern vernacular mentioned in Murray’s lecture (see Figure 2.1), half specify women as patrons, more than a third specify women as dedicatees or imagined readers, and a quarter describe them as pupils whose private instruction incited the production of a dictionary. Within the context of multilingual English lexicography, it seems appropriate to suggest that women play a prominent role not only in constructing the national vernacular but in suggesting the political and social value of vernaculars internationally.

2.1. Dictionaries of English and Another Vernacular, 1500-1700, Cited in Murray (1900)

Date	Author	Type	Woman or Women Specified as...			
			Patron	Dedicatee	Reader	Pupil
1521	Barclay	F-E				
1530	Palsgrave	F-E	x		x	x
1533	Du Wés	F-E	x	x	x	x
1591	Percyvall	S-E				
1598	Florio	I-E	x	x	x	
1611	Florio	I-E	x	x		
1611	Cotgrave	F-E				
1617	Minsheu	poly				
Total:			50%	38%	38%	25%

Note: Dictionary Type indicates languages of description and composition (French, English, Spanish, Italian, or polylingual).

In this section, I would like to explore the roles women appear to play in relation to bilingual English lexicographical projects of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These projects were primarily introductions to a romance language (most often French, Italian,

Spanish) written in English for English speakers. They often include thematically clustered word lists (e.g., terms for clothing, food, or social station) with equivalent terms in each language alongside discussions of grammar and pronunciation; many also offered sample dialogues in the vernacular language with interlinear English translations. In describing languages *other than* English, these early bilingual dictionaries are obviously not *about* English, but they nonetheless fashion expectations of English language users and, more specifically, of English language users as dictionary users. Importantly, readers are presumed to come to the bilingual dictionary with a high level of linguistic proficiency already—not only in English but in the other language described, which they would have learned in private tutorials or foreign travels. Early modern bilingual dictionaries were the tools of refined minds and elite travelers, not of novices or autodidacts.

I will begin by examining individual texts, which themselves are often multigeneric, combining dictionaries with grammars, pronunciation guides, dialogues, and other forms of linguistic description, instruction, or modeling. (Genre mixing was, of course, characteristic of early modern book culture.) Four of the texts I'll examine are cited by Murray: the French-English work of John Palsgrave (1530) and Giles DuWés (1533), as well as John (Giovanni) Florio's (1598; 1611) Italian-English dictionary and its revision. I will also consider a bilingual English dictionary from the end of the seventeenth century: Abel Boyer's (1694) French-English "school master." These five texts demonstrate the way in which early instantiations of the dictionary connected to scenarios of instruction and service, argued the exigence of lexical information, modeled reader roles on the basis of women pupils and patrons, and ultimately tested various theories of the dictionary as a genre.

Mary Tudor and Lesclarcissement de la langue francoyse

Palsgrave's 1530 *Lesclarcissement de la langue francoyse compose par maistre Iohan Palsgraue Angloyse natyf de Londres, et gradue de Paris* is an English description of French words, phrases, grammar, and pronunciation, including what is accepted as one of the first French-English dictionaries. The *Lesclarcissement* is also noteworthy for the prominence of a woman in its conception, reception, and eventual success.

While the *Lesclarcissement* begins with a dedication to “the most high and puissant prince kyng henry the eyght” (Henry VIII of England), “The Authours Epistell to the kynges grace” also narrates how the success of the *Lesclarcissement* was contingent upon Henry's sister, Mary Tudor. Henry had appointed Palsgrave to act as one of Mary's teachers early in 1513. (In the words of Palsgrave's “Epistell,” he had been “commauded by your most redouted hyghnesses to instruct the right excellent princes / your most dere and most entirely beloued suster quene Mary douagter of france / in þ frêche tong.”) Palsgrave went with Mary to France the following year, where he continued in his post as French instructor and secretary until her marriage to Louis XII was effected and her retinue dismissed (Stein 2004). Louis died shortly thereafter, and Mary returned to England with a new husband, Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk. According to Palsgrave's epistle, it was for Mary and Charles that he began work on the *Lesclarcissement*, “for their manyfolde benfyts I was so highly bounden.” Upon completing the *Lesclarcissement*, Palsgrave presented it to Mary and Charles, and:

whan they had thorowly bisyted my said two bokes/ of their great goodnesse and synguler fauour towards me / moche more estemyng them than they in dede were worthy / their graces dyde than put me in a farther hope and conforte / that your highnesse / whiche of your great bouúousnesse and notable benignyte / nat onely encorage well doers in any kynde of vertue / to encrease + to do better.

Of course, it is then under the patronage of Henry VIII that the *Lesclarcissement* is published and sold.

In relation to the *Lesclarcissement*, Mary Tudor thus plays the part of pupil, reader, and patron. As a pupil, she both inspires and influences the content of the work, and, as a reader, she offers an intimate audience to test and affirm that content. Mary is clearly *not* Palsgrave's primary patron: Unlike Henry, she is never directly addressed in the author's epistle, and, when she is described, it is only in her state relation to kings (as "suster queen" or "douagere of France"). She is thus consistently praised only insofar as she is "dere" to and "entirely beloued" by Henry, the true patron of the text. But Mary nevertheless fulfills many of the functions of patronage common in the period. Within systems of literary patronage in early modern England, patrons provided authors much more than monetary support (in the form of gifts, credit, and subsidy); they also offered hospitality (food and lodging), familiarity (intimacy beyond rank), encouragement (private and public demonstrations of interest and praise), protection (from physical abuse, political reprisal, and commercial competition), authority (by virtue of their elevated birth, education, and taste), introductions (to additional resources and audiences), and places and livings (in the form of administrative and ecclesiastical appointments) (Griffin 1996, 18-29). Mary clearly acts as patron to Palsgrave in according him familiarity and encouragement; she may also have played some part in introducing the *Lesclarcissement* to her brother.¹² The *Lesclarcissement* itself lays claim to Mary as a patron by invoking her authority in its front matter.

The roles played by Mary Tudor in relation to the *Lesclarcissement* are played by other women in other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century lexicographical projects involving English

¹² Palsgrave himself would not likely have required introduction to Henry VIII.

and another vernacular. If Mary Tudor can be taken as an example of how women figure into the shaping of the English language dictionary genre, then she will help us to understand how women inform the dictionary's *kairos*, suggest its audience, and construct its exigence.

Palsgrave's narrative of the *Lesclarcissement*, bound as it is to the person of Mary Tudor, shows the dictionary project to be kairotic—an *ad hoc* sort of endeavor that seeks to fulfill the immediate needs of an individual or a set of individuals uniquely situated in time and space. In this case, the sister queen of England, set to marry the king of France, requires personal instruction and assistance in the vernacular of her future husband, and, later, the dowager queen of France will benefit from and take pleasure in a written reference work that rehearses her instruction in the vernacular of her dowager kingdom. As a past pupil and early reader, Mary provides the immediate reasons for the text to be written. But her immediacy also provides reasons for the text to be read: In giving the *Lesclarcissement* an intimate audience, she can measure its value and deem it worthy of a public. It is Mary who suggests that a text commemorative of her own learning could have value for others, could be printed under the patronage of her brother king, and used by his subjects to learn French. The trajectory she suggests and secures for the *Lesclarcissement* makes her private education—a kairotic situation that prompts the dictionary—over into a public service—a kairotic situation prompted by the dictionary.

As a pupil in the *Lesclarcissement* pages, Mary models the language acquisition made possible for readers of the *Lesclarcissement* pages. Her personal experience stands in for theirs. In rhetorical terms, the audience addressed (roughly, the knowable flesh-and-blood person of Mary Tudor) cuts the pattern for the audience invoked (roughly, Palsgrave's "constructed

fiction” of his own readers).¹³ In spite of having been a pupil to Palsgrave, Mary is not taught by his text, placed subordinate to its authority. Rather, Mary’s authority animates the *Lesclarcissement*, and the dictionary stands as a record of accomplishment, as attestation of the British virtue “to encrease + to do better.” Readers thus look to the dictionary not as corrective but as a witness to language in active circulation. This pattern of linguistically competent readers dictated a very different form, content, and function for the genre early on.

Mary I, Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth I and An introductory for to lerne to rede, to pronounce, and to speake Frenche trewly

Du Wés’ 1533 *An Introductorie for to lerne to rede, to pronounce, and to speake Frenche trewly compyled for the right high, excellent, and most vertuous lady, the lady Mary of Englande, doughter to our most gracious souerayn lorde kyng Henry the eight* is another English speaker’s guide to French. The work is divided into two books, the first includes lists of everyday word equivalents, treatises on pronunciation and parts of speech, and grammatical guidance for declension and conjugation, and the second is comprised of “diuerse communications by way of dialoges” and letters. The text relies on three Tudor women as dedicatees, patrons, pupils, and readers.

DuWés had been employed in the British court, as a musician, tutor, and librarian long before he published the *Introductorie*. His association with the court likely began in the mid-1490s when he was appointed lute player to Henry VII of England (Kipling 2008). He was chamber minstrel to the household and music instructor to the children (Arthur, Margaret, Henry, and Mary¹⁴); in the course of the latter occupation, he began delivering informal French lessons. In his prologue to the *Introductorie*, he claims, in “the space of therty yeres and more,”

¹³ Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford’s “Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked” is an elegant summary of opposing theories of audience that also stresses “the integrated, interdependent nature of reading and writing” (1984, 169).

¹⁴ DuWés was thus French instructor to Mary Tudor prior to Palsgrave.

to have taught “many great preinces and princesses/ as to decesses of noble and recomended memory. The prince Arthur/ the noble kyng Hney/ for the present prosperously regnyng/ to whom god gyue lyfe perpetuall: The quenes of france and of Scotlande/ with the noble Marquis of Excestre.” His title at the turn of the century marks the metamorphosis of his royal function: “Master to lute French” (Kipling 2008).

After Henry VIII’s accession, DuWés continued in various royal appointments, eventually returning to his role as Master to Lute French for Henry VIII’s daughter Mary (Mary I of England). As the prologue to the *Introductorie* explains, he was “by my most redoubted lorde and prince the kynge aboue named/ ordained to administer myn accustomed poore and unworthy seruyce to most illustre ryght exellente and ryght vertuose lady/ my lady Mary of Englande his ryght entierly well beloued doughter.” DuWés travelled with Mary to Wales for the period between 1525 and 1528 to continue her instruction in lute and French (Kipling 2008). And it is ostensibly this period “the whiche right specially and straytly [Mary] hath me comanded and encharched to reduce and to put by writtynge.”

Mary may share billing with her father in the title of the *Introductorie* (just as she shared DuWés as a French instructor with him), but she is unmistakably the heart of the work. Her presence—which DuWés characterizes as illustrious, virtuous, and benevolent—saturates its pages: Her name appears in its title, in a dedication and a dedicatory acrostic, and in the prologue; she is also cast (so to speak) as a vocal participant in many of the dialogues comprising the second book, some of which, it should be noted, are communications a more general populace is not at all likely to have (e.g., “A messenger coming from the kynges grace/ to his welbeloued doughter lady Mary.”).

In relation to the *Introductorie*, Mary I is thus a pupil, a dedicatee, and a patron. The trajectory of her learning is more closely followed in the *Introductorie* than Mary Tudor's was in the *Lesclarcissement*. The front matter bears witness to her investment in her own education—she was “so so taught [...] day ly” by DuWés—but the dialogues of book two portray her as a vocal and curious speaker. Precisely because the *Introductorie* evokes such a strong sense of Mary I, she is perhaps less viable as a model learner than Mary Tudor of the *Lesclarcissement*. But Mary I actively ensures the translation of her own instruction to a wider readership. According to DuWés' prologue, it is Mary's “gracious comandment[,] her beniuolence and good wyll” that prompts production of a guide to serve as “proifite to others/ as to her selfe.” (The suggestion that Mary herself will profit from the *Introductorie* implies she may have had some role as reader also, though it may simply indicate the patron benefits of increased fame and magnificence.)

Mary's role of pupil seems to make itself over into the role of patron at large. The *Introductorie* bears witness to her investment in the education of others, which she makes an effort both to preserve and promote. That is, Mary encharges DuWés with writing down not only her own lessons but those of her “progenitours and predecessours” for the benefit of “all reders.” She actively ties together past and future education in her present-day *Introductorie*. DuWés had been French tutor to many and more powerful Tudors, in generations before Mary. It is not simply a curiosity that he finally drafted his guide at the request and for the benefit of a woman. In a sense, Mary commands the content and function of the text, such that it models the education of others by tracing the trajectory of her own family's intimate education. It seems appropriate the text should be so plainly and conspicuously dedicated to her.

Within the more traditional system of literary patronage, Mary I supported DuWés' work in several important ways: She offered a high level of familiarity to DuWés, as the dialogues which feature them both will attest. She plainly encouraged his work, and, importantly, lent it its authority—not simply in the sense that the *Introductorie* could benefit from her high birth, noble taste, and virtuous character, but also in the sense that DuWés and his *Introductorie* were made over into delegates of her own knowledge and benevolence to a point indicating a relation akin to co-authorship.

Mary's mark on the whole of the *Introductorie* is as clear as her royal future was at that time uncertain. In 1533, Mary had lost the title of princess to Elizabeth (Elizabeth I of England), daughter to Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn (Weikel 2008). The second book of DuWés work begins with a dedication to and a poem for this new family, "A laude and prayse to the kynge/ the quene/ and to the princesse noble grace/ for a preamble or prologue to the sayd boke." Boleyn is characterized as pure, clean, and magnanimous; Elizabeth as noble, virtuous, and "Halfe a goddesse." Anne and Elizabeth are thus positioned as patrons to the text who lend the authority of good character, but they exist in stark contrast to Mary who lends significantly more.

If we take Mary I, Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth I, and the *Introductorie* as examples of the gendered formation of the dictionary genre, we again see the dictionary as kairotically situated, inextricable from highly individualized linguistic instruction and often entrenched within legacies and families themselves enmeshed in political wrangling. And yet, the dictionary is extricated from individualized linguistic instruction, and women are the means by which its exigence can be understood within and beyond the court as a public benefit. The elite education enjoyed by Mary becomes a book, first, to honor her and, later, to honor her

father's new family, themselves a testimonial to the expanding power of the British monarchy. The local exigence, to aid in the day-to-day exchanges of a king's daughter, is made over into a broad exigence, to record and thus preserve private learning for public benefit. Readers are thus invited to reenact Mary's multilingual diplomacy, to bear witness to her place within a fluent and fluid empire.

The Countess of Bedford and A World of Wordes

Florio's 1598 *A vvorlde of wordes, or Most copious, and exact dictionarie in Italian and English, collected by Iohn Florio* is noteworthy as one of the first bilingual lexicons to focus exclusively on lexicon. The bulk of Florio's *World of Wordes* is its Italian-English dictionary (lemmas with definitions and equivalents); the front matter includes dedications, a note to the reader about precursors of this dictionary, dedicatory poems, commendations, and references; details of grammar and pronunciation are not described.

Historically and generically, Florio was charting new territory, and his front matter indicates some anxiety about considering words out of the full context of their language. Early instantiations of the genre (as we've seen with Palsgrave's *Lesclarcissement* and DuWés' *Introductorie*, both published more than half a century prior to Florio's *World of Wordes*) had patterned themselves on educational scenarios—the text pretended to teach, and readers played at being pupils. Florio's desire to abstract words from the scene of instruction was, however, accompanied by a concern that doing so would trivialize them for readers. To argue that a lexicon alone could have value for a heterogeneous audience, Florio draws on tropes of gender and a woman patron to reconfigure the genre's exigence, supplanting specialized instruction with general service.

Florio's lexicographical work had begun, in some senses, with two Italian-English phrasebooks: the 1578 *Florio his firste frutes which yeelde familiar speech, merie prouerbes, wittie sentences, and golden sayings. Also a perfect induction to the Italian, and English tongues, as in the table appeareth. The like heretofore, neuer by any man published* and the 1591 *Florios second frutes to be gathered of twelue trees, of diuers but delightsome tastes to the tongues of Italians and Englishmen. To which is annexed his Gardine of recreation yeelding six thousand Italian prouerbs*. In 1598, upon publication of *A World of Wordes*, Florio characterized his earlier work thus:

Two ouerhastie frutes of mine nowe some yeeres since, like two forewarde females, the one pute her-selfe in seuce to an Earle of Excellence [Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester], the other to a Gentleman of Woorth [Nicholas Saunder of Ewell], both into the worlde runne the race of their fortune. Now where my rawer youth brought foorth those female frutes, my riper yeeres affording me I cannot say a braine-babe *Minerua*, aremed at alassaies at first houre; but rather from my Italian *Semele*, and English thigh, a boucing boie, *Bacchus*-like, almost all names.

Florio perceives his first dictionary as a masculine endeavor, a work as playful and promising as a baby boy.

The dedication which begins *A World of Wordes* repeatedly claims masculinity for the text. Cast first as a baby Bacchus, next as a retainer who gives service to the noble dedicatees: "he hath toong to answer, words at will, and wants not some wit, though he speake plaine what each thing is." Florio admits that:

Some perhaps will except against the sexe, and not allowe it for a male-boorde, sirhens as our Italians saie, *Le parole sono femine, & I fatti sono maschij*, Wordes they are women, and deeds they are men. But let such know that *Detti* and *fatti*, wordes and deeds with me are all of one gender. And though they were commonly Feminine, why might not I by strong imagination (which Phisicians giue so much power vnto) alter their sexe? Or at least by such heauen-pearing deuotion as transformed Iphis, according to that description of the Poet.

By sheer force of imagination and devotion, Florio has converted womanly words into a manly dictionary. He goes so far as to baptize this son before sending him out into the world: "So

haue I crost him, and so blest him, your god-childe, and your seruant; that you may likewise giue him your blessing, if it be but as when one standes you in steede, supplies you, or pleases you, you saie, Gods-blessing on him.” In this way, Florio relies on tropes of gender to help establish the exigence for his dictionary; as a playful boy or a loyal manservant, the text can exceed its own contents, performing deeds, actions, and service with the mere womanly words of which it is made.

The god parents designated for Florio’s *World of Wordes* are three “Right Honorable Patrons of virtue, Patterns of Honor.” Two of them had been promising baby boys themselves: Both Roger Manners, fifth earl of Rutland, and Henry Wriothesley, third earl of Southampton, took possession of their earldoms while still children (Hammer 2008; Honan 2008). The third dedicatee, however, was rather more like a forward female: Lucy Russell (*née* Harington), countess of Bedford, ran a race of fortune in the world, forging political alliances and currying royal favor when and as her own circumstances required (Payne 2008).

While Florio’s dedication, in arguing the superior masculinity of *A World of Wordes*, returns again and again to rehearse gender hierarchies, it downplays the gender differences among its patrons. Rutland, Southampton, and Bedford are often set equal and addressed as a group, commended for their liknesses and characterized as engaging in the same intellectual and vocal work:

Your birth, highly noble, more then gentel: your place, aboue others, as in degree, so in height of bountie, and other vertues: your custome, neuer wearie of well dooing: your studies much in al, most in Italian excellence: your conceits, by vnsderstanding others to worke aboue them in your owne: your exercise, to reade, what the worlds best wits haue written, and to speake as they write.

Bedford reads, writes, and speaks as much and better than her male counterparts.

Florio commends Southampton and Rutland for having proved their Italian skills in formal

instruction and foreign travel, but Bedford's linguistic competence seems less arduously acquired than it is magically conjured. In his dedication, Florio asks:

Naie, if I offer seruice but to them that need it, with what face seeke I a place with your excellent Ladiship (my most-most honored, because best-best adorned Madame) who by conceited industrie, or industrious conceite, in Italian as in French, in French as in Spanish, in all as in English, vnderstand what you reade, write as you reade, and speake as you write; yet rather charge your minde with matter, then your memorie with words?

Bedford is depicted as a master of languages, and Florio is careful to point out that her linguistic proficiency is no petty woman's refinement of rote memorization but rather on par with a man's intellectual appetite to charge the mind with matter. Importantly, Florio presents Bedford as participating in stereotypically male endeavors without sacrifice to her womanhood; she retains feminine beauty, nobility, and virtue; in Florio's poetic portrait of her, "faire, great, good, each-other entre-laces."

Florio suggests Bedford will use *A World of Wordes* as Rutland and Southampton will. He addresses all three when he writes:

Though most of these you know already, yet haue I enough, if you know anything more then you knew, by this. The retainer doth some seruice, that now and then but holds your Honors styrrup, or lendes a hande ouer a stile, or opens a gappe for easier passage, or holds a torch in a darke waie : enough to weare your Honors cloth.

The dictionary renders all of its patron godparents, regardless of gender, the same assistance. And the kind of assistance afforded is markedly less genteel than private instruction. Replacing the finely-appointed receiving rooms implied in DuWés' *Introductorie*, Florio's *World* gives us fields, fences, brush, and darkness. *A World of Wordes* is not a dictionary to be put on a shelf but one to be brought into the trenches, for helping with stirrups and stiles. The service rendered is attendant with a marked hierarchy: The patron-readers, already proficient in all things including language, call upon the text only for occasional use and only when messy

things need to be tidied or when small obstacles need to be navigated. Authority resides with the user; it is not pronounced by the dictionary itself (the service rendered by many present-day dictionaries).

In its move toward establishing the dictionary as providing general services, *A World of Wordes* attempts to generalize its audience. Florio's explicit description of the audience in the front matter suggests a desire for heterogeneous users and uses:

Yet here-hence may some good accrewe, not onelie to truantlie-schollers, which euer-and-anon runne to *Venuti*, and *Alunno*; or to new-entered nouices, that hardly can construe their lesson; or to well-forwarde students, that haue turned ouer *Guazzo* and *Castiglione*, yea runne through *Guarini*, *Ariosto*, *Tasso*, *Boccace*, and *Petrarche*: but euen to the most complete Doctor; yea to him that best stande *Alserta* for the best Italian, hereof sometimes may rise some vse [...]

But the *World of Wordes*' readership is modeled beyond scenarios of schooling by the dictionary's patrons (whose use of it is so vividly depicted, in the heat of the horse ride); thus, the dictionary can benefit competent men and women alike.

Queen Anne and Queen Anna's New World of Words

In 1611, Florio revised and rebranded his dictionary. In *Queen Anna's nevv vworld of words, or dictionarie of the Italian and English tongues, collected, and newly much augmented by Iohn Florio, reader of the Italian vnto the Soueraigne Maiestie of Anna, crowned Queene of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, &c. And one of the gentlemen of hir Royall Priuie Chamber. Whereunto are added certaine necessarie rules and short obseruations for the Italian tongue*, the dedication to Southampton, Rutland, and Bedford is replaced with one to Queen Anne, consort of James VI and I of Scotland, England, and Ireland. Anne's prominence as *the* female literary patron of the period was rivaled only by Bedford's, who served as Anne's lady of the bedchamber (Meikle and Payne 2008).

Bedford's old friend Florio served as Anne's Italian tutor and secretary beginning in 1604 (O'Connor 2008).

Beyond their patron status, it is hard to read the similarities between the two women within the pages of *Queen Anna's New World of Words* and (Bedford's) *A World Of Wordes*. If Bedford seems in the thick of language, then Anne is in the ether far above it. Anne is accorded significant remove from the dictionary's content and use, offering only "protection and patronage" that, as Florio's dedication suggests, will "be my guard against the worst, if not grace with the best, if men may see I beare *Minerua* in my front, or as the Hart on my necke, I am *Diana's*, so with heart I may say, This is QVEEN ANNA'S." Queen Anne is conflated with Goddess Diana, and both protect from on high.

Florio seems to be leveraging the full force of his newly-secured imperial patronage in order to make the move he did not dare a dozen years earlier: In 1598, of *A World of Wordes*, Florio specifically "cannot say a braine-babe *Minerua* [...] but rather [...] a boucing boie, *Bacchus*-like, almost all names"; but, in 1611, *Queen Anna's New World of Words* most definitely is *Minerva*, almost all knowledge. Florio suggests he has, finally, captured the sacred seat of wisdom and carried her on his front, just as he would carry a slain stag.

The strangely conflicted gender of *Queen Anna's New World of Words*—at once a *Minerva* and a hart—is echoed in Florio's articulation of the work in relation to contemporary colonial efforts:

Since, following the fathers steps in all observant service of your most sacred Maiestie, yet with a trauellers minde, as erst *Colombus* at command of glorious *Isabella*, it hath (at home) discovered neere halfe a new world : and therefore as of olde some called *Scotia* of *Scota*, and others lately *Virginia*, of Queenes your Maiesties predecessors : so pardon again (o most Gracious and Glorious) if it dare be entitled *QVEEN ANNA'S New world of words*, as vnder your protection and patronage and set forth.

In these scenarios, women's names mark the labor and land of men whom they command. Florio's first work, then, may well have succeeded in making womanly words over into a man's dictionary, but, this time, because his project has been commanded by a queen, it bears her name and her authority.

Florio stops short of making a play for dictionary service as rendering authority rather than assistance, but the move from retainer to goddess would suggest a very different weight to the work, and, without any indication of the role readers are to play, we cannot see them as commanding the text in the same way Bedford, Rutland, and Southampton did. Rather, a shorthand notion of the dictionary seems emergent here; the author is not at pains to direct readers in dictionary use and readers are not expected to bring skepticism to the work. In Bruno Latour's terms, the genre appears already to have "black boxed" (Latour and Woolgar 1979, 242), such that an abbreviated sense of the text's component parts underwrites its quick and uncomplicated use. The idea that authority resides in the dictionary will become increasingly important to generic exigence in the centuries following Florio.

Queen Anne and The compleat French-master for ladies and gentlemen

Boyer's 1694 *The compleat French-master for ladies and gentlemen being a new method, to learn with ease and delight the French tongue, as it is now spoken in the court of France, in three parts, I. A short and plain grammar, II. A vocabulary, familiar dialogues, the niceties of the French tongue, and twelve discourses [...]* III. *Four collections [...]* / by A. Boyer [...] is an English introduction to French, including a grammar, a phrasebook, a set of "familiar dialogues," and a French-English dictionary. It entered the market when, according to Boyer's preface to the reader, "there is scarce any thing to be seen every where, but French-Grammars."

To distinguish his work from that of others, Boyer explains that “if any Understanding Reader does but examine” another French grammar:

he will soon be convinced, that it is but a confused heap of fragments, and scraps of other Grammars shuffled and jumbled together without Method : There you will see most Rules of the *Latin* Tongue promiscuously used for the *French*, as if the Picture of a Young Aiery Daughter, was like to be well drawn, by that of an Antiquated Mother; and if every Language had not a particular Air and Character that distinguishes it from all others.

In his grammar-cum-dictionary, Boyer offers not another mothered daughter, but a *master*. Like Florio, Boyer ensures the superiority of his dictionary by gendering it masculine.

Boyer is said to have originally compiled the *The Compleat French-Master* for the five-year-old William, duke of Gloucester, to whom the first edition and subsequent editions are dedicated. But, in “The Author’s Preface to the *Eighth Edition*,” Boyer explains that the work was commissioned for William by his mother Anne (Princess Consort of Denmark and eventual Queen Regent of Great Britain and Ireland):

I Publish’d about Six and Twenty Years ago the FIRST RUDIMENTS of the French Tongue, calculated for the tenderest Capacities, and chiefly designed for the Late Duke of GLOUCESTER, to whom they were inscrib’d. The Essay was so favourably entertain’d that I was soon after encourag’d by that great Patroness of Arts and Sciences, the late Queen ANNE (then Princess of Denmark) to compose not only a Methodical French GRAMMAR, but likewise a DICTIONARY, for the Use of her Royal Son.

Anne and her sister Mary were thought to have received rather minimal formal education themselves. The instruction provided to the daughters of King James II and VII (of England, Ireland, and Scotland) focused on domestic accomplishments (sewing and embroidery) to the exclusion of all else (history, geography, law); though, Anne became fluent in French and later in life both spoke and wrote the language well enough for formal diplomatic exchange (Gregg 2012). In commissioning the dictionary, she was ensuring a better education for her son than she herself had received—personal mastery seems to have blended with maternal provision to

prompt her formal patronage of Boyer's *Compleat French-Master* (which was, indeed, the foundation of much of Boyer's subsequent work, including, in 1699, *The Royal Dictionary*).

William and Anne may have been Boyer's immediate audience, but he certainly had a larger audience in mind for *The Compleat French-Master*. His title specifies "ladies and gentlemen." Boyer's aim is to reward "especially *Ladies* and Young Persons" who have been "cloy'd and puzzled, by the long intricate Rules which are commonly set down in Grammars" with a "plain and brief Account of all those difficulties that use to discourage them from Learning a Language so sweet, so fine, and so fashionable, that it is accounted a piece of Ill-Breeding to be ignorant of it."

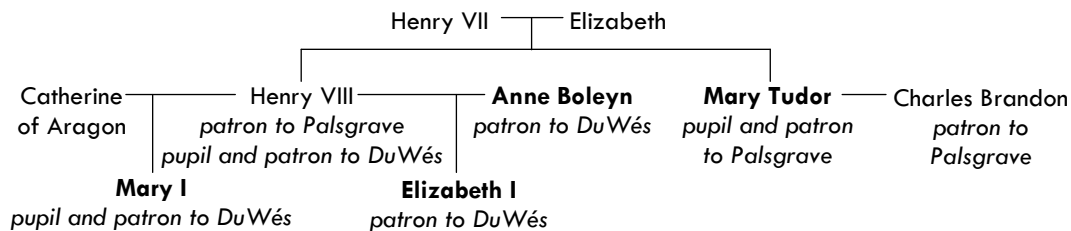
Boyer is one of the first vernacular-English dictionaries to identify a general readership of women (rather than a named woman patron) in his title, and the invocation seems, at least in part, an earnest one. The text addresses itself to women more than once, and women are interlocutors in many of the dialogues. But there were also obvious market benefits to pitching a dictionary to women, regardless of whether or not they comprised its ultimate readership. *The Compleat French-Master* plays to social anxieties about the ill-breeding and unmarriageability of women who had no French. Contracting the governance of *The Compleat French-Master* presented itself as an economic means for the socially mobile to secure their daughters' futures, such that they could someday engage in precisely the kinds of refined dialogues imagined at the end of the book. The prominence of women declares the social exigence of the dictionary in affording refinement and taste. *The French-Master* also relies on women to infuse "ease and delight" into linguistic acquisition. They repeatedly figure into Boyer's dialogues as something like comic relief: lazy gentlewomen bicker with tedious

governesses, picky ladies scold messy waiting-women, and dramatic daughters protest their fathers' plans for betrothal.

Conclusion

Early modern multilingual lexicography in English and another vernacular language took shape in the context of the tightly knit socio-political relations of England's sixteenth- and seventeenth-century gentry. Many of the most important dictionary makers of the period (Palsgrave, DuWés, Florio, Boyer) had direct connections with women belonging to or associated with the Tudor or Stuart monarchies (Mary Tudor, Mary I, Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth I, the Countess of Bedford, Queen Consort Anne, Queen Regent Anne) (see Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.3, and these connections were highly influential of early dictionary work. While none of these women could be said to have *written* a dictionary, they were important collaborators in the creation of dictionaries—as texts and as a genre. These “real life” women, often inspired and supported dictionary publications, and they otherwise influenced the way in which the genre's audience and exigence began to take shape.

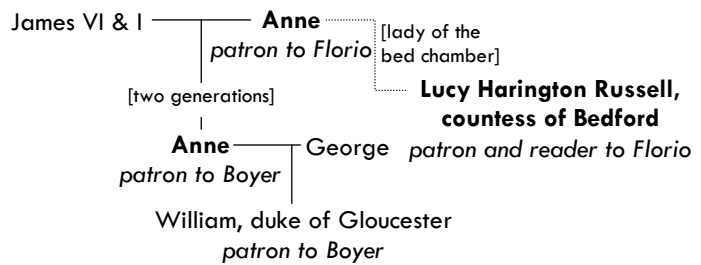
2.2. Tudor Women and Early Modern Bilingual English Dictionaries



Women played a number of roles in relation to early dictionary projects; they were pupils, patrons, dedicatees, and readers. As pupils, they served to highlight the situatedness of lexicographical work within the domain of elite private education. The women whose instruction is described in early dictionaries were also often instrumental in making their own

education available to a wider public. As pupils-cum-patrons, women signaled the potential of the dictionary as a teacher and they modeled the role of readers on their own experiences as

2.3. Stuart Women and Early Modern Bilingual English Dictionaries



students. As patrons, women offered an array of support to dictionary makers: money, familiarity, encouragement, introductions, authority, and protection. But they also played kairotic roles in the inception of the dictionary work: catalyzing it by their own education, commissioning it for the education of others, and encouraging its publication for public use. They reaped various benefits as patrons (Griffin 1996, 29-44) to dictionary work: securing nominal ownership of influential works, garnering contemporary fame and a measure of immortality, displaying and publicizing their own magnificence, controlling cultural interests, and sometimes benefiting from the services rendered by the dictionaries themselves. As readers, women often afforded dictionary makers an intimate audience to assess the success of their work. They may have measured and modified dictionary contents in the earliest stages within the educational relationships they often had with dictionary makers; upon publication, women were likely to receive dictionaries well and to encourage broader dissemination. Women also suggested various exigences of the dictionary for readers: the dictionary teaches when women are taught, it serves when women are served by it, and it commands when women command it.

MOTHER TONGUE: WOMEN IN EARLY MODERN MONOLINGAL ENGLISH DICTIONARIES

Historians of lexicography often debate the “true beginnings” of monolingual English lexicography. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century bilingual dictionaries of English and

another vernacular (such as those described above) are often cited as important “precursors,” as are monolingual lexicons in other languages (primarily Latin and French). Other content-based antecedents are the English word lists and simple glosses included within manuals to reading, writing, and teaching in English; the most famous among these are Richard Mulcaster’s (1582) *The First Part of the Elementarie* and Edmund Coote’s (1596) *The English Schoole-Maister*.

While English descriptions of another vernacular language tended to be commemorative of learning already accomplished by linguistically competent women, schoolbooks about English and dictionaries of Latin often fashioned themselves as catalysts to learning pursued by young men or male scholars who were imperfectly proficient in a language (Latin or English). Such textbooks participated in a long tradition of formal educational material, where the authors and audiences were male and the exigence was heavily coded by the values of religious and liberal arts instruction exclusive of women.

Tracing the “advent” of the monolingual English dictionary genre through these scholarly and educational precursors introduces a generic link on the basis of content. But the link is tenuous in terms of audience and exigence. Only a very small percentage of English guides and Latin lexicons were addressed to a readership of women, while almost all of the “first” English dictionaries specified such an audience. Of the six seventeenth-century monolingual English dictionaries cited by Murray in his Romanes lecture, more than two thirds specify women as readers and half identify women as dedicatees and patrons (see Figure 2.4).

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, women had proven to be a growing “market” for published material. By and large, books printed specifically for women were written by men and treated religious subject matter (Hannay 1985). As I’ll discuss in

greater detail below, many of the early monolingual dictionaries were written by men, published for women, and likewise religious in nature. Early lexicographers were often deeply invested in Christianity and strongly aligned with ecclesiastical and political movements; their published work often included, in addition to lexical writing, religious writing. Treatises on women’s worship and godly conduct are, then, important as antecedent genres of the dictionary, perhaps even more so than scholarly and educational texts which treat linguistic content.

2.4. Monolingual English Dictionaries, 1600-1700, Cited in Murray (1900)

		Woman or Women Specified as...	
Date	Author	Reader	Patron
1604	Cawdrey	x	x
1616	Bullokar	x	x
1623	Cockeram	x	
1656	Blount	x	
1658	Phillips		
1676	Coles		
		67%	33%

In distinguishing precursors to the dictionary from the dictionary itself, scholars are implicitly privileging lexicographical work that stands alone from other kinds of information. That is, Cawdrey’s project is understood as the earliest monolingual English lexicon not because it is unique in its lexical content but because it is unique in not pairing that lexical content with, say, dialogues, grammar lessons, discussions of writing or pronunciation. Cawdrey marks the point at which the English lexicon is unmoored from the context of a language fully described.

Scholars call the earliest monolingual English lexicons “hard word dictionaries” because they define only or mostly difficult terms and phrases. Hard word dictionaries began to appear at the start of the seventeenth century and were published into the eighteenth (Béjoint 2010: 58);¹⁵ over that time, individual hard word lexicons often enjoyed reprints, revisions, and

¹⁵ Though Béjoint (2010, 58) marks an end to the hard word dictionary period, we are, in some sense still in it as evidenced by these twenty-first century titles: *Weird and Wonderful Words* (McKean 2002), *The Artful Nuance* (Evans 2009), *Endangered Phrases* (Price 2011). David

reincarnations as “different” dictionaries by different “authors.” The hard word dictionary phenomenon is unique to English: Authors, publishers, and publics in Britain and in no other European country described their language in this way (Dolezal 2007 cited in Béjoint 2010, 58). This unique characteristic is often curiously attributed to anxieties about English as inadequately lexically endowed. Béjoint, for example, writes, “the English language felt the need to assert itself by enlisting more words, particularly learned words from Greek and Latin” (2010, 58).

Word envy is one explanation for the appearance of monolingual English dictionaries in the seventeenth century, but it seems to me insufficient as an explanation for why and how the dictionary genre shifted in this way at this time. That is, it doesn’t particularly help us to understand why monolingual English lexicographical projects of the seventeenth century and the start of the eighteenth appealed to women as audience and exigence for the genre.

In this section, I would like to explore the roles women appear to play in the period Murray characterizes as “the most important point in the evolution of the modern English Dictionary.” I will again examine individual texts, five cited by Murray: the hard word dictionaries of Cawdrey (1604), John Bullokar (1616), Henry Cockeram (1623), and Thomas Blount (1656) and a more comprehensive dictionary by John Kersey (J. K.) (1702). While the exigence and audience of multilingual English dictionaries may have been readily apparent, especially to those persons whose day-to-day lives put them in touch with multilingual social and political worlds, the exigence and audience for early monolingual English dictionaries was less clear and so actively constructed by early lexicographers. Women were consistently important to arguments for the value of the genre, be it as real people who would buy and read

Bramwell’s *The Book of Hard Words* (2008) explicitly revives the term; the first headword defined is *androcentrism*.

the dictionary or as an abstract idea the invocation of which signified the urgency of the lexicographical project for men.

A Table Alphabeticall for Ladies, Gentlewomen, and Other Unskillful Persons

Cawdrey's 1604 *A Table Alphabeticall, conteyning and teaching the true writing, and understanding of hard vsuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French, &c. With the interpretation thereof by plaine English words, gathered for the benefit & helpe of ladies, gentlewomen, or any other unskilfull persons. Whereby they may the more easilie and better vnderstand many hard English wordes, vvhich they shall heare or read in scriptures, sermons, or elsewhere, and also be made able to vse the same aptly themselues* is widely accepted as the first monolingual English language dictionary and classed among the hard word lexicons. As much as Cawdrey's title foregrounds women, their relation to the text is curiously unclear.

A Table Alphabeticall is dedicated "To the right honourable, Worshippfull, virtuous, & godlie Ladies, the Lady Hastings, the Lady Dudley, the Lady Mountague, the Ladie Wingfield, and the Lady Leigh, his Christian friends." The dedicatees appear to be the five daughters of James Harington of Exton and Lucy (*née* Sidney) Harington. Cawdrey's epistle explains his connection to the family; he was an "especiall friend in the Lord" to the ladies' mother Lucy, and their brother James was Cawdrey's former "scholler, (and now my singuler benefactor)." John, eldest son of the family, was father to Lucy Russell, countess of Bedford and patron-reader of Florio's *World of Wordes*, making the Harington sisters Bedford's aunts. At the time of the *Table's* publication, the dedicatees—Sarah Hastings; Theodosia Sutton, baroness of Dudley; Elizabeth Montague; Mary Wingfield; and the Lady Leigh (likely Catherine)—were all married adult women. Their description as "right honourable, Worshippfull, vertuous, & godlie" is in

keeping with the family's strong Puritan reputation and with Cawdrey's own radical Puritan faith. (His *Table* fits within an oeuvre of guides to Christian living.)

Cawdrey's dedication and epistle suggest the Harington sisters to fulfill a patron role in relation to the dictionary. In the dedication, he writes, "I acknowledge my selfe much beholding and indebted to the most of you, since this time, (beeing all naturall sisters) I am bold to make you all ioyntly patrons heereof, and vnder your names to publish this simple worke." As patrons, they, or at least their mother and brother, appear to have provided some level of familiarity to Cawdrey, and his epistle explicitly draws on their authority as persons of faith and station. Cawdrey in no way suggests he had them in mind when writing the dictionary nor does he indicate hope of them reading or using the text. Their patronage is distinctly less active than that of Mary Tudor, Mary I, or the Queens Anne, nor is it paired with the markedly active use to which their niece was imagined to put the dictionary dedicated to her, but the Haringtons' patronage is nonetheless prominent and meaningful.

The full-length title of *A Table Alphabeticall* is clear that its projected audience is made up of ladies, gentlewomen, and other unskillful persons, but the imagined readership grows fuzzy in successive pages of the front matter. Following his dedication to the Harington sisters, Cawdrey again glosses the audience:

BY this Table (right Honourable & Wor-shipfull) strangers that blame our tongue of difficultie, and vncertaintie may here-by plainly see, & better vnderstand those things, which they haue thought hard. [...] And children heerby may be prepared for the vnderstanding of a great num-ber of Latine words: which also will bring much delight & iudgement to others, by the vse of this little worke.

In this portrait of the dictionary's audience, ladies and gentlewomen are not mentioned; strangers and children take their place.¹⁶ In rhetorical terms, the audience addressed gives way to a very different audience invoked.

The invoked audience shifts again in Cawdrey's address "To the Reader," which begins: "SVch as by their place and calling, (but especially Preachers) as haue occasion to speak publiquely before the ignorant people are to bee admonished, that they neuer affect any strange ynckhorne termes[...]" With this admonishment, ostensibly *to readers*, the *Table's* audience has grown to include ladies, gentlewomen, unskillful persons, strangers, children, preachers, and others who speak publicly before ignorant people. It perhaps goes without saying that there would have been little overlap between the first two categories and the last two categories: Women of 1604 would have been expressly barred from participation in preaching and public speaking; they were permitted to conduct religious education only in convents or in the privacy of their homes and with the blessing of the male head of household; they were likewise prohibited from public presentation, by law, by precedent, or by both.

Cawdrey's continual reconfiguration of the *Table Alphabeticall's* audience is also a continual reconfiguration of the *Table Alphabeticall's* exigence, which he quite consistently grounds in the alleviation of alienation from the English language: *A Table Alphabeticall* has value to foreigners alienated from English by their own uncertainties about it, children alienated from English by their ignorance of Latin, preachers and public speakers alienated from English by affectation and travel. Cawdrey presents his reason for writing thus:

¹⁶ In following and echoing the phrasing of the dedication, there is some suggestion that the Harington daughters, born and raised in England, are themselves foreigners who blame English for their own difficulty with it. And, indeed, the intimation that British women were somehow less British held, even as the English tongue was described as a mother tongue.

Some men seek so far for outlandish English, that they forget altogether their mothers language, so that if some of their mothers were aliue, they were not able to tell, or vnderstand what they say, and yet these fine English Clearks, will say they speak in their mother tongue; but one might well charge them, for counterfeyting the Kings English.

The promise of the *Table Alphabetical*—its reason for being read—is, then, reconciliation: of mother tongue and son’s affectation, child and Latin, foreigner and English. These readers will leave the dictionary at peace with a language that is a little Latinate, not too European, and thoroughly British.

The circumstance of alienation from English and the promise of reconciliation with the language do not hold for the ladies and gentlewomen specified as Cawdrey’s audience. Their alienation is from their sons, not their language. And, while the promise of reconciliation with their mothers is a possible benefit for men who read *A Table Alphabeticall*, it is not the primary exigence for women who read it. Their encounter with the text allows them to “the more easilie and better vnderstand many hard English wordes, vvich they shall heare or read in scriptures, sermons, or elsewhere, and also be made able to vse the same aptly themselues.”

In contrast to the women pupils, patrons, and readers whose vibrant linguistic proficiency was documented and encouraged by many early modern bilingual dictionaries, the ladies and gentlewomen of Cawdrey’s *Table Alphabeticall* are mainly passive and mostly mute: They read scriptures penned by disciples, and listen to sermons delivered by preachers. The suggestion that they “vse the same [hard English wordes] aptly themselues” is a suggestion not for language production but for language reception (Brown 2001). Accordingly, the sisters Harington bear witness as Cawdrey brands his dictionary with their name. The early modern ideal of womanly silence is upheld even in a book of words for women’s use.

Cawdrey's dictionary is ultimately *not* actually “for women's use” though it is “for women” in a more paternal sense. As Sylvia Brown has argued, his dictionary plays to notions of women “as not only exemplary passive receivers but also exemplary active propagators”; their susceptibility to the word of God and their ability to bring their families to God made them “fertile ground” to “actuate” the project of a religiously-minded dictionary (2011, 144). As an audience addressed, women mark frailty: they are betrayed by traveling sons and in want of spiritual guidance. The audience addressed implicates and activates an audience invoked: these women demand and ensure men's responsibilities to God and Country as they are made in language. The *Table* proposes gendered exigences for the dictionary—promising to perfect the speech of men in order to save the souls of women and shore up the character of the nation. *A Table Alphabeticall* is only “for” ladies and gentlewomen in so far as it is for the protection of a Protestant nation-state.

An English Expositor Entertained by the Greatest Ladies and Studious Gentlewomen

Bullokar's 1616 *An English expositor teaching the interpretation of the hardest words vsed in our language. With sundry explications, descriptions, and discourses. By I.B. Doctor of Phisicke* is another in the class of hard word dictionaries. Bullokar's father, William, is thought to have written the first English grammar in English (following on a long tradition of English grammars in Latin), and it may be for William that the *English Expositor* was initially compiled; according to Bullokar's “epistell dedicatorie,” it was “written in my youth, at the request of a worthy Gentleman, one whose loue preuailed much with me” (Bately 2004). But as Bullokar explains to his dedicatee, he was “perswaded (Right Noble Ladie) by some friends, for publike benefit to make this Collection of words common.”

That collection is formally dedicated “TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE AND VERTVOVS, HIS SINGVLAR GOOD LADIE, THE LADIE IANE Vicountesse Mountegaue, all honour and happineffe.” This is possibly Jane Browne (*née* Sackville), who married Anthony Maria Browne, second viscount of Montagu (Zim 2009). Her husband was the grandson of Anthony Browne, first viscount of Montagu, and Magdalen Browne (*née* Dacre). The Montagu family were famous for staunch Catholicism within Elizabethan England, maintaining two large strongholds for the faithful in Cowdray and Battle, the latter of which was known among Protestants as “Little Rome” (Eales 2008). Bullokar himself was a steadfast Roman Catholic (Bately 2004).

The dedicatory epistle to Montagu describes her in familiar terms of patronage; Bullokar characterizes her as contributing to the authority and the magnificence of the work by virtue of her own honorable, virtuous, charitable, and “singvlar good” character. But, given the contentious religious climate of the turn of the late sixteenth century, one in which Montagu’s husband would be imprisoned in the Tower of London for his connection to the Gunpowder Plot (Zim 2009) and Bullokar’s son would be hanged, drawn, and quartered for the treasonous act of delivering mass (Bately 2004), it is hard not to read Bullokar’s dedication as a plea for a more aggressive kind of patronage. Bullokar writes:

I am emboldened to present this little Pamphlet vnto your Honour, with hope that by your Patronage it shall not one-ly bee protected from iniuries, but also finde fauourable entertainment, and perhaps gracefully admitted among greatest Ladies and studious Gentlewomen, to whose reading (I am made beleeeue) it will not prooue altogether vngratefull.

Bullokar, mindful of harsh political reprisal and the stakes of public favor, seems to plead the patronage benefits of protection in addition to introduction and encouragement.

Without Montagu, Bullokar “could not finde in heart to send it [*An English Expositor*] forth, no better furnished than with a bare Title ; left like an vnknowne Infant, it should be

exposed to ouer hard vsage, or per-aventure scornefully reiected, aduenturing abroad without countenance of any friend or commander.” Montagu is called upon to raise up the unknown infant, shelter it, secure its introduction and acceptance, and continually protect it from injury. Her role is thus figuratively maternal but it is also generically crucial: Montagu is urged to directly participate in the construction of the exigence of Bullokar’s instantiation of the dictionary. She will be responsible for the grounds on which it is entertained by other ladies and studious gentlewomen. How Montagu herself styled the exigence of *An English Expositor* in the company of her studious lady friends is likely lost to us forever, but the exigence that Bullokar imagined is documented in his address “To the Courteous Reader.” There, Bullokar clearly understands his dictionary as a means of affording women access to the domains of knowledge typically restricted to men.

Whereas many early bilingual English dictionaries positioned noble women as model learners whose linguistic training might benefit others, in *An English Expositor*, it is Bullokar himself who plays the role. He writes, “in my younger yeares it hath cost me some obseruation, reading, study, and charge” to understand an English so heavily influenced by Latin, Greek, vernaculars, and specialized fields of “Logicke, Philosophy, Law, Physicke, Astronomie, &c.” Bullokar stands in for a male student who undertakes a masculine course of study in classical languages and academic disciplines. And he is sensitive to the censure that sharing restricted knowledge across gender roles might incur:

I hope such learned will deeme no wrong offered to themselues or dishonour to Learning, in that I open the signification of such words, to the capacities of the ignorant, whereby they may coneieue and vse them as well as those which haue bestowed long study on the languages, for considering it is familiar among best writers to vsurpe strange words, (and sometime necessary by reason our speech is not sufficiently furnished with out termes to expresse all meanings) I suppose withal their desire is that they should also be vnderstood; which I

(knowing that *bonum quo communis eo melius*) I have endeauoured by this Booke, though not exquisitely, yet (I trust) in some reasonable measure to performe.

To share the man's lexicon with women is potentially to harm men and dishonor English, and yet Bullokar insists that the lexicon is a benefit made better by sharing: *bonum quo communis eo melius*. Bullokar's dictionary depends on these gender dynamics for its existence.

In terms of women readers, Bullokar's dictionary seems as progressive as Cawdrey's seems conservative; that the former invites an active engagement with the text while the latter requires a passive one might well reverse expectations of Catholic and Protestant stances on women's reading. But the distinction is important also to understanding the pronounced difference between Bullokar and Cawdrey in configuring the exigence for the monolingual English dictionary. While Cawdrey argues the value of the dictionary in preserving Protestant England, Bullokar argues its value in celebrating formal education. In Cawdrey's configuration of the genre, women mark both a vulnerability and a purity to be protected and preserved by men's proficiencies in English. But by Bullokar's configuration, the content of the dictionary is masculine knowledge as it registers in English, and so women mark an ignorance to be educated. As though uncertain of the exigence he has proposed for the dictionary, Bullokar invites his flesh-and-blood patron to reinvent it as she sees fit among the eventual readership.

The English Dictionarie *Enables Ladies and Gentlewomen*

Cockeram's 1623 *The English dictionarie: or, An interpreter of hard English vvords Enabling as well ladies and gentlewomen, young schollers, clarkes, merchants, as also strangers of any nation, to the vnderstanding of the more difficult authors already printed in our language, and the more speedy attaining of an elegant perfection of the English tongue, both in reading, speaking and writing. Being a collection of the choisest words contained in the Table alphabeticall and English expositor, and of some*

thousands of words neuer published by any heretofore. By H.C. Gent. is another hard word dictionary, and, notably, the first English dictionary to describe itself with the term “English dictionary.”¹⁷ It is comprised of three parts: the first contains “the choicest language” explained in common terms, the second “vulgar words” with loftier synonyms, and the third a recital “of seuerall persons, Gods and Goddesses, Giants and Deuils, Monsters and Serpents, Birds and Beasts, Riuers, Fishes, Herbs, Stones, Trees, and the like.”

Cockeram is known to have drawn heavily from both Cawdrey’s *Table Alphabeticall* and Bullokar’s *English Expositor*, as his own title suggests.¹⁸ In his “Premonition from the Author to the Reader,” Cockeram states his reasons for writing *The English Dictionarie* thus:

my endeauours may bee truly termed rather a necessity of doing, than an arrogancie in doing. For without appropriating to my owne comfort any interest of glory, the *understanding* Readers will not, the *ignorant* cannot, and the *malicious* dare not, but acknowledge that what any before me in this kinde haue begun, I haue not onely fully finijhed, but thoroughly perfected.

Cockeram is claiming an authorial exigence that is loyalty to a common lexicographical legacy. He is prevailed upon to complete and perfect the dictionary project. Of course, his 5,000-word dictionary seems, to a present-day audience, to fall far short of completeness or perfection, but audiences of the day were clearly impressed by *The English Dictionarie* which went through twelve editions by 1670 (Béjoint 2010, 58).

Cockeram’s *English Dictionarie* is dedicated “TO THE RIGHT HONourable, Sir Richard Boyle, Knight, Lord Boyle, Baron of Youghall, Viscount Dungaruan, Earle of Cork, and one of his Maiesties moft Honourable Peiuie Councill of the Kingdome of Ireland, &c.” Cockeram appears to have had only indirect ties to the earl and an “ambition of being knowne unto” him. The larger

¹⁷ Thomas Elyot (1538) had used the term *dictionary* for his Latin-English lexicon.

¹⁸ Acknowledgement of Cawdrey and Bullokar is, however, absent in subsequent editions of *The English Dictionarie*.

audience Cockeram imagines for his *English Dictionarie* seems almost as abstract as Cork must have been. Cockeram's title and his brief "Premonition" both describe the audience in broad strokes, stringing together potential reader categories without distinction or explanation. In the premonition, after some discussion of prior lexicographical work and the parts of *The English Dictionarie*, Cockeram writes, "I might insist vpon the general vse of this worke, especially for Ladies and Gentlewomen, Clarkes, Merchants, young Schollers, Strangers, Trauellers, and all such as desire to know the plenty of the English." The heterogeneous audience puts women first in a collection of mobile sets— aspiring middle-class men, maturing children, and travelling foreigners.

The exigence for the audience is as much a hodgepodge as Cockeram's description of readers seems to be. The title of *The English Dictionary* suggests benefits to readers and speakers of English: It will foster "*vnderstanding of the more difficult authors already printed in our language,*" and it will allow for "*the more speedy attaining of an elegant perfection of the English tongue.*" The premonition suggests that by its use, "the capacity of the meaneſt may ſoone be inlightened," that "any deſirous of a more curious explanation by a more refined and elegant ſpeech ſhall looke into, he ſhall there receiue the exact and ample word to expreſſe the ſame," "that thoſe who deſire a generality of knowledge may not bee ignorant of the ſenſe, euen of the *fuſtian termes*, vſed by too many who ſtudy rather to bee heard ſpeake, than to vnderſtand themſelues," and "that the diligent learner may not pretend the defect of any helpe which may informe his diſcourſe or practice." Readers and speakers—mean, diligent, or merely curious—can rely on the dictionary to illuminate English (as the difficult, elegant, refined, exact, and ample language it is), to aid in their attainment and perfection of spoken English specifically and

discourse more broadly, to sate their curiosities about words and things; to afford access to a generality of knowledge and even enlightenment.

The sheer excess of uses, whimsical to transcendent, seems to suggest a specific rather than a general use for *The English Dictionarie* among the pretty and the mobile: The project of this dictionary is one of refinement, to secure personal taste as well as public reputation. Whereas *A Table Alphabeticall* ensured national salvation and *An English Expositor* promised a democratization of knowledge, *The English Dictionarie* offers elegant entertainments. Cockeram seems to revel in the unusualness of the words he describes—they are “choice,” “vulgar,” “curious,” “ridiculous,” “fustian,” “never published by any heretofore.” Many of these, in fact, are exactly the same “hard words” collected in Cawdrey and Bullokar, but, while Cawdrey and Bullokar sought to render hard words less hard and more common in the interests of personal learning and interpersonal communication, Cockeram’s hard words are meant to remain hard. The dictionary is cast as a preserve of novelties belonging to the elite.

Bartho[lomew] Hore’s poetic commendation for *The English Dictionarie*, included as part of the front matter, demonstrates how women align the dictionary with this project of refinement:

If things farre fetch’d are dearest, most esteem’d.
which by times sweatful houres haue been redeem’d.
Of what count’s this, of which sort like was neuer,
Praise it of force you must, and loue him euer.
The *Adage* is far sought, dear bought, please ladies,
You must yield to this Maxime, or proue babies.
Then giue worths due, that worthiness giuse,
If not, my Motto is, you are unwise.

The dictionary describes hard words not to protect or educate women, but to sate a desire for the far sought and dear bought. Women do not signal male responsibility to god or country, nor herald knowledge as a masculine preserve to share or restrict at will; women here signal

the social value of the exotic and exclusive lexicon. The job of the dictionary is not to naturalize words “derived” or “borrowed” from other tongues into an English mutually intelligible to all but to highlight those words that are far sought and dear bought in order to mark their extralinguistic value. Cockeram suggests a possible exigence for the dictionary as affording women and men social mobility.

Glossographia Intended for More-Knowing Women and All Such of the Unlearned

Blount’s 1656 *Glossographia: or A dictionary, interpreting all such hard vvords, whether Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, Teutonick, Belgick, British or Saxon; as are now used in our refined English tongue. Also the terms of divinity, law, physick, mathematicks, heraldry, anatomy, war, musick, architecture; and of several other arts and sciences explicated. With etymologies, definitions, and historical observations on the same. Very useful for all such as desire to understand what they read* is the last of the hard word dictionaries I’ll consider here. Murray also cites it as the last English dictionary to reference the needs of women until the turn of the eighteenth century.

Women are mentioned somewhere in the middle of Blount’s address “To the Reader,” where he suggests them to be a primary audience for the *Glossographia*. Blount does little to develop an argument for the exigence of the dictionary for this audience—he makes the suggestion and moves on. The *Glossographia* is, he writes:

chiefly intended for the more-knowing women, and the less-knowing Men; or indeed for all such of the unlearned, who can but finde in an Alphabet, the word they understand not; yet I think I may modestly say, the best of Schollers may in some part or other be obliged by it. For he that is a good *Hebrician, Grecian, and Latinist*, perhaps may be to seek in the *Italian, French, or Spanish*; or if he be skil’d in all these, he may here finde some *Words, Terms of Art, or Notions*; that have no dependence upon any of those Languages.

In imagining his readers, Blount’s first move is to repeat his immediate predecessors in English bilingual and monolingual lexicography, claiming that the dictionary is for (unlearned) women

(and less-educated men). But he makes an abrupt jump to elaborate on the fine grained use of the dictionary for learned readers—and not just any learned readers but the *best of scholars*. Hence an audience addressed lingers even as the exigence and audience invoked shift.

This former readership of scholars is continuous with Blount's account of himself as the model language learner. Unlike bilingual English lexicons which often cast women in the role of archetypal pupil and like Bullokar who put himself in the role, Blount contextualizes his lexicon within his own educational endeavors. In his address to readers, he claims he was “often gravelled in English Books; that is, I encountred such words, as I either not at all, or not thoroughly understood, more then what the preceding sence did insinuate.” This student-Blount sets to understanding by a rigorous form of scholarship that involves such skilled reading practices as “extract[ing] the quintessence of *Scapula, Minsheu, Cotgrave, Rider, Florio, Thomsius, Dasipodius*, and *Hexams Dutch*, *Dr. Davies Welsh Dictionary, Cowels Interpreter, &c.* and other able Authors.” The dictionary is thus firmly set in the hand of a scholar rather than a more-knowing woman or less-knowing man.

If Blount's address to the reader can be taken as both a statement of authorial exigence and a model for audience's understanding of dictionary exigence, then it is not surprising the *Glossographia* should be one of the last early English dictionaries to reference women. It does so *pro forma*; that is, it references women only *because* its predecessors did, not *as* they did. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, bilingual English dictionaries addressed themselves to women as a means of documenting their instruction, securing their patronage, and inviting their audience. Monolingual English dictionaries addressed themselves to women because women were of direct value in establishing the exigence of the dictionary. But Blount

addresses himself to women only because, by doing so, he signals his participation in the dictionary genre.

Juliet Fleming has argued that the early modern period “demonstrates how dictionaries for women provide for the arrogation (and profitable realization) of male knowledge” (Fleming 1994, 306), and certainly Bullokar’s emphasis on male professional fields and academic disciplines participated in that arrogation and realization. But it is only with Blount that the audience for and value of arrogated male knowledge are patently gendered masculine...and masculine *only*. Blount is not invested in any exigence which includes women (not even in the exigence of common good, *bonum quo communis eo melius*, which Bullokar imagined). Likewise, he is not invested in the audience of women; his interest in them is not only buried it is still born—the breath of life blown into the passage that bears their mention spends itself in the “modest” suggestion that the best male scholars might approve of and enjoy a dictionary.

The *Glossographia* is, to me, significant among the hard word dictionaries and for the future of English lexicography in marking a confluence of factors that effectively eliminated women’s prominence in the genre and constrained their participation in it for centuries to come. In the *Glossographia*, the scholar and his scholarship come to supplant all rhetorical contingencies: author, audience, *kairos*, content, and exigence. The result is a sort preposterous claim for the genre: The dictionary is a scholar offering scholars doing scholarship his scholarship so that they can continue in their scholarship. The scholarly comes to stand for the universal, in spite of the fact that scholarship is available only to certain subject positions and tends to valorize masculine semantic fields (divinity, law, physick, mathematicks, heraldry, anatomy, war, musick, and architecture, among other arts and sciences) while ignoring feminized ones. The scholarly also comes to stand for the neutral, in

spite of the fact that scholarship is itself motivated, gendered, and inflected by religious, national, political, and social investments which are articulated to and enacted through gender roles and relationships. This arhetorical claim for the genre, is, then, one of Blount's most significant contributions to lexicography. Working with largely the same semantic fields as his predecessors, he was first to include etymologies, source citations, and illustrations, but he was also first to tie the dictionary's *kairos* and exigence to the very specific circumstances and consequences of scholarship (it is the learned words of and for learned men) while suggesting that that *kairos* and exigence were universal and neutral.

A New English Dictionary *Designed for the Female Sex*

Kersey's 1702 *A New English Dictionary: Or, a Compleat: Collection Of the Most Proper and Significant Words, Commonly used in the Language; With a Short and Clear Exposition of Difficult Words and Terms of Art. The whole digested into Alphabetical Order; and chiefly designed for the benefit of Young Scholars, Tradesmen, Artificers, and the Female Sex, who would learn to spell truly; being so fitted to every Capacity, that it may be a continual help to all that want an Instructer* is not classed among the hard word dictionaries. To be sure, it describes difficult and unusual terms, but it also includes more common ones and thus gestures toward the kinds of comprehensive lexicography valued in the present day. For Murray, Kersey's *New English Dictionary* is notable for punctuating the long period of lexicography's silence about the education of women, lasting from the Restoration "till we pass the Revolution settlement and reach the Age of Queen Anne" (1900).

In reviving the tradition of women in the English dictionary, Kersey seems to do so more in the vein of Blount than Cawdrey, Bullokar, or Cockeram. That is, it announces his participation in a genre, the exigence for which is no longer significantly tied to the idea or interests of women. Kersey's preface declares "it may be needless to insist on the usefulness of

Dictionaries in general, in regard that Words are introductory to the knowledge of Things, and no Arts or Sciences can be attain'd without a right understanding of their peculiar Terms.” Here, Kersey’s “Arts and Sciences” echoes Blount’s “best of scholars,” and higher learning becomes justification in and of itself.

In *A New English Dictionary*, as in the *Glossographia*, the lexicon (and the lexicographical project writ large) is not primarily invested in national survival, spiritual understanding, social refinement, or even intelligible English, but rather the dictionary is styled as a gateway to all things and most especially an advanced liberal arts education. Again, the idea of “general knowledge” is conflated with formal learning and other domains restricted to men of means.

Kersey claims that dictionaries like Cockeram’s had served to befuddle men of lesser status, such that “a plain Country-man, in looking for a common *English* Word, amidst so vast a Wood of such as are above the reach of his Capacity, must needs lose the sight of it, and be extremely discouraged, if not forc’d to give over the search.” *A New Dictionary of English* is positioned as the search completed, an English pitched to readers of lesser capacity.

Distant as they were from the uppermost echelons of education, it is not, then, coincidental that women should lose their primary position within the lineup of potential dictionary readers. In both Kersey’s title and the one sentence which mentions them in the preface, they are mentioned last. Kersey hopes that:

the usefulness of the Manual to all Persons not perfectly Masters of the *English* Tongue, and the assistance it gives to young Scholars, Tradesmen, Artificers and others, and particularly, the more ingenious Practitioners of the Female Sex; in attaining to the true manner of Spelling of such Words, as from time to time they have occasion to make use of, will, we hope procure it a favourable Reception.

Young scholars, tradesmen, artificers, and women are “ignorant of the Learned Languages” as well as of “the genuine words of their own Mother-tongue.” But because, on occasion these

same orders will need to make use of learned words or their native English, the dictionary obliges with a coherent “proper Language” that conflates the two—learned words and mother tongue. Though the low-status audience is described as actively (if only occasionally) using the dictionary, emphasis is placed on their passive relation to it. They are called upon to recognize “the usefulness of the Manual,” to receive it favorably, to approve of it. They do so because their capacities are lesser than those of the text.

Cawdrey’s pairing of ladies and gentlewomen with unskillful persons is often read as doing similar work to Kersey. But, as I showed above, Cawdrey’s *Table Alphabeticall* in some ways genuinely addresses itself to women, who symbolize a worthy “natural” English/England in need of protection. Kersey, on the other hand, is not interested in honoring the purity of “women’s English” nor in preserving women’s godly place in a strong Protestant England. Unlike Bullokar, Kersey’s invitation for women to receive “Learned Language” stops short of inviting their participation in advancing and extending that learning within their personal networks of studious ladies. And, in stark contrast to Florio, whose readers commanded the service of the dictionary, Kersey posits a dictionary that most definitely instructs and possibly even corrects readers.

In some important senses then, the foreclosure on reader roles beyond reception is not unique to women. All English speakers (who are not dictionary makers or the finest authors of the age) lose authority and agency in the dictionary as Kersey here configures it. Women’s alienation from the English language and the English dictionary simply marks a more dramatic change in role than that of other readerships because women move from particular positions of power and importance in relation to the dictionary (commemorated, honored, served, protected, included, and enabled) to abjected ones (alienated, instructed, corrected).

It is precisely this reification of the dictionary as a universal authority that pronounces on the totality of English (in the face of silent readers) that Murray seeks to upset in his Romanes lecture. And yet there, he misses the powerful link between the progressive absencing of women and the consolidation of the universal authority in spite of the fact that he locates both within a period of utmost importance to the evolution of the genre. Specifically, he misses that the problem of the dictionary conceived as universal authority on totality is produced through gendered abjection.

Conclusion

Early modern monolingual lexicography in English took shape in the context of the evolving religious, national, social, and academic institutions of the seventeenth century; private instruction and royal relations were less influential than they had been in the formation of bilingual English lexicography. In the first half of the century, monolingual English dictionary makers were actively working to define the dictionary as a marketable and valuable genre. Their texts all made original arguments about what the English dictionary was, who it was for, and why it might be important for personal, institutional, and linguistic objectives. That is, while the actual semantic content of early dictionaries varied little, their positioning of that content in relation to possible roles for readers and functions for the genre varied greatly.

Women were thus important to the production and consumption of individual hard word dictionary projects. Women continued to serve as patrons of lexicographical work; and they were commonly identified as the primary audience for many of the most important dictionaries of the early modern period (Cawdrey, Bullokar, Cockeram, Blount, and Kersey). The direct influence of women on the genre as a demographic is untraceable, but their influence as an imagined category is. The idea of women affected the formation of the

subgenre of the hard word dictionary as well as its transition into a more comprehensive lexicon of English. As a group, they often signaled anxieties about religious devotion, national sovereignty, social mobility, the corruption of English, and the universality of academic knowledge. Women were consistently woven into the dictionary project in a way that indicated concerns about authority in larger domains.

TONGUE IN CHEEK: WOMEN IN EARLY MODERN DICTIONARIES OF LADIES' ENGLISH

According to Murray's timeline of English lexicography (1900), between Blount's 1658 *The English Dictionarie* and Kersey's 1702 *A New English Dictionary*, dictionaries were silent on the matter of women, but there are exceptions to this rule. Boyer's 1694 *Compleat French-Master* is one. I'll explore two more in this next and final section: Mary Evelyn's 1690 "The Fop-Dictionary" and John Dunton's 1694 *The Ladies Dictionary*. Neither text received mention in Murray's Romanes lecture, and neither has garnered much scholarly attention in the centuries since their publication. But both are relevant to a discussion of women in early modern English dictionaries.

As was the case with bilingual English lexicography, dictionaries of women's English often thread lexical description together with other kinds of instruction. While Italian-English and French-English dictionaries commonly appear within language manuals alongside grammatical treatises and pronunciation guides, the women's English dictionaries I'll consider below appear within larger discussions of domestic behavior, specifically courtship, personal care and conduct, and household management. Of course the relation of lexicographical thought to these other kinds of projects changes the way we can understand the lexical work, but just as the proximity to grammatical and elocutionary genres did not disallow the participation of early modern multilingual dictionaries from the history of English

lexicography, the proximity to domestic genres should not disallow our consideration of women's English dictionaries. Again, a more thorough understanding of how the dictionary genre relates to antecedent genres such as the domestic guide is as important as how it relates to antecedent genres such as the Latin glossary, and I will return to this consideration in Chapters 3 and 5 in relation to lexicographical projects attributed to women.

“The Fop-Dictionary” Compiled for the Fair Sex

Evelyn's 1690 *Mundus muliebris: or, The ladies dressing-room unlock'd, and her toilette spread In burlesque. Together with the fop-dictionary, compiled for the use of the fair sex* is, like many early modern publications, a generic jumble. The volume includes a six-page preface, a twelve-page poem entitled “A Voyage to Marryland, or, the Ladies Dressing-Room,” a ten-page dictionary entitled “The Fop-Dictionary,” and a one-page recipe entitled “To Make Pig, or Puppido, Water for the Face.” The book's contents hang together in the present-day mind as tenuously as does its authorship: *Mundus Muliebris* is commonly attributed to Mary Evelyn, who was the daughter of John Evelyn and Mary (*née* Browne) Evelyn (the former remembered today as a diarist and early conservationist, the latter as a letter writer), but she is often thought to have collaborated with her father on the project or contributed only portions to the work. Certainly John Evelyn played a significant role in publication of *Mundus Muliebris*, which did not appear in print until five years after Mary Evelyn's death of smallpox at the age of nineteen (Perkins 2004).

“The Fop-Dictionary” is itself a very small work, containing just sixty-five headwords and definitions along with a brief endnote; the lexicon almost exclusively treats cosmetic terminology, specifically words and phrases to do with hair, garments, accessories, perfumes, cases, and other products used by women of the late seventeenth century. As the endnote to the dictionary acknowledges, because “we have submitted to, and still continue under the

Empire of the *French*,” “The Fop-Dictionary” is very nearly a French-English dictionary, offering mostly un-Anglicized French headwords with definitions in English. While the preface to *Mundus Muliebris* as well as the poem “A Voyage to Marryland” address themselves to “young gallants” in pursuit of “marriage or mistress,” “The Fop-Dictionary” is specifically “for the use of the fair sex.”

There is no preface to the dictionary portion of *Mundus Muliebris* to elaborate on the exigences of “The Fop-Dictionary,” and the title of the lexicon itself superimposes a trivialization of the project that makes its value to women unclear. Whether *fop* broadly references foolish people or narrowly references vain men, the lexicon itself is bound to disappoint for it is not particularly foolish nor does it represent a word list useful for communicating with or about modish men. The terms describe women’s fashions that are currently “in *Vogue*” in England, not entirely obscure and only occasionally ridiculous (e.g., *septizonium* is defined as “the Ladies new Dreſs for their Heads, which was the Mode among the *Roman Dames* [as] deſcrib’d by *Juvenal* in his 6th Satyr,” and the style is made to resemble “A very high Tower in *Rome*, built by the Emperour *Severus* of Seven Ranks of Pillars, ſet one upon the other, and diminiſhing to the Top”). In fact, as its endnote indicates, “The Fop-Dictionary” records the terms of an “Elegant Science” with a “Divine Hiſtory.” Far from disparaging of the vocabulary it punctuates, the endnote invites its extension within English, currently stalled “for want of ſome *Royal* or *Illuſtrious Ladies* of Invention and Courage, to give the Law of the *Mode* to her own Country, and to vindicate it from Foreign Tyranny.”

Certainly there is a bit of satire at work here. “The Fop-Dictionary” is a playful treatment of terms to do with women’s self presentation. But Florio’s and Cockeram’s lexicographical work was equally playful; the lexicographer who documents can also wink. If

“The Fop-Dictionary” were actually intended for the use of fops, of vain men in pursuit of hairdressing ideas or perhaps more exact terms with which to woo a wife or mistress, then it would fit more comfortably within the humorous *Mundus Muliebris* and be easier to read as satire over lexicography. But because “The Fop-Dictionary” makes such an abrupt break from the rest of the work, declaring a different audience and suggesting some future within the naturalized lexicon of English, it is clearly adding a stone to the lexicographical cairn, marking a direction the genre of the dictionary *could* take—toward the documentation of hard words belonging to the realm of women’s knowledge rather than men’s.

For this reason, we should understand “The Fop-Dictionary” as wading into the seventeenth-century discussion of what the English dictionary can and should be. Evelyn’s lexicographical thinking suggests that the content of the dictionary need not confine itself to the “arts and sciences” understood as the academic and professional disciplines of men but potentially also as the “arts and sciences” understood as the cosmetic and domestic disciplines of women. It also suggests a certain sort of agentive dictionary reader, one who might be eager to take hold of English by adding to it, such that it would be better equipped to articulate her fashions, rather than the reader who only receives and affirms the sufficiency of English for “general use.” Finally, “The Fop-Dictionary” seems important in its unabashed attention to contemporary English; Evelyn’s endnote concedes, “besides these [terms included in the dictionary], there are a world more [...] with innumerable others now obsolete, and for the present out of use; but we confine ourselves to those in *Vogue*.” Unlike other early monolingual lexicons, “The Fop-Dictionary” imagines its exigence to be transitory; its vocabulary is not positioned as timeless, derived from the classical tongues and signifying ideas and values that

will serve for eternity, but rather as vogue, suited to be useful in its moment and largely irrelevant thereafter.

The Ladies Dictionary

Dunton's 1694 *The ladies dictionary, being a general entertainment of the fair-sex a work never attempted before in English* participates in an encyclopedic tradition of lexicographical work, documenting not only words and meanings but also persons and biographies, activities and prescription for their practice. *The Ladies Dictionary* originally appeared under the authorial name of "N. H.," a pseudonym for Dunton who was both a writer and a bookseller living in London (Berry 2008). Lexicographically, the work is notable for its inclusion of common words, half a decade before Kersey did so. *The Ladies Dictionary* is not only dedicated to women, it identifies them as its primary audience and treats a semantic field relevant to their daily lives.

The dedication of *The Ladies Dictionary* both suggests women as patrons (albeit in forms markedly different from those of bilingual and other monolingual English dictionaries) and as audience. Dunton's six-page address to women begins, "TO THE /Ladies, Gentlewomen, and Others, /OF THE /Fair=Sex, /The Author Humbly Dedicates this / following Work." Dedicating itself to a class of persons rather than a specific monied woman or set of women, *The Ladies Dictionary* makes a play for more abstract benefits of patronage but it nevertheless receives benefits, chiefly authority and familiarity.

Dunton's dedication indicates a belief that women have ensured the quality and success of his work by virtue of their superior character as a class of humanity. Of *The Ladies Dictionary*, he writes, "I shall Attribute its Success in the World, to the ILLUSTRIOUS SUBJECT it Treats on ; viz. The Virtues and Accomplishments of your Sex ; which are so many and Admirable, that no Volume can contain them in their full Extent." But *The Ladies Dictionary* also benefits from the familiarity

and authority of individual women, “*who by their Generous imparting to me their Manuscripts, have furnished me with several hundred Experiments and Secrets in DOMESTICK AFFAIRS, BEAUTIFYING, PRESERVING, CANDYING, PHYSICK, CHIRURGERY, &c.*” Women, often unable to find publishers for their work or unwilling to self-publish at considerable risk to themselves, appear to have met Dunton and agreed to hand over their manuscripts to him so that the contents could be printed and distributed.

Importantly, the authority of *The Ladies Dictionary* appears to derive from the authority of *one* woman. In his dedication, Dunton writes, “*Nor shall I dissemble the Assistance which I have from the Private Memoirs of Madame ----- a Person well known to all the World, for being both Exact and curious in those Matters, of which my DICTIONARY Treats.*” Here, Dunton is possibly referencing Hannah Woolley, who had, by the time of *The Ladies Dictionary*, published a number of manuals for women (e.g., 1673; 1677; both are discussed in Chapter 3) some of which had been published abroad in translation (Considine 2004). Dunton’s authority is thus in part derived of Woolley’s economic straits which found some relief in her unparalleled skill as an author of women’s guides.

Dunton’s dedication of *The Ladies Dictionary* is careful to point out that he began the dictionary in response to the request of another man:

first entered upon this Project, at the desire of a worthy Friend, unto whom I owe more than I can do for him : And when I considered the great need of such a Booke, as might be a Compleat Directory to the Female-Sex in all Relations, Companies, Conditions and States of Life ; even from CHILD HOOD down to Old-Age, and from the Lady at the Court, to the Cook-maid in the Country : I was at length prevailed upon to do it, and the rather because I know not of any Book that hath done the like.

Dunton continues, “*tis hoped twill meet with a Courteous Reception from all, but more Especially from you, for whose sakes twas undertaken.*” The dictionary is patently paternalistic, but it has general aspirations in that is:

intended for a General Entertainment, and will, I hope, prove to the Satisfaction of the Learned and Ingenious of the Age ; whose Discretion I need not doubt, will keep them from wresting it to any other end, that what it was designed for ; viz. The Benefit and Advantage of the Modest of either Sex, not desiring that this Book should fall into the hands of any wanton Person, whose Folly or Malice, may turn that into Ridicule, that loudly Proclaims the Infinite Wisdom of an Omnipotent Creator.

The exigence for the dictionary bears, then, on all audiences as an entertainment that aspires to a comprehensive kind of “general knowledge.” (This in contrast to Blount and Kersey, who placed a liberal arts education rather than ingenious entertainment at the heart of “general knowledge.”)

The dedication of *The Ladies Dictionary* promises a great deal in terms of content:

you’ll find here at one view, the whole Series and order of all the most Heroick and Illustrious Women of all times, from the first dawning of the World to this present Age, of all degrees, from the IMPERIAL DIADEM, to the SHEPHERDS CROOK, of all Regions and Climats, from the Spicy East, to the Golden West, of all Faiths, whether Jews, Ethnicks, or Christians, (and particularly an Account of those WOMEN MARTYRS that suffer’d in Queen Mary’s days : And in the West in 85 : And of all Eminent Ladies, that have dy’d in England for these last fifty years) of all Arts and Sciences, both the graver, and more polite ; of all Estates, VIRGINS, WIVES and WIDOWS ; of all Complexions and Humours, the Fair, the Foul, the Grave, the Witty, the Reserv’d, the Familiar, the Chast, the Wanton.

Dunton’s dictionary thus imagines an alternative center to the dictionary project, one gendered feminine rather than masculine but nevertheless gesturing toward an ambitious degree of inclusivity.

The Ladies Dictionary models its “general audience” for the dictionary on the basis of women, treats terms of “general use” in everyday domestic settings, and thereby gestures to different domains that might comprise the “general knowledge” encoded in the English

dictionary as well as different practical “general purposes” to which the reference work might be put. In other words, while the hard word dictionaries of English which precede Kersey also gesture to women as a primary or significant audience, Kersey is more closely linked to the early bilingual lexicons which commemorated women’s linguistic competencies for public use. Women are not an audience to a masculine set of semantic fields, they are an audience which has also shaped the semantic content of the dictionary genre. Importantly also, the feminized English of *The Ladies Dictionary* is not dismissed as ancillary to the “real” English of a “real” dictionary. *The Ladies Dictionary* does not imagine itself as a supplementary dictionary, and its feminized English is taken as a legitimate centerpoint for the dictionary. In proposing a feminine worldview as universally important, Dunton’s may well be the first gynocentric dictionary of the English language. (In Chapter 5, I’ll address how feminist dictionaries of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries reinstated gynocentrism as a lexicographical method.)

Conclusion

The lexicography of women’s English took shape in the context of early modern lexicography that focused on men’s English. Certainly men did not *make* English nor was their lexicographical construction of it likely to have consciously or viciously excluded women’s English, but what “The Fop-Dictionary” and *The Ladies Dictionary* make clear is a strain of early modern lexicographical thought which recognized semantic fields that escaped the attention of hard word dictionaries. Dictionaries of women’s English not only filled a gap, but suggested alternative generic configurations of audience (as competent and industrious rather than ignorant and mute), of semantic field (built out of everyday circumstances that often did not involve writing or recognized forms of authorship), and of purpose (fleeting rather than final). Murray did not mention these dictionaries as stones to the cairn, but he should have. They are

invaluable to his argument that dictionaries are strikingly mundane, individual, and practical, that they mark local memories and temporary boundaries of the English language (1900). With women as audience and content, these dictionaries disallow the misplaced confidence we have in Dr. Johnson by emphasizing the rhetorical contingencies of the dictionary genre.

CONCLUSION

I hope to have added to Murray's claim that women appeared in and then disappeared from lexicographical work of the early modern period (1900), by complicating how and to what effect they appeared and disappeared. Women—as historical figures and/or as a conceptual category—do indeed appear within many of the earliest and influential English dictionaries, but their invocation by dictionary makers is neither consistent nor simple. They are sometimes aligned with men of equal or better station, sometimes with foreigners or children, sometimes with orators and learned men, and sometimes with men of lesser class; their position alongside these men sometimes indicates an erasure of gender differences, but it can also articulate and enforce gender differences. As readers, women can “stand in” for ignorant persons at large, but they can also represent competent and accomplished speakers who actively direct the dictionary, calling it into being, putting it to their own occasional use, advancing its success among other audiences. Women readers have sometimes offered immediate audiences to dictionary makers, as former pupils, current friends, and potential patrons; but they have also offered a more abstract commercial appeal as people who buy or are bought books that will facilitate social mobility. Women often sponsor dictionary projects, from the earliest stages of inception to the last stages of distribution—catalyzing the work by contracting for private language instruction; commissioning dictionaries to document their own, their family's, or their children's courses of education for personal or public benefit;

encouraging dictionary makers and introducing them to resources that will sustain their work; and finding readers and uses for the final dictionary texts. They act as patrons not just to male lexicographers but to lexicographical work and to language learners at large.

Murray is correct in claiming some coincidence of the dictionary project with an investment in women's higher education. Certainly the accounts of Mary Tudor and Mary I as pupils confirms this connection. But it is important to point out that the dictionary seems also to have been invested in excluding and/or affirming the exclusion of women from higher education. Dictionaries, in sanctioning certain gender roles and certain gendered knowledges, participated in the subjugation of women, often in the name of religion, nation, refinement, and enlightenment.

Their various and complex roles in early dictionary instantiations informed the array of roles dictionary audiences could be expected to play and what kinds of exigence the dictionary could be understood to have. And, importantly, they seem to signal different major phases in English lexicography than the ones outlined by Murray in 1900 (see Figure 2.5). Murray's phases emphasize form and content, but tending to women points to the importance of considering audience and purpose. Women mark shifts in the conception of the dictionary, earlier as a document of special instruction modeling learning for a linguistically competent audience, later as a general service for linguistically competent users who rely on it for periodic assistance, later still as an unusual collection of refinements to be entertained among the socially ambitious, and eventually as universal knowledge legislating language for the lower orders. Throughout these phases, women are an audience addressed that defines the possible roles for the audience invoked by the emerging genre. Their move from honored, to served, to improved, to controlled is indicative of shifting arguments for the genre's exigence.

Women thus come to bear directly on Murray’s theoretical aim of unsettling notions of lexicography as legislation. It is partly through the gradual exclusion of women from the dictionary and its evolving notions of “general audience” and “universal knowledge” that the popular understanding of the dictionary becomes unproductively monolithic and authoritarian. And Murray himself repeats the exclusion in constructing a history of English lexicography that discounts works like Evelyn’s and Dunton’s. Murray participated in the practice of foregrounding women in the lexicography of English when he dedicated the first fascicles of the *OED* to Queen Victoria, but he otherwise confirms and perpetuates the disappearance of women from English lexicography by constructing a history and theory of the dictionary as predicated on masculine antecedent genres.

In this chapter, I hope to have shown that women are not an anomaly in the history of the dictionary genre though they have been made to seem so by lectures such as Murray’s which acknowledge but inadequately address how and why women were invoked. Their regular place in the genre in fact signals irregular expectations of the genre. They mark

2.5. Murray's Phases of Evolution in English Lexicography

Ten Phases	
1.	Latin-Latin and Latin English Glossing: “glossing of difficult words in Latin manuscripts by easier Latin, and at length by English words”
2.	Latin-English Glossaries and Vocabularies: “the collection of the English glosses into Glossaries, and the elaboration of Latin-English vocabularies”
3.	English-Latin Vocabularies: “the later formation of English-Latin vocabularies”
4.	Vernacular-English and English-Vernacular Dictionaries: “the production of Dictionaries of English and another modern language”
5.	Hard Word English Dictionaries: “the compilation of Glossaries and Dictionaries of “hard” English words”
6.	General English Dictionaries: “the extension of these by Bailey, for etymological purpose to include words in general”
7.	Standard English Dictionaries: “the idea of a Standard Dictionary, and its realization by Dr. Johnson with illustrative quotations”
8.	Inclusion of Pronunciation Information: “the notion that a dictionary should also show pronunciation of the living word”
9.	Expansion of Quotation Function: “the extension of the function of quotations by Richardson”
10.	Historical English Dictionaries: “the idea that the Dictionary should be a biography of every word, and should set forth every fact connected with its origin, history, and use, on a strictly historical method.”

(based on Murray 1900)

conflicted configurations of the English it could describe; the personal, social, and political functions it could accomplish or allow; and the reader roles and relationships it could support.

ABSENT AUTHORS, BRAZEN BORROWERS, AND THE EDGE OF ENGLISH: DICTIONARIES ATTRIBUTED TO WOMEN, 1600–1900

“The Fop-Dictionary,” addressed to “the fair sex” and attributed to Mary Evelyn (1690), is one of the last English dictionaries *for* women¹⁹ and perhaps one of the first *by* a woman, yet Evelyn rarely bears mention in lists of dictionary makers. Almost no women do, in spite of the fact that many of them authored and edited lexicographical work in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, as this chapter will show.

James Murray’s (1900) “The Evolution of English Lexicography” sets a precedent for this exclusion. As I described in Chapter 2, no women appear in his brief history after the late seventeenth century—the point at which, according to his lecture, “less-knowing women” (his term for the linguistically competent and/or ambitious women so important to the formation and early success of the genre as its primary audience and key patrons) had either “come upsides with the more-knowing men” or “s[u]nk back again into elegant illiteracy.” For Murray and most other lexicographical historians, women were not important to the

¹⁹ Early modern dictionaries were of course both “for” women at large and sometimes for a woman in particular (see Chapter 2). The “tradition” of dedicating dictionaries to women continues to this day (e.g., Foyle 2007 is “To Catherine, my long-suffering supporter in all my endeavors.”)

dictionary genre's exigence or audience from the early eighteenth century onward nor were they to be counted among significant authors of the genre.

By the turn of the eighteenth century, of course, neither of the explanations (facetiously) offered by Murray at the turn of the twentieth had come to pass: English-speaking women (even of the highest class) had not succeeded in securing equal education to men nor had they elegantly accepted illiteracy. Women continued throughout and after this period to advocate against prejudicial treatment and for women's literacy, education, suffrage, and equal rights. Lexicographical work was part and parcel of those political and intellectual aims; it was also an occupation of women happily embedded within patriarchal structures. That is, women's dictionaries sometimes sought to promote women's formal education and sometimes ensured it remained informal (and inferior) to men's. Women's dictionaries sometimes attest to an empowered and empowering literacy and sometimes advocate for the elegance of willful illiteracy.

Historians of lexicography tend to corral women—real or categorical—in their moment as sixteenth and seventeenth century audience and to ignore the ways in which women meaningfully participated in dictionary making during that time and after. The exclusion might seem justifiable in the case of Evelyn's "Fop-Dictionary." Any appearance that Evelyn and "The Fop-Dictionary" might make in the history of the English dictionary would necessarily be underscored by striking absences: Evelyn herself is largely untraceable, while her dictionary is perhaps *not* hers, perhaps *not* a dictionary, and definitely *not* participating in the same lexicographical work as the majority of dictionaries contemporary to it.

Almost all of what is known of Evelyn's life derives from family sources, characterizations of her in her parents' writing. According to her father:

Nothing was so full delightfull to her as to go into my study, where she would willingly have spent whole dayes, for as I sayd she had read an abundance of history, and all the best poets, even Terence, Plautus, Homer, Virgil, Horace, Ovid; all the best romances and modern poems; she could compose happily, and put in pretty symbols, as in the ‘Mundus Muliebris,’ wherein is an enumeration of the immense variety of the modes and ornaments belonging to the sex; but all these are vaine trifles to the virtues which adorn’d her soule (quoted in Evelyn 1907, 218).

Precocious adventures in masculine intellectualism are here tempered by a prodigious feminine piety, and the greatness of Evelyn’s soul fully eclipses the dalliance that is her dictionary. This biography (it is, perhaps, the closest and best we have to a biography of Evelyn, contemporary or subsequent) is not, as we might expect, built of bibliography. Rather it undoes bibliography, suggesting that the one work for which we remember Evelyn is and should be treated as a trifle.

The evidence of Evelyn’s existence is nearly as scant as the evidence of her work on “The Fop-Dictionary.” Her role in its production is hard to ascertain, and, most particularly, her authorship is not cleanly categorizable as such. A reasonable question is: “Did she write it?” The whole of *Mundus Muliebris* is itself unsigned, as are its component parts—the preface, the poem “A Voyage to Marryland,” the dictionary, and the recipe for “Pig, or Puppido, Water for the Face.” Evelyn’s name is tied to the work on the basis of family papers—diaries and letters by her father and mother as well as surviving work in Evelyn’s own hand (Perkins 2004, Nevinson 1977). While some of these secondary accounts explicitly tie Evelyn to *Mundus Muliebris*, none definitively describe which parts she composed nor how she composed them. The fact that Evelyn died five years in advance of the dictionary’s publication would indicate that work on the text occurred in her absence and extended beyond light editing. If she left drafts of the work behind, preparations for publication of “The Fop-Dictionary” would likely

have entailed both collection (alongside the poem and recipe) and composition (of titles and preface at least, but possibly of component parts also).²⁰

The historical documentation that most certainly remains to us of Evelyn and “The Fop-Dictionary” is the text itself, which is as difficult to situate within dominant narratives of the English dictionary as is its supposed author. A reasonable question is: “Is it a dictionary?” Collected in the generic confusion of the *Mundus Muliebris*, the dictionary comprises only one-third of the total work and offers roughly 2,400 fewer lemmas than the shortest of the recognized general-purpose hard word dictionaries, Robert Cawdrey’s (1604). A slight dictionary—covering only an infinitesimal portion of the English language and indeed only a fraction of the larger work in which the lexicographical content appeared—is slighter still for covering a highly-restricted semantic field, one confined to women rather than men, to the fashionable rather than the domestic, to the trendy rather than the entitled.

Evelyn’s is a case of complexity, but it is likewise a case for the value of wading through complexity. “The Fop-Dictionary” is worth uncovering and understanding: Not only does it participate in and recast an important tradition of addressing English dictionaries to women

²⁰ It is suspected that this additional work was carried out by Evelyn’s father, whose many surviving publications and well-documented scholarship affirm his likely capability of and interest in such a project. John Evelyn was a prolific diarist, author, and translator; an early investor in the East India Company; and a founding member of the Royal Society. In addition to his diary, he left behind letters, pamphlets, catalogues of his library and furniture, and a daunting number of books, all of which testify to his connectedness not only to publishers and printing houses but also to prominent encyclopedic and lexicographical projects of the period. John Evelyn penned and published a number of encyclopedic works himself (on gardening, trees, soils, medals); he contributed articles to Edmund Gibson’s (1695) revision of the *Britannia*; and he employed dictionary-maker Edward Phillips as a tutor to his son (Chambers 2008). An anonymous 1691 sequel to Mary Evelyn’s *Mundus Muliebris*, titled *Mundus Foppensis, or, the Fop Display’d. Being the Ladies Vindication, In Answer to a late Pamphlet, Entitled, Mundus Muliebris: Or, The Ladies Dressing-Room Unlocked, &c, In Burlesque. Together with a short Supplement to the Fop-Dictionary: Compos’d for the Use of the Town Beaus*, is attributed to John Evelyn alone and without question.

(as I argued in Chapter 2), it also documents a semantic field not elsewhere recorded. The *Oxford English Dictionary* illustrates fifty-one entries with quotations from Evelyn's *Mundus Muliebris*, twelve specifically from "The Fop-Dictionary." It also models alternative forms of lexicographical corpus building and illustrative quotation; rather than citing brief passages from the best literature in English under a headword and definition, "The Fop-Dictionary" assembles what seems modish ephemera to sandwich headwords and definitions active in that ephemera.

In the grander scheme of lexicographical history, to forget a dictionary that, like Evelyn's, is undercut by such questions of authorship and form might seem appropriate, even necessary. But the uncertainties prompted by Evelyn's "The Fop-Dictionary" are by no means unique to her work. These issues instead pervade publications by women throughout the early centuries of English language lexicography. In the world of dictionary making, women are almost always difficult to find, their roles impossible to confirm, their contributions blurred by family relations, their authorship complicated by circumstances of publication, and their lexicographical value muddled by various creative forms and historical accounts which may undo the contributions as contributions at all. That is, the instabilities of Evelyn's "The Fop-Dictionary" are not unique to Evelyn, are, indeed, common among women, and are more preponderant among women than men. To address the biases of gender encoded in biases against biographical uncertainty and formal variation, we have to accept certain levels of instability and exercise generosity in reading texts attributed to women.

In this chapter, I would like to recover—if only partially—the history of women's lexicographical work before the turn of the twentieth century. While women fall away as audience of English dictionaries at the end of the seventeenth century, they rise as authors of

them—drafting and editing a number of fascinating and important dictionaries. I will attempt to answer concomitant questions: What lexicographical work were women involved in before the turn of the twentieth century? If women were denied praxis of lexicography, what (mixed) genres were important to women’s lexicographical thinking of the time? How do women’s dictionaries and other forms of lexicographical thought participate in or disrupt the English dictionary’s known generic trajectory over this period?

WOMEN DICTIONARY MAKERS

I have below attempted to compile a list of dictionaries and other lexicographical projects attributed or attributable to women. To do so, I have looked to an array of sources:

- dictionary collections, such as The Warren N. and Suzanne B. Cordell Collection of Dictionaries at Indiana State University’s Cunningham Memorial Library;
- histories of dictionaries and lexicography, such as *The Oxford History of English Lexicography* (Cowie 2009);
- online dictionary databases, such as Lexicons of Early Modern English (Lancashire 2012);
- dictionary bibliographies, such as Robin Alston’s (1966) *The English Dictionary*;
- dictionary acknowledgements, such as John Dunton’s (1694) credit to the influential work of “Madame _____”;
- title catalogues, such as *The English Short Title Catalogue* available online through the British Library;
- online collections of significant work published in the English language, such as Early English Books Online;
- dictionaries of bibliography, such as the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Goldman 2012).

As I consulted these resources, I was looking for lexicographical texts (often but not always featuring words or phrases like: “definition,” “dictionary,” “explanation of terms,” “glossary,” “vocabulary,” “word-book,” etc.) that named women as authors—title pages and/or prefaces which credited an “Elizabeth Elstob,” for example, or a “Mrs. Gwatkin,” or, simply, “A Lady” or an “Affectionate Mother.” Some texts were of course published without attribution, and female authors have been identified only after the fact, as with Mary Evelyn or Olive Schreiner

(who published under the pseudonym Roger Iron). In some instances, I've discovered that a wife made significant contributions to a lexicographical project formally attributed to a man, as is the case with Marie Breheault who helped her husband Shirley Palmer to write a multilingual dictionary of medical terminology (Cowie 2009, 81).

In compiling a list of dictionaries attributed to women, I am, in some ways, engaged in the heavy-handed but necessary work of feminist recovery: In spite of my recognition that gender (sex possibly as much so) is a construct which makes “women” historically unidentifiable, I have compiled a list of heretofore neglected gender-identified dictionaries. Obviously, I have no ability to claim nor particular interest in claiming to know that the embodied individual dictionary makers I below name were women in anything other than socially-constructed status. I've built this list on the basis of names—flagging Marys and Hannahs, ignoring Edwards and Johns—which practice relies on obviously gendered names and neglects known possibilities of anonymity and pseudonym. But I am nonetheless interested in how dictionaries did or did not capitalize on socially-constructed women as dictionary authors and editors. That is, I am interested in dictionaries that willfully advertised themselves as by women, for such texts may have relied on gender to (stereotypically) authorize a degree of descriptive focus or freedom available only to women that is an important piece of lexicographical history; and I am likewise interested in dictionaries that concealed women dictionary makers, for such texts (attributed to men, initialed, anonymous, and otherwise ungendered) have relied on gendered notions of labor (“women’s work”) while feeling it to be damaging to the production, publication, or sales of certain kinds of dictionary endeavor.

Findings, Trends, and Traditions

Between 1486 and 1900, women were credited with or helped to produce a number of dictionary titles. Women not only participated in lexicographical work as sole authors, co-authors, and silent or individual collaborators; they also produced monolingual, bilingual, and polyglot dictionaries; their lexicons covered general and specific semantic fields; their definitions ranged from the minimal (e.g., spelling dictionaries, word lists) to the encyclopedic (e.g., dictionaries of biography, employment, genealogy, mythology); and their projected audiences ran the gamut from inclusive (e.g., all English speakers, readers, learners) to restricted (e.g., women,²¹ young people, pupils, members of a professional field). In short, women were involved in many kinds of lexicographical work—beginning, for the most part, in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, continuing throughout the eighteenth, and surging in the nineteenth.

The following collected list of dictionaries, presented chronologically, includes titles readily recognizable as multi- or monolingual lexicons, but it also includes a number of how-to guides, schoolbooks, lectures, and other text types that contain lexicographical components. In reading the list, it becomes clear that some settings seemed to open onto women's engagement with lexicography; their positions within schools and foreign missions often preceded and prompted dictionary work. Some languages and some Englishes seem to have been available to description by women; women maintained a close alignment with vernacular dictionaries, for example; they edited comprehensive introductions to romance languages as well as lexicons of dialectal and marginalized national Englishes. Women also maintained a

²¹ Whether women can be considered a “restricted audience” of the English dictionary (especially when men have never been so classed) is a question I'll return to in the consideration of feminist dictionaries in Chapter 5.

tight link to polite languages; their lexicographical work often found a home in etiquette and conduct books. Some semantic fields appear to have been more accessible than others to women; religious, domestic, and culinary, medicinal, and horticultural domains, for example, were common considerations of dictionaries attributed to women. I'll elaborate on these themes and others in greater detail below.

Figure 3.1. English Dictionaries Attributable to Women, 1486-1900

Date	Author(s)	Title	Language(s)	Semantic Field(s)
1486	[Dame Juliana Berners]	"The boke of hawkyng, and hynthyng, and fysshynge" in <i>The Book of St. Albans</i>	English	carving, fauna, hawking, hunting
1673	Hannah Woolley	<i>The gentlewomans companion; or, A guide to the female sex containing directions of behaviour [...] With letters and discourses upon all occasions. Whereunto is added, a guide for cook-maids, dairy-maids, chamber-maids, and all others that go to service. The whole being an exact rule for the female sex in general. By Hannah Woolley.</i>	English	address, carving, greeting, medicine
1677	Hannah Woolley	<i>The compleat servant-maid; or, The young maidens tutor Directing them how they may fit, and qualifie themselves for any of these employments. Viz. Waiting woman, house-keeper, chamber-maid, cook-maid, under cook-maid, nursery-maid, dairy-maid, laundry-maid, house-maid, scullery-maid. Composed for the great benefit and advantage of all young maidens.</i>	English	accounting, carving
1690	[Mary Evelyn]	"The Fop-Dictionary" in <i>Mundus muliebris: or, The ladies dressing-room unlock'd, and her toilette spread In burlesque. Together with the fop-dictionary, compiled for the use of the fair sex.</i>	English	cosmetics, fashion, housewares
1715	Elizabeth Elstob	<i>The Rudiments of Grammar for the English-Saxon Tongue. First given in English: with an Apology For the Study of Northern Antiquities. Being very useful towards the understanding o our ancient English Poets, and other Writers. By Elizabeth Elstob.</i>	English, Old English	historical language
1741	Arabella Atkyns	<i>The family magazine: in two parts. Part I. Containing useful directions in all the branches of house-keeping and cookery. [...] Part II. Containing a compendious body of physick [...] To which is Added, An Explanation of such Terms of Art used in the Work, as could not be so easily reduced to the Understanding of common Readers.</i>	English	general-purpose/ hard words
1745	A[nne] Fisher [later Slack]	<i>A new grammar, with exercises of Bad English: or, an easy guide to speaking and writing the English language properly and correctly. [...]</i>	English	general-purpose, address, elocution, homonyms

Date	Author(s)	Title	Language(s)	Semantic Field(s)
1753	Mary Johnson	<i>The young w[o]man's companion; or the servant-maid's assistant; digested under the several heads hereinafter mentioned, [... including] II. The Young Womans's Guide to the Knowledge of her Mother-Tongue. III. A compendious English Spelling Dictionary, peculiarly calculated for the present Undertaking. [...]</i> The whole compiled by Mary Johnson, For many Years a Superintendant of a Lady of Quality's Family in the City of York. [Published in 1755 as <i>Madame Johnson's Present...</i>]	English	general-purpose, grammar, personal names
1760	H[annah] Glasse	<i>The servant's directory, or house-keeper's companion [...]</i> With Directions for keeping Accounts with Tradesmen, and many other Particulars, fit to be known by the Mistress of a Family. By H. Glass, Author of <i>The Art of Cookery made plain and easy.</i>	English	weights and measures
1773	A[nne] Fisher [later Slack]	<i>An Accurate New Spelling Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language [...]</i>	English	general-purpose, comprehensive
1782	Ellin Devis	<i>Miscellaneous Lessons, Designed for the Use of Young Ladies</i>	English	general-purpose, etiquette
1784	Hannah Adams	<i>An alphabetical compendium of the various sects which have appeared in the world from the beginning of the Christian aera to the present day : With an appendix, containing a brief account of the different schemes of religion now embraced among mankind. : The whole collected from the best authors, ancient and modern.</i>	English	religion
1793	Affectionate Mother	<i>La bagatelle. Intended to introduce children of three or four years old, to some knowledge of the French language. In two volumes. ...</i>	English, French	foreign language, children's
1794	Hester Lynch Piozzi	<i>British Synonymy, or, An attempt at regulating the choice of words in familiar conversation. Two Volumes.</i>	English	general-purpose, synonymy
1797	Margaret Bryan	<i>A compendious system of astronomy, in a course of familiar lectures [... including] a vocabulary of the terms of science used in the lectures [...]</i>	English	astronomy
1799	Stéphanie Félicité Genlis	<i>The Traveller's Companion for Conversation, being a Collection of Such Expressions as Occur Most Frequently in Travelling and in the Different Situations in Life</i>	English, French (some editions with Dutch, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese)	foreign language
1799	Lady Charlotte Murray	<i>The British Garden. A descriptive catalogue of hardy plants, indigenous or cultivated in the climate of Great Britain; with their generic and specific characters, Latin and English names, native country, and time of flowering [...]</i> Two Volumes.	English, Latin	botany
1803	Mary Hays	<i>Female biography; or Memoirs of illustrious and celebrated women, of all ages and countries: Alphabetically arranged. In Six Volumes</i>	English	biography
1804	Matilda (Mary) Betham	<i>Biographical Dictionary of the Celebrated Women of Every Age and Country</i>	English	biography
1806	Margaret Bryan	<i>Lectures on natural philosophy: the result of many years' practical experience of the facts elucidated. With an appendix: containing, a great number and variety of astronomical and geographical problems: also some useful tables, and a comprehensive vocabulary. By Margaret Bryan</i>	English	philosophy

Date	Author(s)	Title	Language(s)	Semantic Field(s)
1807	Mrs. [Susanna Haswell] Rowson	<i>A spelling dictionary, divided into short lessons, for the easier committing to memory by children and young persons, and calculated to assist youth in comprehending what they read: selected from Johnson's Dictionary, for the use of her pupils.</i>	English	spelling
1813	Mrs. Jameson/Miss Murphy [Anna Brownwell Murphy Jameson]	<i>The First, or, Mother's Dictionary for Children</i>	English	children's
1814	Hannah Adams	<i>A Dictionary of All Religions and Religious Denominations, Jewish, Heathen, Mahometan, and Christian, Ancient and Modern. [...] By Hannah Adams. [originally published in 1784 as A View of Religious Opinions]</i>	English	religion
1814	Miss E[lizabeth] Smith	<i>A Vocabulary Hebrew, Arabic, and Persian by the Late Miss E. Smith. To which is prefixed, a praxis, on the Arabic alphabet, by the Rev. J. F. Usko, Rector of Orsett, Essex.</i>	English, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian	foreign language
1823	Mrs. Mary Eaton	<i>Cook and housekeeper's complete and universal dictionary : including a system of modern cookery, in all its various branches, adapted to the use of private families : also a variety of original and valuable information, relative to baking, brewing, carving [...]</i>	English	cooking, housekeeping
1824	Elizabeth Appleton [later Lachlan]	<i>A guide to the French language, consisting of a vocabulary, verbs, dialogues, and exercises. Adapted to the use of young persons of both sexes. By Elizabeth Appleton.</i>	English, French	foreign language
1825	[Mrs. Jane Haldimand Marcet]	<i>Conversations on natural philosophy, in which the elements of that science are familiarly explained, and adapted to the comprehension of young pupils. Illustrated with plates. By the author of Conversations on chemistry, and Conversations on political economy. Improved by appropriate questions, for the examination of scholars; also by illustrative notes, and a dictionary of philosophical terms. By Rev. J. L. Blake, A. M. [revision of Marcet's 1819]</i>	English	philosophy
1827	Mary Robson Hughs	<i>The New expositor : Containing tables of words from two, to seven syllables, inclusive; accented explained, and divided according to the most approved method of pronunciation: for the use of schools.</i>	English	general-purpose
1828	Eliza Robbins [later Markham]	<i>Primary dictionary, or Rational vocabulary, consisting of nearly four thousand words, adapted to the comprehension of children and designed for the younger classes in schools. [Third Edition?]</i>	English	children's
1831	Almira H. Lincoln Phelps	<i>Familiar lectures on botany : including practical and elementary botany : with generic and specific descriptions of the most common native and foreign plants, and a vocabulary of botanical terms : for the use of higher schools and academies / by Almira H. Lincoln Second Edition</i>	English	botany
1833	[Elizabeth Washington Gamble Wirt]	<i>Flora's Dictionary. By a Lady.</i>	English	botany
1835	Mother Marie Joseph Aubert	<i>New and complete manual of Maori conversation: containing phrases and dialogues on a variety of useful and interesting topics, together with a few general rules of grammar; and a comprehensive vocabulary: by S.A.</i>	English, Maori	foreign language

Date	Author(s)	Title	Language(s)	Semantic Field(s)
1837	Elizabeth Strutt	<i>The Book of the Fathers</i>	English	religion
1839	Mrs. [Mary (Reynolds)] Palmer, ed. Mrs. [Theophila (Palmer)] Gwatkin	<i>A Devonshire Dialogue, In Four Parts. To which is added a glossary for the most part by the late Rev. John Phillips of Membury, Devon</i>	English	dialect
1840	Mrs. H[arriet] B. L[ow] Cutter	<i>Vocabulary and phrases, in English and Assamese. By Mrs. H. B. L. Cutter. [Jaipur, Printed at the American Baptist Mission Press]</i>	English, Assamese	foreign language
1840	Ann Coward Wheeler	<i>The Westmoreland Dialect in Four Familiar Dialogues</i>	English	dialect
1841	Mrs. Matilda Marian Chesney Pullan	<i>Beadle's dime guide to dress-making and millinery : with a complete French and English dictionary of terms employed in those arts. By Mrs. Marion [!] M. Pullan.</i>	English	craft
1842	Lucy Hooper	<i>The lady's book of flowers and poetry; to which are added a botanical introduction, a complete floral dictionary and a chapter on plants in rooms. Ed. by Lucy Hooper.</i>	English	botany
1844	Mrs. M. J. Stockwell	<i>What shall we name it? A dictionary of baptismal names for children</i>	English	personal names
1845	Mary Cowden Clarke	<i>The Complete Concordance to Shakspeare</i>	English	literature
1845	[Marie Breheault and] Shirley Palmer	<i>A pentaglot dictionary of the terms employed in anatomy, physiology, pathology, practical medicine, surgery ... in two parts: part I. With the leading term in French, followed by the synonyms in the Greek, Latin, German, and English explanations in English; and copious illustration in the different languages. Part II. A German-English-French dictionary, comprehending the scientific German terms of the preceding part. By Shirley Palmer M.D.</i>	English, French, Greek, Latin, German	medicine
1848	Mrs. L[ouisa] C[aroline] Tuthill	<i>History of architecture, from the earliest times; its present condition in Europe and the United States; with a biography of eminent architects, and a glossary of architectural terms. By Mrs. L.C. Tuthill ...</i>	English	architecture
1849	[Emily Chubbuck Judson and] Adoniram Judson	<i>A Dictionary: English and Burmese</i>	English, Burmese	foreign language
1852	Mary Ann Clark Riggs	<i>An English and Dakota vocabulary, by a member of the Dakota mission. Published by the A. B. C. F. M.</i>	English, Dakota	foreign language
1853	I. S. P. [Isabella Rushton Preston]	<i>Handbook of Familiar Quotations from English Authors</i>	English	quotation
1854	Ann Elizabeth Baker	<i>Glossary of Northamptonshire Words and Phrases</i>	English	dialect
1856	Sarah Josepha Buell Hale	<i>A Complete Dictionary of Poetical Quotations</i>	English	literary quotation
1859	Helen Wood	<i>The Grammatical Reading Class-Book</i>	English	general-purpose
1861	Mrs. Graham Campbell	<i>Louisa's Metrical English Grammar</i>	English	general-purpose
1863	Mrs. Maria Bojesen	<i>A guide to the Danish language</i>	English, Danish	foreign language
1863	Madame Le Marchand	<i>Le Marchand's The Fortune Teller and Dreamer's Dictionary</i>	English	fortune and dreams
1863	Charlotte M. Yonge	<i>History of Christian Names (two volumes)</i>	English	personal names
1864	Mrs. S. R. Ward	<i>Brief vocabulary in English and Assamese, with rudimentary exercises ... By Mrs. S. R. Ward [Sibsaugor, Assam, American Baptist mission press]</i>	English, Assamese	foreign language

Date	Author(s)	Title	Language(s)	Semantic Field(s)
1866	Miss S[arah] Jolly	<i>A Vocabulary of Egyptian, Grecian, and other mythologies. By Miss S. Jolly</i>	English	mythology
1870	C[aroline] [Wells] H[ealey] Dall	<i>Genealogical notes and errata to Savage's Genealogical dictionary, etc. Correcting family records of Richard Francis, John Whittingham, William Hubbard, Hon. John Clarke, Rev. Nathaniel Rogers, William Heley, and others. By C. H. Dall.</i>	English	genealogy
1873	Sue Law McBeth	"Dictionary and Grammar of the Nez Perce Language"	English, Nez Perce	foreign language
1875	Christina Blackie	<i>A Dictionary of Place-Names Third Edition</i>	English	place names
1875	Eliza Meteyard	<i>The Wedgwood handbook. A manual for collectors. Treating of the marks, monograms, and other tests of the old period of manufacture. Also including the catalogues, with prices obtained at various sales, together with a glossary of terms. By Eliza Meteyard ..</i>	English	collecting
1875	Mrs. G. M. Tweddell	<i>Rhymes and Sketches to illustrate the Cleveland dialect/ by Mrs. G. M. Tweddell, (Florence Cleveland)</i>	English	dialect
1875	H. M. L. S.	<i>A Few Words of Advice on Travelling and Its Requirements Addressed to Ladies. BY H. M. L. S. With short vocabulary in French and German (BL 19th; Google Books) F-Ger-E</i>	English, French, German	foreign language, travel
1878	[Mrs. Isabella Beeton]	<i>All about everything : being a dictionary of practical recipes and every-day information : an entirely new domestic cyclopaedia, arranged in alphabetical order and usefully illustrated.</i>	English	cooking, housekeeping
1878	[Mrs. Isabella] Beeton	<i>Beeton's every-day cookery and housekeeping book : comprising instructions for mistress and servants, and a collection of over sixteen hundred and fifty practical receipts : with numerous wood engravings and one hundred and forty-two coloured figures, showing the proper mode of sending dishes to table.</i>	English	cooking, housekeeping
1878	Miss S[arah] F. Buckelew, C. A. Halstead	<i>Dictation lessons in drawing : for primary grades : to accompany White's primary school drawing cards / by Miss S.F. Buckelew, Principal of Primary Department, Grammar School No. 49, New York City. Assisted by Miss C. A. Halstead, Vice-Principal.</i>	English	drawing
1878	S[ara] Anne Carmichael	<i>A new dictionary of musical terms</i>	English	music
1878	A[dele] M[arion] Fielde	<i>First lessons in the Swatow dialect. By A. M. Fielde</i>	English, Swatow	foreign language
1879	Georgina Frederica Jackson	<i>Shropshire Word-Book</i>	English	dialect
1879	May Rogers	<i>The Waverley dictionary; an alphabetical arrangement of all the characters of Sir Walter Scott's Waverley novels, with a descriptive analysis of each character, and illustrative selections from the text. By May Rogers</i>	English	literature
1880	Margaret Ann Courtney	<i>A Glossary of Terms Used in Cornwall</i>	English	dialect
1880	Phebe Lankester	<i>The National Thrift Reader, with Directions for Possessing and Preserving Health</i>	English	hard words, poetic abbreviation, biography
1880	J[enny] H. Stickney [later Lansing]	<i>Studies in language; a teachers' guide to "Letters and lessons in language," numbers one to four. By J.H. Stickney.</i>	English	general-purpose

Date	Author(s)	Title	Language(s)	Semantic Field(s)
1881	Jehiel Keeler Hoyt and Anna Lydia Ward	<i>Cyclopaedia of Practical Quotation</i>	English	quotation
1882	S[ophia] F[rances] A[nne] Caulfield and Blanche C. Saward	<i>The dictionary of needlework, an encyclopaedia of artistic, plain, and fancy needlework, dealing fully with the details of all the stitches employed, the method of working, the materials used, the meaning of technical terms, and, where necessary, tracing the origin and history of the various works described. Illustrated with upwards of 800 wood engravings, plain sewing, textiles, dressmaking, appliances, and terms, by S.F.A. Caulfield, ... Church embroidery, lace, and ornamental needlework, by Blanche C. Saward.</i>	English	craft
1882	Edith L. Chamberlain	<i>A Glossary of West Worcestershire Words</i>	English	dialect
1883	Adele Marion Fielde	<i>A Pronouncing and Defining Dictionary of the Swatow Dialect Arranged According to Syllables and Tones</i>	English, Swatow	foreign language, general-purpose
1883	[Olive Schreiner, pseudonomously] Roger Iron	<i>The Story of an African Farm -- "Several Dutch and Colonial words occurring in this work, the subjoined Glossary is given, explaining the principal."</i>	English, Dutch	foreign language, regionalisms
1884	Bertha Marian Skeat	<i>A Word List...Modern English with Anglo-French Vowel-Sounds</i>	English	pronouncing
1885	Frances Hays	<i>Women of the day: a biographical dictionary of notable contemporaries</i>	English	biography
1888	Anna Randall-Diehl	<i>Two Thousand Words and Their Definitions</i>	English	general-purpose
1888	Elizabeth Weir	<i>Heath's New German Dictionary [Boston] /Cassell's New German Dictionary [London]</i>	English, German	foreign language
1889	Jennie Taylor Wandle	<i>Writer's reference hand-book. For popular use, comprising a manual of the art of correspondence, correct forms for letters of a commercial, social and ceremonial nature, with copius explanatory matter ... and a handy Dictionary of synonyms ...</i>	English	general-purpose, address, greeting, synonymy
1889	Anna Lydia Ward	<i>Dictionary of quotations in prose [from American and foreign authors 1900]</i>	English	literary quotation
1890	Lady Matilda Ridout Edgar	<i>Ten years of Upper Canada in peace and war, 1805-1815; being the Ridout letters, with annotations by Matilda Edgar. Also an appendix of the narrative of the captivity among the Shawanese Indians, in 1788, of Thos. Ridout, afterwards Surveyor-General of Upper Canada; and a vocabulary comp. by him, of the Shawanese language.</i>	English, Shawanese	foreign language
1891	Honnor (Violet) Morten	<i>Nurse's Dictionary of Medical Terms and Nursing Treatment</i>	English	medicine
1892	Helene Petrovna Blavatsky	<i>The Theosophical Glossary</i>	English	religion
1892	Sarah Hewett	<i>The Peasant Speech of Devon 2nd ed.</i>	English	dialect
1892	Miss M. E. Woodward	<i>A Vocabulary of English-Chinyanja and Chinyanja-English as spoken in Likoma, Lake Nyasa.</i>	English, Chinyanja	foreign language
1893	Mary Jane (Mead) Clark	<i>Ao Naga grammar with illustrative phrases and vocabulary</i>	English, Ao Naga	foreign language
1894	Alice Bertha Gomme	<i>The traditional games of England, Scotland, and Ireland with tunes, singing-rhymes, and methods of playing according to the variants extant and recorded in different parts of the Kingdom Collected and annotated by Alice Bertha Gomme.</i>	English	games

Date	Author(s)	Title	Language(s)	Semantic Field(s)
1896	Nora Hoegelsberger and Helen M. Hayes	<i>Elementary exercises for German prose composition, with grammatical notes and a complete vocabulary</i>	English, German	foreign language
1896	Mathilde A. Meliot	<i>English and French Explanatory Dictionary Relating to Finance, Stock Exchange Transactions, Joint Stock Companies and Gold Mines</i>	English, French	finance, trade
1896	Fran D. Parker	<i>Kitchen French; a dictionary of terms used in cookery</i>	English, French	cooking
1897	Marquise de Fontenoy [pseudonym]	<i>Eve's Glossary: The Guide-book of a Mondaine</i>	English	cosmetics, fashion
1897	Elisabeth Robinson Scovil	<i>Names for children; a dictionary of baptismal names for children containing upwards of 1200 names with their meaning and the language from which they were derived. Comp. by Elisabeth Robinson Scovil</i>	English	personal names
1898	Sarah Sharp (Heaton) Hamer	<i>The dictionary of dainty breakfasts By Phyllis Browne With a tabular introduction by a mere man</i>	English	cooking
1898	Ethel S. Meyer	<i>A practical dictionary of cookery : 1200 tested recipes / by Ethel S. Meyer.</i>	English	cooking
1898	Mrs. Leonora Philipps, Miss Marian Edwardes, Miss Janet Tuckey, Katherine Esther Dixon	<i>A dictionary of employments open to women With details of wages, hours of work, and other information</i>	English	employments
1899	Mattie [Martha] Anstice Marris	<i>A glossary of West Saxon Gospels</i>	English	religion
1899	Emily Marjory Armstrong Stoney	<i>Practical materia medica for nurses, with an appendix containing poisons and their antidotes ... mineral waters; weights and measures; dose-list; and a glossary ...</i>	English	medicine
1900	Clara-Erika Dietl	<i>Wörterbuch für Recht, Wirtschaft und Politik : mit Kommentaren in deutscher und englischer Sprache / von Clara-Erika Dietl, Egon Lorenz ; unter Mitarbeit von Wiebke Buxbaum, Walter Bonhoeffer.</i>	English, German	law, politics
1900	Anna Eva Fay	<i>Anna Eva Fay's Somnolency and guide to dreams : an original interpretation of all manner of dreams with instructions how to turn such occurrences to practical account : a dictionary of dreams, alphabetically arranged, all having been tested by Miss Fay : love, courtship, marriage, information on all these points : valuable knowledge for young and old, youth or maiden, married or single : dreams, visions, apparitions, love charms, and tokens / all personally supervised by Anna Eva Fay.</i>	English	dreams
1900	Enid M. Parker	<i>Afar/English dictionary : preliminary draft / Enid M. Parker ; final checking done by Hussein Abdu</i>	English, Afar	foreign language
1900	Mina S. Seymour	<i>Pen pictures. Transmitted clairaudiently and telepathically by Robert Burns. Received and edited by Mina S. Seymour. With complete glossary.</i>	English	dialect

Multilingual Lexicography

Roughly a quarter of the projects in Figure 3.1 are multilingual, describing classical and historical languages (Greek, Latin, Old English) as well as languages spoken in Asia (Ao,

Assamese, Burmese, Shantou), Africa (Afar, Afrikaans, Chewa), North America (Dakota, Nez Perce, Shawnee), Europe (Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish), and New Zealand (Maori). Some of this work looks very much like the early bilingual lexicography described in Chapter 2, offering a general introduction to a language for an English-speaking readership and lexicographical insofar as it offers interlinear glosses and word equivalency lists useful for reading and traveling. Stéphanie Félicité Genlis' (1799) *The Traveller's Companion for Conversation*, for example, is similar in structure and content to the dialogues and wordlists offered to Mary I in in Giles Du Wés' (1533) *An Introductorie for to lerne to rede, to pronounce, and to speake Frenche trewly*. Others among the multilingual projects participate in the lexicographical shift away from small practical language guides to compendious scholarly records. Elizabeth Weir's (1888) *New German Dictionary* is a large single-volume German-English dictionary that would be recognizable as such to contemporary users.

By the mid nineteenth century, a preponderance of the bi- and multilingual lexicographical projects undertaken by and attributed to women can be tied to colonial and/or evangelical work in Asia, Africa, and North America. British and American women who had married missionary men or taken positions as teachers at Baptist, Presbyterian, and Catholic missions often engaged in language work. Adele Marion Fielde, for example, was a New York Public School teacher before she moved to Bangkok in 1866 to marry a Baptist missionary who died before her arrival. She nevertheless became a missionary teacher and remained in Thailand for seven years then moved to China where she lived for another ten (Ogilvie and Harvey 2000, 444). In 1878, she wrote and published an introductory language guide with word equivalents entitled *First Lessons in Swatow Dialect*; the next year she began expansion of that work into a large-scale Chinese-English dictionary, *A Pronouncing and Defining Dictionary of the*

Swatow Dialect Arranged According to Syllables and Tones. Fielde's work compiling the dictionary was sponsored, perhaps reluctantly,²² by the Baptist mission in Swatow; its publication in 1883 and all subsequent reprints were handled by a Presbyterian mission in Shanghai (Warren 2002, 78-80).

The lexicography of conversion was not strictly women's work, but it seems to have been unusually hospitable to women writers of the late nineteenth century. In their roles as missionary workers, women were often responsible for "healing bodies and souls" (Semple 2003, 2): they worked in hospitals and mental institutions; they established schools; and they acted as cultural ambassadors between mission leaders and the community members. These forms of professionalism demanded high-level competencies in bi- and multilingual communication, and, because dictionaries were rarities in many British and American mission locations, it seems to have not infrequently fallen to women to produce such work.

Specialized Lexicography


Still others of the bilingual dictionaries attributed to women are specialized lexicons, documenting a restricted semantic field (botany, cooking, finance and trade, law and politics) in English and another language (French, German, Latin). Women also authored a number of monolingual specialized dictionaries, often but not always for a primary audience of women, students, or children. Some of these specialized lexicons treat vocabularies deemed appropriate to women (e.g., cooking, cosmetics, dressmaking, fashion, housewares,

²² According to biographer Leonard Warren, Fielde was "writing the dictionary on mission time [...] while neglecting mission responsibilities when the mission was seriously understaffed because of leave-taking and illness" (2002, 78). William Ashmore, head of the Swatow mission, permitted the work but with some resentment. According to Warren, Ashmore was "annoyed at the prospect of his junior undertaking such a major, time-consuming, and expensive task. He was the acknowledged scholar of the mission and of Westerners in China" not Fielde (78).

needlework, nursing); others define more neutral areas of knowledge and work (e.g., botany, meat carving, drawing, dreams, music, personal and place names, religion), and still others describe what would have been predominately masculine professional preserves (e.g., architecture, astronomy, medicine, natural philosophy).

Louisa Caroline Tuthill belongs to this last category of dictionary maker; at a time when the vast majority of architecture books—an estimated 86 percent (Bonta 1996, 332)—were authored by men, Tuthill published the *History of Architecture* (1848). It was the first such history published in the United States, notable not only for its emphasis on the home as itself architectural but also for its appended glossary of architectural terms (Grayson 2000). The whole of Tuthill’s work is dedicated “To the Ladies of the United States of America, the acknowledged arbiters of taste.”

Margaret Bryan’s and Jane Haldimand Marcet’s dictionaries of natural science were similarly appended to longer treatises on the subject. Bryan, whose private school for girls was established in 1795 and open through at least 1816, was herself trained in math and science, and she included those subjects in her students’ curriculum though it was at that time unconventional to do so (Ogilvie 2004, Haines 2001). *A Compendious System of Astronomy*, published in 1797 as a series of ten lectures, includes a twenty-five page “vocabulary of the terms of science used in the lectures; which latter are explained agreeably to their application in them.” Bryan’s definition style is simple and clear, often accompanied by illustrations, minimal line drawings of geometric and physical principles. For example:

A RIGHT ANGLE is formed by two straight lines, one drawn perpendicular to the other. 

Bryan’s (1806) *Lectures on Natural Philosophy* are appended with a dictionary of similar style.

In neither work is Bryan's gender concealed. Portraits of Bryan (and her two daughters) serve as frontispieces; her full name appears on title pages, and her prefaces are signed. The prefaces themselves tend to draw attention to but not quite apologize for her status as a woman. She introduces *A Compendious System of Astronomy* as "truth, enfeebled by female attire" (ix), as though to emphasize the foolishness of dismissing knowledge authored by a woman.

Bryan is often confused with Marcet, a contemporary who published much of her work anonymously (Ogilvie 2004). Marcet's *Conversations in Natural Philosophy* appeared in 1819, and, in 1824, it was appended (perhaps by John Lauris Blake) with a glossary of terms. The scholarly and lexicographical contributions of both women were and are tempered in some ways by their audience and presentation. The works are intended for pupils (in Marcet's case, "the very young" and "the female sex" also), and the material, though very obviously *written*, is presented as *oral*. The format of the lecture, the dialogue, the conversation was common in early women's science education.

Student audiences and conversational material seem to have made it possible for women to participate in the production of scientific knowledge, but those same circumstances seemed also to enable and even necessitate supporting lexicographical work. The corpus of English that reveals itself in Bryan's lectures and Marcet's conversation underwrites and animates their dictionaries. As was the case in Evelyn's "Fop-Dictionary," the suggestion here is that the lexicon cannot be conceived separately from practical use. Poems and lectures necessitate dictionaries, and so poems and lectures are the necessary front matter of dictionaries even as they also serve in the capacity of illustrative examples.

Scholars have tended to understand dictionaries attached to other kinds of work as somehow underdeveloped, not mature enough to stand alone. But the prevalence of this structure in dictionaries attributed to women suggests lexicographical method rather than accident of immaturity. In Chapter 5, I'll return to this discussion, to show how the feminist dictionaries revive the practice of privileging meanings in use over meanings made in definition.

Dialectal Lexicography

Another domain of “specialized” lexicographical work that seems to have been hospitable to women was dialectal. Nine of the lexicographical projects listed in Figure 3.1 treat Englishes spoken in nineteenth-century Cornwall, Devon, North Riding, Northamptonshire, Shropshire, Westmorland, Worcestershire, or Scotland.²³ These texts often combined lexicographical work (glossaries and interlinear glosses) with (comical) dialogues, folk tales, and verse. (Again we see the “oral” publication as open to women.)

The 1839 *Devonshire Dialogue*, for example, is based on a manuscript written by Mary (Reynolds) Palmer, elder sister to the famed painter Joshua Reynolds and friend to Samuel Johnson (who described her mind as “very near purity itself” [Craig 1895, 29]). Palmer’s dialogues, in whole and in extract, circulated privately before her death in 1794. In 1839, her daughter, Theophila (Palmer) Gwatkin, edited the manuscript to include a preface, footnote glosses, and a twenty-page dictionary of dialect terms. Gwatkin’s lexicographical contribution was collaboratively created; the full title of the *Devonshire Dialogue* credits the glossary as “for the most part by the late Rev. John Phillips” who died in 1828 (“State of the Diocese” 1828, 240). Phillips does not appear to have elsewhere published that glossary, and it is only in the context

²³ Strictly speaking, Scots is a national English not a dialectal one.

of Gwatkin's dialogue-with-dictionary that the lexicographical work seems to have come to completion and publication.

Dialect dictionaries and dictionaries of English and another language account for more than a third of the projects listed in Figure 3.1. Women compilers seem to have been interested in—or at least able to describe—English as it connected to distant spaces and circulated among nonstandard speakers. While some dictionaries attributed to women were invested in Standard English, many were not.

Lexicography and Women's Conduct (in Cooking, Household, and Medicine)

A handful of the monolingual projects attributed to women participate in the early (Mulcasterian) tradition of lexicons appended to more general education books—grammars, spellers, readers, and writing handbooks. Only five of the dictionaries listed in Figure 3.1 are explicitly aimed at child audiences, but more are addressed to young people, students, and learners generally. Quite a few are explicitly directed to female audiences—girls, young women, housewives, maid servants, nurses. A child audience is more likely in texts that combine lexical material with grammatical description of the English language (e.g., Jameson/Murphy 1813, Robbins 1828). A female audience is more likely in texts that combine lexical material with personal and social prescriptions for English speakers (e.g., Devis 1782, Wandle 1889).

In fact, the woman's conduct book shows itself to be a genre persistently coincident with the dictionary, long after the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century emergence of the dictionary genre. Early bilingual and monolingual dictionaries (those described in Chapter 2) set a precedent for combining lexical description with depictions of and, later, suggestions for “proper” social and moral behavior. And the seventeenth-century dictionaries attributed to

women continue that tradition. We need only look to the source texts for Dunton's (1694) *The Ladies Dictionary*, Hannah Woolley's (1673) *The Gentlewomans Companion* and her (1677) *The Compleat Servant-Maid*, to see the ways in which lexicographical work was an important component of life and work guides for women by women.

Woolley's earliest known publication, *The Ladies Directory*, appeared in 1662 (perhaps the year earlier) with a dedication "To all Ladies & Gentlewomen in Generall, Who love the Art of Preserving and Candyng" (A2). Its pages contain 185 single- and multi-paragraph entries under titles such as "To Preserve Aprecock's in Jelly" and "For a Cough of the Lungs" (Woolley 1662, 2, 9). Woolley's subsequent publications tended to simplify or complicate the part-cooking-part-medicine contents of *The Ladies Directory*—her (1664) *The Cook's Guide* more strictly detailed culinary recipes; her (1670) *The Queen-Like Closet* detailed cooking, medicine, household crafts, seasonal meal menus, and treatises on the roles of domestic employees. *The Gentlewomans Companion* and *The Compleat Servant-Maid* mark an increasing dictionary-likeness to Woolley's work, a turn Dunton formalized when he borrowed her content and styled it as *The Ladies Dictionary* (1694).

These latter two of Woolley's works are still a heady combination of genres, including varieties of the dictionary. The full title of *The Gentlewomans Companion* gives a good sense of its broad contents: *The gentlewomans companion; or, A guide to the female sex containing directions of behaviour, in all places, companies, relations, and conditions, from their childhood down to old age: viz. As, children to parents. Scholars to governours. Single to servants. Virgins to suitors. Married to husbands. Huswifes to the house Mistresses to servants. Mothers to children. Widows to the world Prudent to all. With letters and discourses upon all occasions. Whereunto is added, a guide for cook-maids, dairy-maids, chamber-maids, and all others that go to service. The whole being an exact rule for the female sex*

in general. By Hannah Woolley. Similarly, *The Complete Servant-Maid*, “Composed for the great benefit and advantage of all young maidens” directs them in “how they might fit, and qualifie themselves” for employment as “Waiting woman, house-keeper, chamber-maid, cook-maid, under cook-maid, nursery-maid, dairy-maid, laundry-maid, house-maid, scullery-maid.” In the course of delineating the lifework of women, Woolley offers a wealth of lexicographical material that would today be appropriate to a number of dictionaries—biographical, idiomatic, synonymous, medical. Both *The Gentlewomans Companion* and *The Compleat Servant-Maid* offer, for example, “Terms for carving all sorts of Meat at Table.” Separate from more detailed instructions on how to carve various meats (e.g., “*Quaint Directions for the Carving all manner of FOWL*”), the books define words and meanings. The verb *thigh* is one of the “proper terms in Carving, which are used abroad and at home, by the curious students in the art of Carving,” and defined thus by Woolley:

In cutting up all manner of small Birds, it is proper to say, Thigh them; as thigh that Woodcock, thigh that Pidgeon; but as to others say, Mince that Plover, Wing that Quail, and wing that Patridge, Allay that Pheasant, Untach that Curlew, Unjoint that Bittern, Disfigure that Peacock, Display that Crane, Dismember that Hern; Unbrace that Mallard, Frust that Chicken, Spoil that Hen, Sauce that Capon, Lift that Swan, Rear that Goose, Tire that Egg. (Woolley 1673, 113; but similar in Woolley 1677, 30)

The simple definition (“cutting up all manner of small Birds”) precedes the term (“Thigh”); headword and definition are offered in the context of similar verbs appropriate to specific species of small bird (“Mince that Plover, Wing that Quail” and so on). The style of definition is at once tidy and rich.

The terminology of carving is a common component of books that describe cookery, medicine, and household management. (Terms for carving constitute a portion of the lexicographical content in the earliest of the dictionaries attributable to a woman: Dame

Juliana Berners offers a strikingly similar list in the 1496 Book of St. Albans, which additionally describes terms for hawking and hunting.) Lynette Hunter argues that combining cookery, medicine, and household management into a single guidebook was a structure emergent in and unique to women authors of the mid sixteenth-century; similar texts produced by men (for women) tended to describe only one or two of these domains (1997, 95), as in Woolley’s *The Ladies Directory*. And so the density of women’s lives is rendered in dense texts which are sometimes comprised of lexicographical description and sometimes made legible by appended lexicographical description. Mary Johnson’s *The Young Woman’s Companion* (later published as *Madame Johnson’s Present*) follows the tripartite structure; it also includes “An Accurate tho’ Compendious Spelling Dictionary” which list of words without definitions nevertheless reveals the scope of women’s “conduct” within and beyond the household. Between *abdomen* and *azure*, we encounter:

accountant	anonymous	apparel	arbitrable
ache	ante-date	apple a fruit	arithmetical
after-birth	anti-Christ	apple (of love) a plant	aromatic
almond	anti-venereal	appointment	arrow-head
ambigue	anxiety	apprenticeship	artillery
amble	apish	aqueous	atom
anemony	apothecary	arable-land	autumnal

It is, I think, as important to recognize the lexicographical work of women undertaken in conjunction with cooking and conduct as it is to recognize it in conjunction with grammar and conversation. That so much of the dictionary-work attributable to women before the turn of the century happened within “domestic” and professional manuals of this kind indicates an uncommon but persistent insistence on definition as contextual: words are made meaningful at the table, the sickbed, the market.

Comprehensive General-Purpose Lexicography

Notably few of the lexicographical works attributable to women look like those authored by Samuel Johnson or Noah Webster. To be sure, many of the dictionaries listed in Figure 3.1 record common words as well hard ones (e.g., Woolley's 1673 *The Gentlewomans Companion* defines formulas of address and greeting). Many encourage (by creating and/or reproducing) a normative form of the English language (e.g., Johnson's 1753 "Spelling Dictionary" in *The Young Woman's Companion* regulates orthography). Many build from a corpus of terms in circulation (e.g., Evelyn's 1690 "The Fop-Dictionary" defines terms of women's dress). But very few dictionaries attributed to women attempt to record the whole of the language by means of a written literary corpus and with an eye to general use. Anne Fisher's 1773 *An Accurate New Spelling Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language* (second edition) is the exception.²⁴ And it almost was not an exception at all.

Surviving copies of any edition of Fisher's work have proven rare. In compiling his bibliography of English dictionaries, 1604-1800, Alston (1966) was able to track down and catalogue all but five of the 352 dictionaries, subsequent reprints, revisions, and abridgements on his list. Alston had located advertisements and other commentary attesting to three editions of *Fisher's Spelling Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language* (1774; 1781; and 1782), but he was unable to locate a single copy of any edition. Today, copies of the second edition (1773) are held only in the Gregg Swem Library at the College of William and Mary and Robinson Library at Newcastle University.

No copy of the first edition of Fisher's dictionary (1771) survives. As detailed in a compelling and well-researched article by Alicia Rodríguez-Álvarez and María Esther

²⁴ Other notable exceptions include Piozzi 1794 (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4) and Hughs 1827, both of which are freestanding monolingual dictionaries of considerable bulk.

Rodríguez-Gil (2006), this is because its publication and sale were suppressed by injunction. Legal proceedings had been instigated by Fisher's own publisher (grown bitter or greedy enough to forge evidence) and the injunction filed by the publishers of John Entick's *The New Spelling Dictionary* (1765). In court, Fisher argued innocence in pirating Entick's work, won, and published a so-called second edition of the dictionary, "the same Size & Plan with all y^e same material Improvements in common" with the first, in 1773.

The *Spelling Dictionary and Expositor* joined a formidable oeuvre. Fisher had, by the 1760s, established herself as an educator, author, and grammarian (Isaac 2004). Her 1750 *A New Grammar: being the Most Easy Guide to Speaking and Writing the English Language Properly and Correctly* was popular and influential; it was reprinted by her publisher and pirated by others. Fisher is commonly credited with creating both the grammatical exercise of correcting "false English" and the grammatical rule that the masculine pronoun is generic. Her work was and is persistent. Evidence suggests that her dictionary ran to at least six editions by 1788.

It is not, to me, surprising that, at the moment the question "Is it a dictionary?" seems most answerable in the affirmative—profitable in 1771 and powerful now—that the question "But did she write it?" also comes to the fore. Rodríguez-Álvarez and Rodríguez-Gil (2006), drawing on Fisher's own arguments, show that she *did* write it. Her original contributions withstanding, Fisher was as indebted to other predecessors (e.g., Bailey 1721, Buchanan 1757) as she was to Entick, and her dictionary was as dependent on other lexicographers as were the dictionaries of her contemporaries. Fisher was a marked danger in her time, aberrant as a best-selling author of authoritative reference works and aberrant most especially as an author of a large-scale English language dictionary. Given that this is the story of perhaps the most

successful general-purpose English language dictionary to be authored by a woman, it is not surprising there were not more.

WOMEN'S DICTIONARIES AND MAJOR TRENDS IN ENGLISH LEXICOGRAPHY

I have been describing dictionaries produced by women as rich in variety, but that fact, in some ways, simply attests to the rich variety of dictionaries produced over this time period. The work of women in the domain of lexicography is not necessarily groundbreaking or unique. The eighteenth century, for example, saw a flood of botany dictionaries while the nineteenth saw a flood of dialect dictionaries (Cowie 2009, 62); women's botany and dialect dictionaries neither anticipated nor followed those floods but participated in them.

Women's lexicographical projects are sometimes there at the "start." In 1794, Hester Lynch Piozzi's *British Synonymy* was early in a pack to imitate Girard's (1718) French synonymy and so pave the way for Roget's (1852) *Thesaurus* (Hüllen 2003). Anna Lydia Ward's (Hoyt and Ward 1881) co-authored *Cyclopedia of Practical Quotations* as well as her (1889) solo *Dictionary of Quotation in Prose*, ushered in an era of quotation dictionaries (Cowie 2009, 258-259). But women's lexicographical projects are not primarily interesting for being "first" or even "early" in various traditions of specialized lexicography. Women's dictionaries simply constitute an often under-considered portion of the specialized English dictionary archive.

And women's dictionaries suggest some varieties of the specialized English dictionary worth establishing and describing more systematically: the cooktationary,²⁵ the conduct dictionary, and the colonial dictionary, most specifically. As genres of reference, the dictionary and the cookbook share a number of rhetorical features and functions that might be productive

²⁵ I am indebted to Cora Dann Arvidson for originating this term and to Heather Arvidson for passing it along to me.

to consider together as they each fashion shared meanings, practical knowledge, and consultative reading practice. Cookbooks (and domestic manuals) not only participate in definition-like work but, as I've shown, they sometimes contain explicitly lexicographical components that, in contrast to hard word dictionaries, emphasize common words in ordinary everyday use. The conduct dictionary might be important to consider as it extends the tradition of hard words and antedates the kinds of prescriptive lexicography valued later on as advancing, say, students in college settings. The conduct dictionary sets a scene in which the dictionary's work is to shore up the cultural elite, but it does so not in only in relation to literature and other learned letters but also and primarily in polite conversation and interpersonal correspondence. The colonial dictionary seems a striking sister to the sleeping dictionary, pointing to the ways in which the lexicographical work of the British Empire fell to women, colonizing and colonized.

Traditions of the Scholarly English Dictionary

Historians of lexicography tend to be in agreement about the major historical “turning points” of the English language dictionary over the time period I've here covered: Before the early seventeenth century, lexical information was combined with other kinds of linguistic description (e.g., grammar), but after the early seventeenth century, dictionaries were “freestanding,” codices in which the bulk of the content was lexical description. Before the early eighteenth century, dictionaries described only difficult or unusual words, but after the early eighteenth century, dictionaries described the lexicon more comprehensively. Before the mid eighteenth century, dictionaries were made by copying other dictionaries, but after the mid eighteenth century, dictionaries were made by compiling a corpus and extracting words and meanings from it. Before the early nineteenth century, dictionaries described elite English

for learned audiences, but after the early nineteenth century, dictionaries were accessible all-purposes references for general audiences. In the final section of this chapter, I'd like to discuss how dictionaries attributable to women do and do not participate in these so-called turning points.

Lexicographical Trends: Combined to Freestanding Lexicons, Hard Word to Comprehensive Dictionaries

Cawdrey's (1604) *A Table Alphabeticall* is the first of the freestanding dictionaries of English and it also the first in the hard words tradition. The point at which the dictionary "breaks free" from other kinds of information is accorded great importance within most histories of lexicography. The first freestanding monolingual dictionaries concentrate on cataloguing technical and abstract words, with increasingly encyclopedic definitions toward the end of the seventeenth century; this style of dictionary remains dominant into the mid-eighteenth century. (See Figure 3.2)

3.2. Timeline of Dictionaries Attributable to Women, 1486-1755

1486	1604	1673	1677	1690	1702	1715	1741	1745	1753
Berners carving, fauna, hawking, hunting	Cawdrey monolingual hard word	Woolley address, carving, greeting, medicine	Woolley accounting, carving	Evelyn cosmetics, fashion, housewares	Kersey comprehensive, general- purpose	Elstob foreign language	Atkyns carving, housewares, medicine	Fisher address, elocution, homonyms	Johnson grammar, personal names, spelling
↳ hard words tradition					↳ comprehensive tradition				

Dictionaries attributed to women don't comfortably fit within this periodization scheme. While many define and describe hard words (Evelyn's "The Fop-Dictionary," for instance, is in large part a trove of technical and abstract terms), many define and describe common words used in everyday language (notably, Woolley 1673 catalogues and defines formulas of address and greeting). Moreover women's dictionaries are unwilling, unable, or just unlikely to separate the lexicographical from other kinds of material. At no point does

freestanding lexicographical work become primary. From the seventeenth century and throughout the nineteenth, women's lexicons are consistently housed within all-purpose references, lifework/conduct guides, and other forms of equal- or easy-access education manuals.

John Kersey's (1702) *A New English Dictionary* is often used to flag a major "advance" in lexicographical work, the beginning of a comprehensive tradition. (See Figure 3.2.) In the first half of the eighteenth century, dictionaries begin to record common words as well as hard ones. They also gesture to increasingly broad audiences and grow to include and define an increasing number of headwords. Dictionaries attributed to women do grow in size over this period (e.g., Evelyn collects sixty-five headwords; Johnson more than 5,000), but they do not claim to be "comprehensive," "unabridged," or "universal"—terms favored in reference to Kersey.

Lexicographical Trends: Borrowing Methods to Corpus Methods

At the mid-eighteenth century, historians note that dictionaries begin to build their word lists not by collecting and heavily borrowing from earlier lexicons but by building and analyzing a corpus of written literary English, sometimes including quotations of those sources within the dictionary itself. Dictionaries also attempt in earnest to cover "the whole" of the English language. Samuel Johnson's (1755) *A Dictionary of the English Language* is considered an important precursor to this scholarly universal tradition, which continues to this day. (See Figure 3.3.)

3.3. Timeline of Dictionaries Attributable to Women, 1755-1800

1755	1760	1773	1782	1784	1793	1794	1797	1799	1799
Johnson scholarly universal, general- purpose	Glasse weights and measures	Fisher scholarly universal, general- purpose	Devis general- purpose, synonymy	Adams religion	Affectionate Mother foreign language, children's	Piozzi general- purpose, synonymy	Bryan astronomy	Genlis foreign language	Murray botany
↳ scholarly universal tradition									

Johnson's dictionary is an early articulation of what would become hallmark features of the dictionary genre's form, content, and function. His 1755 edition as well as its authorized and posthumous revisions held sway in England throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Bejoint 2010, 89). It wasn't until the *OED* (Murray et al. 1884-1928) that the historical dictionary marked the beginning of a twentieth century tradition, though that tradition too emphasizes the scholarly (method), the universal (audience), and the comprehensive (lexicon).

Dictionaries attributed to women again don't fit quite comfortably into these eighteenth- and nineteenth-century lexicographical traditions. Certainly, the patterns of borrowing are, in the case of women, different. Which is not to say that women were not party to the kinds of reproduction that we today call piracy or plagiarism, only that the tight systems of borrowing that have been meticulously traced in the case of male-attributed texts (e.g., Starnes and Noyes 1991; Hüllen 1999; Landau 2001) have not been established for female attributed ones (though Mulvey 2007 makes a small start; as does Rodríguez-Álvarez and Rodríguez-Gil 2006). Moreover, the front matter to women's dictionaries sometimes credits their sources and names their collaborators (e.g., Atkyns 1741; Piozzi 1794; Rowson 1807; Palmer 1839). In many cases, borrowing may have been uncommon because precursors were

nonexistent. The semantic fields covered by women’s dictionaries were not often coincident with the semantic fields of other contemporary lexicographical projects.²⁶

The historical focus on assembly and analysis of a corpus has had the effect of limiting our understanding of early lexicographical “method” to borrowing and adding. Women’s dictionaries may be a rich archive through which to explore early dictionary-making practices that were not reproductive: How did women assemble corpuses, especially when oral and practical rather than written and literary? Because women’s dictionaries were often appended to or embedded within larger reference works, their corpus is often built in and through that larger reference. To what extent does the non-lexicographical material of dictionaries attributed to women fulfill a similar or different role to literary or illustrative quotation?

Lexicographical Trends: Elite to Egalitarian

In the United States, Webster’s (1806) *A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language* continued in a similar vein to Samuel Johnson. But Webster is credited with shifting into a more egalitarian tradition of lexicography. (See Figure 3.4.) According to Béjoint, “Rather than tools for the well educated to read their literature or enjoy sharing their culture with their peers, American dictionaries were all-purpose guides and reference works accessible to American citizens of all social classes and all levels of education” (2010, 89).

3.4. Timeline of Dictionaries Attributable to Women, 1806-1830

1806	1806	1807	1813	1814	1814	1823	1824	1825	1827	1828
Webster scholarly universal, American English	Bryan philosophy	Rowson spelling	Jameson/ Murphy children’s	Adams religion	Smith foreign langauge	Eaton cooking, housekeeping	Appleton foreign language	Marcet philosophy	Hughs general- purpose	Robbins children’s
↳ scholarly universal tradition										

²⁶ While dictionaries attributable to women seem to have borrowed little from dictionaries attributable to men, borrowing from cookbook to cookbook was common practice.

For a long time prior to 1806, British and American women had conceived of the lexicographical as fully integrated into all-purpose reference. Women's life and work conduct guides regularly described the English lexicon in a manner accessible not only to "the gentlewoman" but the "servant-maid" also, as Woolley's titles indicate. Certainly lexicographical material was a smaller percentage of the total work in women's conduct books of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than it would be in American dictionaries of the nineteenth, but both readily align the work of the dictionary with day-to-day reference works that, for important and valuable reasons, do *not* stand alone. Women's dictionaries and other forms of lexicographical thought may thus participate in the English dictionary's known generic trajectory of this period, but they also disrupt it, suggesting that the massive sea change of the eighteenth century may have been less massive than scholars tend to claim.

CONCLUSION

The time period I've treated in this chapter, three eventful centuries, is somewhat unwieldy and the texts themselves may seem unevenly distributed across it. But this study is not an attempt at an exhaustive history (like Coleman 2004a; 2004b; 2009; 2010). I have not and we perhaps cannot recover all of the texts by women that would be required for such a history. This collection of dictionaries and other forms of lexicographical thought nevertheless reveals moments when women cluster around kinds of lexicography—colonial, dialectal, specialized, embedded, ancillary. And it attests, if not to the formal training of women in dictionary making, to their creative theorization and professional participation in it.

Anonymous, initialed, pseudonymous, and named women researched, drafted, and published dictionaries of heterogeneous format, unique semantic field, unusual corpora, and

alternative illustrative use. Women marked and concealed their gender as it suited their aims, and they pushed at the edges of the English language nearly as often as they articulated its standard. Some forms of lexicography showed themselves to be more hospitable to female dictionary makers: women produced colonial and evangelical dictionaries in English about another language; they authored dialectal dictionaries of marginalized Englishes; and they embedded their lexicographical work within larger references of women's conduct and children's education. Indeed, an oral and educational emphasis seems to have been a near necessary precursor to women's dictionary making through to the nineteenth century.

An area of lexicography that remained largely but not entirely closed to women was the one that, at that time and into today, seems also to have been most prestigious.

Comprehensive dictionaries of the English language, built on a scholarly method for the benefit of a universal audience, were rarely published by women. And when women did venture into this domain, they often did so obliquely (couching their work as synonymy rather than dictionary, as is the case with Piozzi 1794, or as supplement rather than critique, as is the case with Randall-Diehl 1888).

In the end, this chapter is “a story of moments, not movements,” to quote Jane Donawerth. Donawerth's *Conversational Rhetoric* (2012, 1-2), like this project, uncovers a women's tradition in a masculine domain. Women rhetoricians and women lexicographers alike seem to have theorized their fields in whatever kinds of publications were available to them, even if we today don't recognize that work as, in Donawerth's case, a rhetorical handbook, or, in mine, an English dictionary. And yet, the women's work I have here described is undeniably lexicographical and often enough recognized as “a dictionary” or “a glossary” or

“a vocabulary” by the women responsible for production and the public responsible for consumption.

By compiling and describing lexicographical work attributable to women and insisting on its scholarly recognition, I am, in part, pointing out that women have been excluded from histories of lexicography because historians of lexicography have overly privileged free-standing (rather than integrated) dictionaries, dictionaries restricted to academic arts and sciences (rather than practical arts and sciences), comprehensive (rather than restricted and specialized) dictionaries, and alphabetic (rather than thematic and conversational) macrostructures. But beyond revealing what has been privileged in prior scholarship, I am proposing what could come of future scholarship that takes seriously the contributions to lexicographical theory and practice offered in dictionaries attributable to women. Women’s lexicographical work helped shaped the genre, but it has also shown how the genre bends.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE PARLOR: WOMEN AS PARTICIPANTS IN AND CRITICS OF LARGE-SCALE DICTIONARIES, 1700–1900

In a now famous scene of William Makepeace Thackeray's (1848) *Vanity Fair*, the novel's heroine, Becky Sharp, throws a freshly-gifted edition of "Johnson's Dixonary" out the window of her moving carriage:

When Miss Sharp had performed the heroical act mentioned [...] and had seen the Dixonary, flying over the pavement of the little garden, [...] the young lady's countenance, which had before worn an almost livid look of hatred, assumed a smile that perhaps was scarcely more agreeable, and she sank back in the carriage in an easy frame of mind, saying—"So much for the Dixonary; and, thank God, I'm out of Chiswick." (9)

Thackeray's character plays out something of a commonplace in dictionary histories, one that holds women to be particularly hostile to the dictionary project.

Of course, no woman is *more* hostile to the dictionary than the wife of a dictionary maker. Amy Cooper is the archetype here. John Aubrey's (1693) biographical sketch of her husband Thomas Cooper, who compiled the Latin-English dictionary *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae et Britannicae* (1565), goes as follows:

Dr. Edward Davenport told me that this learned man had a shrew to his wife: who was irreconcilably angry with him for sitting-up late at night so, compiling his *Dictionarie*. When he had halfe-donne it, she had the opportunity to gett into his studie, took all his paines out in her lap, and threw it into the

fire, and burnt it. Well, for all that, the good man had so great a zeale for the advancement of learning that he began it again, and went through with it to that Perfection that he hath left it to us, a most usefull Worke. He was afterwards made Bishop of Winton. (Aubrey 1693, 79)

Resentful of the dictionary for absorbing her husband's attentions, Cooper resorts to destruction of the work in order to distract her husband from it. But her efforts prove ineffective. She may succeed in compromising the place and product of the dictionary (she breaks into the scholar's sanctum, not unsuggestively pulls her husband's pious labor down into her lap, and then pitches the work to its fiery destruction), but she fails to extinguish her husband's zeal for learning; he persists in dictionary making until he completes, perfects, and passes along to the world "a most usefull Worke." It is difficult to imagine what more Cooper could have done to contribute to the ruin of the *Thesaurus* and, likewise, difficult to imagine what more she could have contributed to the success of the metaphoricization of lexicography as man-against-world.²⁷

In spite of the fact that Sharp is fictional and Cooper possibly apocryphal, their caricatures appear in a number of scholarly and popular lexicographical histories otherwise dominated by lists of extraordinary men (e.g., Béjoint 2010 mentions Sharp; Landau 1984 and Starnes and Noyes 1946 mention Cooper; Green 1996 mentions both Sharp and Cooper). The destructive and distracting woman is not uncommon in histories of the dictionary where she is foil to the dictionary-making man, but that woman is quite exceptional in the evidence that remains of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century dictionary making. Accounts of

²⁷ Almost nothing is known of Amy Cooper aside from her troubled marriage: her family name may have been Royse; she may have had land. Around 1546 she is known to have married Thomas Cooper. In the years following, she is supposed to have had at least two affairs, both of which became public knowledge throughout Oxford; her infidelity is documented in poems and pamphlets into the 1590s. Against the advice of friends, her husband refused to divorce her. It is around the time of the affairs that she is reported to have destroyed early drafts of her husband's dictionary (Bowker 2009).

lexicographical production during this period show wives, daughters, and sisters of dictionary makers to be, by and large, distinct advantages rather than liabilities in dictionary work. Indeed, as this chapter will show, women in general proved to be significant, skilled, supportive, and necessary coworkers on the large-scale dictionary projects of this time attributed to men, even as women recognized the consolidation of the genre as a preserve of masculine English and masculine employment.

Notably, women's contributions were often secured by the domestic setting of dictionary production. Allen Walker Read has celebrated the professionalization of lexicography that took place early in the eighteenth century, by referring to "the advent in 1702 of John Kersey, the first professional lexicographer" (2003, 223). But the armchair lexicographer and the professional lexicographer are, in fact, more difficult to distinguish than Read's configuration suggests. Private residences were the scene of lexicographical work in the seventeenth century as they were in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and so the professional lexicographer *is* an armchair lexicographer precisely because the profession of lexicography does not, at any point before the last decade of the nineteenth century, move from the home.²⁸

Importantly, the professional armchair lexicographer is not likely to work alone. His lexicographical labor is enabled and overlapped by, at times indistinguishable from, the domestic management and maintenance that most often fell to women in his household.

²⁸ Printing shops and libraries were other important scenes of early dictionary work, but professional institutional spaces—university offices, and commercial offices—are slow to supplant homes as the primary setting for dictionary making. Even in the twenty-first century, some large-scale dictionaries are made in homes; Jonathon Green (2010) compiled *Green's Dictionary of Slang* in his home. In a 2012 interview, Green appealed for the future of his dictionary, saying, "I want the dictionary to continue; [...] the work needs a home, and, at the moment, my home is insufficient" (Cummins 2012).

Women's lexicographical contributions were made within and in spite of enforced domesticity; their work was often piecemeal, taken as voluntary, compensated little if at all. To recognize the domestic setting of the dictionary is to emphasize the way in which the genre is situated and gendered by at once exploiting women's labor and rendering it invisible.

To prove this point, we need only look to the two most famous English language lexicographical projects of the time: Samuel Johnson's (1755) *A Dictionary of the English Language* and James Augustus Henry Murray's (1884-1928) *Oxford English Dictionary* (then known as the *New English Dictionary*). The two are from markedly different lexicographical epochs; Johnson's epitomizes the single-authored dictionary and Murray's the staffed behemoth. And yet both were undertaken within *ad hoc* offices in family homes; both relied on women as manual, administrative, and intellectual labor; both are heavily historicized as achievements of individual men.²⁹

In this chapter, I will show that the domesticity of these projects guaranteed women's participations and that those participations prove absolutely necessary to the successful production of increasingly comprehensive dictionaries. In arguing that women made an array of important contributions to Johnson's and Murray's dictionaries, I am not, however, arguing that these women ensured that Johnson's and Murray's universal dictionaries were indeed universal (e.g., not androcentric). As I argued in Chapter 3, women were either prevented from or uninterested in producing comprehensive scholarly dictionaries themselves, and their participation in such dictionary making under the leadership of men does not mark a reconciliation between women and the comprehensive scholarly tradition. This ambitious

²⁹ While Johnson stands alone, Murray stands alongside other individual men who were prominent editors and advocates of the *Oxford English Dictionary*: Henry Bradley, William Craigie, Frederick Furnivall, C.T. Onions, Richard Chenevix Trench, to name a few.

form of dictionary production may have required the labor of women, but it nevertheless entailed their exclusion, gendering the genre as masculine in content and authorship. I'll therefore pair my description of women's participations in Johnson's and Murray's dictionaries with a description of critiques of those dictionaries offered by women connected to them. These perspectives support the claim that women were crucial to the work of Johnson and Murray at the same time they testify to the ways in which those dictionaries present a masculinized English and produce a working environment hostile to women workers.

Finally, I will briefly consider how both the gendered labor that underwrites the production of Johnson's and Murray's dictionaries and critical observations about the gendering of the genre offered by women close to Johnson's and Murray's projects are absented from lexicographical histories. Historical accounts may well include women as part of the story of dictionary making, but women tend to be portrayed as either destructive distractions or happy helpmates. Neither portrait does justice to the variety, quantity, and quality of labor women contributed to large-scale dictionary making or to the personal, social, and generic cost of their contributions.

SAMUEL JOHNSON: LADIES' MAN

Histories of Samuel Johnson exist in near-stifling abundance. By and large, they paint the same unbelievable portrait of endless capacity. The man writes poetry, rescues prostitutes, publishes popular periodicals, and fetches oysters to feed his favorite cat. He gives new meaning to phrases like "literary lion" and "ladies' man"; in fact, he doesn't just give new meaning, he *is* meaning. He tells us what words mean and what *life* means. And he does all of this in delightfully digestible *bon mots*: "If (jaid he) I had no duties, and no reference to futurity

I would spend my life in driving briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman” (Boswell 1791, vol 2, 149).

His death in 1784, at the age of seventy-five, was said to have been quiet (Rogers 2009), but cacophony followed. Friends, acquaintances, and even enemies raced to publish his definitive biography, and England’s reading public raced to read it. Hester Lynch Piozzi, known to her close friend Johnson as “Mrs. Thrale,” drafted her biography while honeymooning in Italy, and it was Piozzi who was first to print his life story. Her *Anecdotes of Doctor Johnson* was published on 25 March 1786, just three months after Johnson’s death; all copies sold that day (Ingrams 1984, xiv).

The impulse to tell the story of “Dictionary Johnson” and “Johnson’s Dictionary” has remained thick into this century. Lexicographical histories of *A Dictionary of the English Language*, often draw on the abundance of biographical detail about Johnson, sketching a portrait not just of the dictionary which bore his name but of the daily life led by the man and his diverse coterie of wealthy friends, literary luminaries, Grub Street colleagues, ragtag housemates, and pets. It is within the domestic and social scenes of Johnson’s lexicographical work where it becomes possible to read women’s participation in dictionary making. Johnson’s duties in reference to the future of the English language may have prevented him from driving briskly in a post-chaise, but they did not prevent him from keeping the company of women.

Women at Work: A Dictionary of the English Language

Johnson’s work on *A Dictionary of the English Language* was, in some way or another, in-progress for more than four decades. The project itself likely began sometime in the early 1740s, when a group of London booksellers started speculating on the profitability of a large-scale English dictionary and Johnson emerged as possible author. Johnson’s own work on the project likely

ended in 1786, when alterations written by Johnson in his own copy of the fourth edition informed the sixth and seventh editions posthumously published in 1785 (Reddick 1990, 175). Work on Johnson's *Dictionary* was as spread out in space as it was in time: alliances were forged in Grub Street, books were borrowed from private libraries in and around London, pages were set in Little New Street, titles were conferred at Oxford, advertisements were placed in papers published throughout England. The bulk of Johnson's own day-to-day work on the *Dictionary* occurred in private residences, of which he had many after 1746: Holborn, Gough Square, Hampstead, Inner Temple, Johnson's Court, and Bolt Court, to name a few. It is a biographical commonplace that Johnson crowded into these homes not only a strange coterie of infighting friends, but, in the case of Gough Square and Johnson's Court, dictionary workshops complete with libraries, deal tables, and staff members. Later in life, Johnson became a semi-permanent houseguest himself, holding his own rooms and free rein of the libraries in the Streatham and Southwark homes of Henry and Hester Thrale, from 1766 until 1782.

Women lived in and were important to the daily function of the homes-*cum*-workplaces Johnson inhabited. Within these spaces, women were not only general domestic workers, they fulfilled administrative tasks attendant with dictionary work (acting as ambassadors and amanuenses, for example). They were also Johnson's valued friends, offering companionship that was as much intellectual (and lexicographical) stimulation as it was social distraction.

Domestic and Administrative Work

Women were responsible for much of the housework and housekeeping of the homes that contained Johnson's primary dictionary workshops at Gough Square and Johnson's Court. While maids and cooks undertook manual domestic labor, domestic responsibilities easily shaded into administrative ones for at least three of the women in Johnson's household: his

wife Elizabeth (*née* Jervis then Porter) Johnson, his lifelong friend Anna Williams, and his family friend Elizabeth (*née* Swynfen) Desmoulins (who was also Elizabeth Johnson's long-term companion and general nurse). These women, in helping to manage home and family, were also helping to manage dictionary workshops and staffs.

Elizabeth Johnson is frequently disparaged by historians in the words of Robert Levet: “always drunk and reading romances in her bed, where she killed herself by taking opium” (e.g., quoted in Reddick 1990, 68), but she was not likely as inactive and inconsequential as this and other similar characterizations suggest. Though she was frequently estranged from her husband and spent a great deal of time away from him in Hampstead, Elizabeth Johnson was mistress of the houses at Holborn and Gough Square (Bate 1955, 263). She appears to have overseen at least some of the household cooking and cleaning; two oft-cited exchanges between the couple (which originally appeared in Piozzi 1786) attest to her concern with the household: According to Samuel Johnson, “She was extremely neat in her disposition, & always fretful that I made the House so dirty—a clean Floor is so comfortable she would say by way of twitting; till at last I told her, I thought we had had Talk enough about the Floor, we would now have Touch at the *Ceiling*” (Ingrams 1984, 30). Asked “if he ever huffed his Wife about his meat,” Johnson is said to have replied, “Yes Yes [...] but then She huffed me worse; for She said one Day as I was going to say Grace—Nay hold says She, and do not make a Farce of thanking God for a Dinner which you will presently protest not eatable” (Ingrams 1984, 31).

Elizabeth Johnson's defensiveness about the household is of course not a defense offered by one who cooked and cleaned herself but rather by one who managed the cooking and cleaning on behalf of her husband. Further evidence that she enacted such duties—in spite of estrangements and/or romance reading—comes from the realigning of household

responsibilities that followed her death. In 1752, we know that kitchen supervision was overtaken by Desmoulins (Craig 1895, 234) while household accounting and general management were overtaken by Williams (Jones 2004). Williams occupied a particularly prestigious place within Johnson’s home. She presided over household ceremonies, carving meat at the dinner table and serving tea to Johnson and his guests (Craig 1895 227-228), including those who visited on dictionary business.

Williams and Desmoulins were thus helping to manage the dictionary workshop at Gough Square, and they were still doing so at Johnson’s Court, where the fourth edition of the *Dictionary* was made. By then, the household had grown to include two servants: a maid each to Williams and Johnson. Johnson’s maid, a Mrs. White, served as a general housekeeper (Bate 1955, 304) and was left one hundred pounds of stock annuities in Johnson’s will (Boswell 1791, vol 2, 572). These women thus supported the domestic daily function of the spaces in which the first edition of *A Dictionary*

of the English Language took shape, underwriting lexicographical labor with manual and administrative labor (see Figure 4.1).

4.1. Women Contributors to the First and Fourth Editions of *A Dictionary of the English Language*: Household Members, Friends, and Paid Staff

Contributor	Residence
Elizabeth (Swynfen) Desmoulins	Gough Square, Johnson's Court
Elizabeth (Jervis Porter) Johnson	Gough Square
Hester Lynch (Salisbury Thrale) Piozzi	Streatham, Southwark
Mrs. White	Johnson's Court
Anna Williams	Gough Square, Johnson's Court

Intellectual Work

That women were connected not only to Johnson’s dictionary workshops but to his lexicographical thinking is clear in the cases of Williams and Piozzi. Both of these women maintained close and long-lasting friendships with Johnson, both lived with him and

entertained him at tea into the small hours of night, both collaborated with him on published projects, and both undertook independent lexicographical projects of their own.

Nearly as long as Johnson was a lexicographer, Williams was his constant companion. The two became friends in 1748, and Williams moved into the Johnson household in 1752. She resided with Johnson for more than three decades. The two regularly shared tea, dinner, and walks with one another. According to James Boswell, even during the brief period in which Williams lived separately from Johnson, she:

had so much of his attention, that he every night drank tea with her before he went home, however late it might be, and she always sat up for him. This, it may be fairly conjectured, was not alone a proof of his regard for her, but of his own unwillingness to go into solitude before that unseasonable hour at which he had habituated himself to expect the oblivion of repose. (1791, vol. 2, 228).

In spite of Boswell's attempt to downplay Williams' importance to Johnson, we can see that she was significantly more than a domestic employee who smoothed operations within and beyond the dictionary-making space; she was also a personal resource for Johnson, and her affective labor in friendship supported the mental health and professional productivity of the dictionary maker.

The conversation shared by Williams and Johnson may well have turned to the lexicographical at least on occasion. Letters from Johnson to a printer and to the novelist Samuel Richardson show that Williams was engaged in a dictionary project of her own in 1754, a collection of philosophical terms (Jones 2004). On behalf of Williams, Johnson asked Richardson if he "th[ought] her dictionary likely to shift for itself in this age of dictionaries," but Richardson's answer appears to have been no (quoted in Larsen 1985, 29). The dictionary may not have been completed, was not published, and does not survive today. The scenario nevertheless suggests that, just as Williams' work sponsored Johnson's dictionary, his

connections and encouragements sponsored hers. Williams did go on to publish a poetic project. Her 1766 *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* includes a preface, poetry, and prose by Johnson and others among his literary friends.

In the years between the third and fourth editions of the *Dictionary*, Johnson relied on the friendship of Piozzi, then known by her first married name Thrale. Piozzi had a vibrant intellectual and literary life in advance of meeting Johnson; she was well educated by her parents (“till I was half a Prodigy,” she wrote in her *Autobiography*). She maintained her own study, wrote regularly, and had earned a reputation as a literary magnet in her own right (Franklin 2004). Like Williams, Piozzi was a witty conversationalist and shared in Johnson’s intellectual interests. The year after Johnson met her (early in 1765), he took up rooms in her houses, where he had full access to her well-appointed libraries (Franklin 2004). For the next sixteen years, Johnson remained a frequent visitor and travel companion. Piozzi collaborated with Johnson on various publication projects. She contributed original poetry and a translation to Williams’ *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose*. According to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, “she assisted him in the preparation of his *Journey to the Western Islands* (1775), and Johnson acknowledged that several of the lives in his *Lives of the English Poets* (1780-1781), completed at Southwark and at Streatham, owed as much to her conversation as to her skills as amanuensis” (Franklin 2004).

Piozzi was thus proficient in the Johnsonian style of a dictionary maker—equipped with discerning taste, insatiable in intellectual conversation, and competent at harmless drudgery. These capacities suggest that she contributed more or less directly to Johnson’s lexicographical work—perhaps as an amanuensis or conversationalist but certainly as a taste maker whose social influence and finely-appointed library helped to determine which authors of the day

were “authoritative” enough to be cited in the *Dictionary*. Her independent interest in the English language lived on after Johnson’s death and gave her cause to put her skills to use in her own dictionary project, *British Synonymy, or, An Attempt at Regulating the Choice of Words in Familiar Conversation* (1794).

Domesticating Johnson’s Dictionary: Piozzi’s Parlor-Window Lexicography

On her thirty-fifth birthday, Hester (*née* Salusbury) Thrale was given six blank leather-bound books by her first husband, Henry Thrale. The covers of each volume bore red labels with the title *Thraliana* printed in gold lettering. Until 1809, the year in which her second husband, Gabriel Mario Piozzi, died, she used these volumes as a diary and commonplace book, documenting daily events, recording personal anecdotes, and drafting creative work. Her entry for 14 December 1791 reads: “The Synonymes François makes a pretty Book; perhaps an English one of the same plan might be useful, I have half a mind to try my skill for the purpose” (Piozzi 1776-1809, 831).

Within three months, she had begun preliminary work on the project (Clifford 1952, 367) but was faltering:

just now that I am sick & growing old & all, I have A Project or two in my Head one to write a little Poem something like More’s female seducers[...]. My other Project is a two Volume Book of *Synonymes* in English, like that of Abbé Girard has done in French, for the use of Foreigners, and other Children of six feet high: such a Business well manag’d would be useful, but I have not depth of Literature to do it as one ought.—a good parlour-Window Book is however quite within *my* Compass, and such a one would bring me Fame for ought I know, & a hundred pounds which I want more; for this last Bath Journey has been marvelously expensive—between giving Balls & Suppers, & Stuff to divert Cecilia Thrale’s empty head from this paltry Fellow—and buying Clothes to appear in, & one Thing or other. (Piozzi 1776-1809, 837-838)

By August 1792, though, Piozzi was hard at work on the project. In a letter to her daughter, she describes her workday: “ten pages o’ Day copying, besides a little Composition now & then to

stretch and swell: but this is my best Time for Diligence, as Mr. Piozzi is in Wales, and there is nobody near to drop in and disturb one at this Time o' Year" (Clifford 1952, 368). And yet drop-ins and disturbances were frequent throughout composition of *British Synonymy*: Piozzi had other literary projects underway (the poem she mentions as well as a preface for another work), an ailing husband to attend to, a daughter on the verge of making a bad marriage, guests to entertain, travel to plan, and a steady stream of social events to host and attend. She was, after all, *not* a professional lexicographer nor even a professional author, but rather "always a blue" (Hayward 1861, 462), a part-time cultural luminary and part-time house mistress, busy with mostly unremunerated public and private responsibilities.

Her foray into lexicographical publication brought her three hundred pounds, a handful of compliments, and quite a few harsh criticisms (Clifford 1952, 370-373; Piozzi 1776-1809, 866, 905, 922, 931, 947). *Thraliana* records Piozzi's reaction to early reviews that forwarded accusations akin to plagiarism: "the Critics are all civil for ought I see, & nearly just, except when they say that Johnson left some Fragments of A Work upon Synonymy—of which God knows I never heard till now one Syllable, nor had he and I in all the Time we lived together, any conversation upon the Subject" (905). Indeed, Piozzi had delayed her publishing career to avoid just such an accusation: "While Johnson lived whatever I wrote would have been attributed to *him* & I *could* not turn Author" (813).

The popular question then and now is what does *British Synonymy* say about the relationship between Piozzi and Johnson? Does the *Synonymy* symbolize "a case of self-defeating rebelliousness" because Piozzi was "so busy setting herself apart from Johnson that she [did] not think of appropriating him" (McCarthy 1985, 186)? Or does it mark Piozzi's "ambivalent response to her threatened historical subordination" which made her "recast

Johnson as merely a great author, one source among many for the synonymist” (Berglund 2003)? *British Synonymy* may well have accomplished any number of affective ends for Piozzi in her personal relation to Johnson, but the question I would rather ask is what does *British Synonymy* say about the gendering of the dictionary genre?

I am here interested in the lexicographical effects the *Synonymy* achieves in relation to large-scale dictionary work of the eighteenth century. Understood as a commentary on Johnson’s *A Dictionary of the English Language*, *British Synonymy* forms the hinge between women in domestic contact with the masculinized lexicon and women attempting to read the domestic back into the lexicon: As “Mrs. Thrale,” Piozzi made significant (if invisible) contributions to making *A Dictionary of the English Language*, affording domestic and personal supports to the dictionary maker as well as intellectual and cultural authority to the dictionary itself, but, as a dictionary maker in her own right, Piozzi forwards a lexicographical project quite counter in theory to Johnson’s. Piozzi’s work insists on meanings as highly situated, socially motivated, and culturally contingent. *British Synonymy* thus serves to unsettle *A Dictionary of the English Language*, taking many of its definitions and highlighting their radical inadequacy in educated day-to-day use.

British Synonymy identifies itself as a guide to the “selection of words in conversation and elegant colloquial language” (ii). Piozzi claims that, while proper writing is the preserve of men, the kind of “familiar talk” treated within *British Synonymy* is often an attainment of women, who “may at worst be qualified—through long practice—to direct [their] choice of phrases” (ii). Piozzi is, of course, herself one such qualified woman, “a learner, not a teacher” of these “mundane sciences,” who, in modeling her own conversational training, can “direct travellers on their way, till a more complicated and valuable piece of workmanship be found to

further their research” (iii-iv). She declares that the work is “intended chiefly for a parlour window, [...] acknowledging itself unworthy of a place upon a library shelf” (iv).

The A-to-Z contents of *British Synonymy* unfold as a series of short essays on semantic clusters. In the place of a headword, there is a list of similar terms, and, in the place of a definition, there is a short essay. Instead of an entry that looks like this:

ABANDON v. a. [*abandonner*, Fr.]
1. To give up, resign, or quit. *Dryd.*
2. To desert. *Sidney. Shakefp.*
3. To forsake. *Spenser.*
(Johnson 1775)

There is an entry that looks like this:

TO ABANDON, FORSAKE, RELINQUISH, GIVE UP, DESERT, QUIT, LEAVE
OF these seven verbs then, so variously derived, though at first sight apparently synonymous, conversing does certainly better shew the peculiar appropriation, than books, however learned; for whilst through them by study all due information may certainly be obtained, familiar talk tells us in half an hour—That a man FORSAKES his mistress, ABANDONS all hope of regaining her lost esteem, RELINQUISHES his pretensions in favour of another; GIVES UP a place of trust he held under the government, DESERTS his party, LEAVES his parents in affliction, and QUILTS the kingdom for ever.
Other instances will quickly prove to a foreigner that 'tis a well-received colloquial phrase to say, YOU LEAVE London for the country. Telling us you QUIT it seems to convey a notion of your going suddenly to the Continent. —That any one DESERTS it can scarcely be said with propriety, unless at a time of pestilence or tumults of a dangerous nature, when we observe that the capital is DESERTED [...].
(Piozzi 1794)

This particular entry continues for a total of three pages, addressing the fine distinctions in meaning as revealed in and demonstrated by examples from polite conversation.

Entries in the earliest pages of Piozzi's *Synonymy* seem closely tied to Johnson's *Dictionary*.³⁰ Where the *Dictionary* equates *abandon*, *give up*, *desert*, and *forsake*, the *Synonymy*

³⁰ A cursory comparison suggests that entries for later letters of the alphabet are less closely linked to Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language*, and, as is the case with many lexicographers, more independent methodologies may have emerged by later letters of the

repeats and only slightly extends the word cluster before going on to declare their incommensurability. The repeated assertion is that writing flattens crucial difference in meaning readily apparent in conversation.

Piozzi's contribution to lexicographical theory is, then, to relocate the lexicon from the abstract page to the concrete parlor, to (re)domesticate meaning in order to highlight its nuance, its contingency, and its power. Piozzi's personal testimony and her lexicographical work both signal that, while women of the eighteenth century were closely tied to and necessary in lexicographical work, they were considered to have little authority in English and their participations in dictionaries of English—especially comprehensive dictionaries of English—were thus frequently confined to domestic settings. That is, women could be invisible administrative and intellectual contributors to the consolidation of Standard English within comprehensive dictionaries attributed to men or they could publicly describe Domestic English within lexicographical work that positioned itself as ancillary.

Women Described: Historicizations of Women's Contributions to Johnson's Dictionary

I have been arguing that women were necessary to the function of Johnson's dictionary workshops and vital to the function of Johnson as a dictionary maker (see Figure 4.1). A *Dictionary of the English Language* needed a well-managed office and well-balanced editor; and women assured both. But I've also shown that women's participations in *A Dictionary of the English Language* entailed their alienation. At the same that time Johnson may have invited women to support him in the making of his dictionary, those same women attest to the ways in which his dictionary and dictionary making in general excluded them. Williams kept the books

alphabet. More robust analysis of *British Synonymy* as a lexicographical object is needed. McCarthy's (1985) assessment of it as making insufficient use of Johnson (186-187) seems insufficient as an account of Piozzi's lexicographical method.

for the dictionary workshop, but her dictionary never became a book; Piozzi's discerning taste in literature informed the corpus for *A Dictionary of the English Language*, but her discerning taste in parlor conversation was not a part of English as it was described in *A Dictionary of the English Language*.

The kinds of contributions women made to Johnson's *Dictionary*, including their commentary on the gendered mode of lexicography the *Dictionary* promoted, are rarely highlighted within historical accounts—even lexicographical ones—of the dictionary's production or revision. To be sure, women appear in such accounts, but their influence on the dictionary's production is narrowed to their influence on the dictionary maker, and that influence tends to be cast, in the vein of Cooper and Sharp, as destructive and dismissive instead of supportive or enlightening.

Allen Reddick's 1990 *The Making of Johnson's Dictionary 1746-1773* is an example of a lexicographical history that offers a detailed description of the production of each unabridged edition of *A Dictionary of the English Language* published during Johnson's lifetime.³¹ It downplays the gendering of dictionary labor and the gendering of the dictionary genre revealed in women's contributions to the work, and it casts women into marginal roles that further support a gendered history of the genre.

Women most commonly appear in Reddick's narrative within the frame of biography not lexicography. According to the introduction to *The Making of Johnson's Dictionary*, the history draws on biographical narrative³² “to provide texture and richness” to the subject (ix); however, the texture and richness afforded by biographical narrative does not accrue to these

³¹ Two unabridged editions were published in 1755, a third in 1765, and a fourth in 1773.

³² Reddick draws on biographical narrative along with “textual and bibliographic analysis, printing and publishing history, lexicographical theory and history, theologico-political history, poetical criticism, literary theory and history” (1990, ix).

women (Reddick gives little detail about them beyond their names) or to the subject of dictionary making but rather to Johnson. That is, the barest sketches of women appear within *The Making of Johnson's Dictionary* in order to flesh out our appreciation of Johnson's own personal achievements (in kindness, perseverance, generosity, genius). The role of women in *The Making of Johnson's Dictionary* is thus primarily rhetorical—they are not described in the context of day-to-day dictionary work or method but rather their description helps to shore up the personal and professional attributes of the hero-lexicographer.

The primacy of this rhetorical role becomes obvious when women who are vastly different in their ties to Johnson's life and work are reduced to roughly the same effect. The first woman to appear in *The Making of Johnson's Dictionary*³³ is a woman who very likely had no role in the *actual* making of Johnson's *Dictionary* and no place in his affections, household, or social circles: Mary Peyton. Peyton was the “presumed” wife of an amanuensis Johnson was “particularly protective of” (63). The financially-strapped Johnson paid for her bail when she “had charges brought against her, apparently for disturbing the peace”; Johnson begged money from friends and acquaintances in order to support the Peytons when “Mrs. Peyton was bedridden and either paralyzed or comatose, perhaps as a result of a stroke” and her husband forced to give up work to care for her; Johnson later paid for her burial (63-64). While Mary Peyton is shrouded in presumably, apparently, and perhaps within Reddick's narrative, Johnson comes into clear focus as a steadfast and enterprising provider. “Johnson's paternal care” and “devotion” for his favorite dictionary amanuensis “continued for years” in spite of

³³ *The Making of Johnson's Dictionary* names eleven women: Poll Carmichael, Elizabeth Carter, Elizabeth “Tetty” Johnson, Sarah Johnson, Mary Peyton, Lucy Porter, Catherine Talbot, Hester Thrale, Sophia Thrale, Jane Warton, and Anna Williams. Most are listed in the index.

this troublesome wife (63). Like Cooper, Peyton poses a threat to the dictionary that is ultimately hollow because the zealous dictionary maker will not be diverted.

Elizabeth Johnson is nearly indistinguishable from Peyton in rhetorical function, in spite of the fact that she meant significantly more to Johnson and his dictionary workshop at Gough Square. The index of *The Making of Johnson's Dictionary* points to six pages referencing her, and all six pages allude to her death as a distraction from dictionary progress. While Johnson was hard at lexicographical work, "his wife sank miserably to her death" which event "anguished and strained" Johnson so much that work on *A Dictionary of the English Language* all but stopped for over a year (2, 27, 69). Reddick is careful to point out additional causes for the delays (27), but he returns, again and again, to Elizabeth Johnson as Samuel Johnson's albatross. In life, she is embarrassingly ignorant of his lexicographical genius and resentful of his lexicographical labor; Reddick positions her complements of Johnson's work on *The Rambler* as "particularly poignant because we know of no other example of Tetty³⁴ offering her husband praise for his work, which it is clear (and hardly surprising) that she often resented as intrusive" (68). In illness, she prompts such "extreme and debilitating sadness" in Johnson that it distracts his attention from the dictionary (69). In death, she leaves him "distraught with sadness and guilt and virtually unable to function[...]. His daily concerns, not to mention his lexicographical or literary interests, were badly disrupted. Johnson continued in this state for some time, obsessed with and all but incapacitated by the loss" (69). Reddick repeats the Levet line: Elizabeth Johnson was "always drunk and reading romances in her bed, where she killed herself by taking opium" (68). The caricature of Elizabeth Johnson that emerges is a pitiful one—unhelpful and unenlightened, she is an embarrassing burden that is just as heavy once it

³⁴ Reddick, together with most other historians, refers to Elizabeth Johnson as "Tetty," the name by which she was familiarly known to her husband.

is buried in the ground. She is, then, a threat to dictionary making, graver perhaps than Mary Peyton but no more successful; for, in time, Samuel Johnson finds “busy yet unburdensome responsibility which might take his mind off his troubles and help him to become productive again” (70) and soon enough his *Dictionary* is complete.

These two women—dying or dead—are more prominent in *The Making of Johnson’s Dictionary* than is Williams, the woman who lived with him throughout his lexicographical career.³⁵ No details of Williams’ value to the dictionary or the dictionary maker are included in Reddick’s narrative; she is only named and classed among the “misfits” who “depended upon Johnson, and he obviously needed their presence as well” (65).³⁶ Any characterization of Williams as little more than an adopted dependent or an atmospheric ornament seems a gross underestimation of her practical and intellectual value to the dictionary maker and the dictionary-in-the-making.

The Making of Johnson’s Dictionary is itself much indebted to Piozzi for her documentation of the project’s proceedings. Piozzi had born witness to Johnson’s intellectual habits (30), his financial straits (63-64), his contractual dealings with London booksellers for the fourth edition of the *Dictionary* (89), and his reluctance to undertake revision for the fourth edition (217), but Reddick absents the person of Piozzi from these proceedings—parenthetically citing her writing without acknowledging her presence during Johnson’s intellectual, financial, commercial, and editorial work.

³⁵ Sarah (née Ford) Johnson, Samuel Johnson’s mother, is a third ghost. Her son’s lexicographical consistency is described as compromised by his feelings of guilt for not visiting her in the years before her death (106).

³⁶ Poll Carmichael is the other woman named as belonging to the pack of misfits (65). While Williams and Carmichael did indeed live together under Johnson’s roof, they were not comparable. By most all accounts, Carmichael’s residence was brief and regrettable.

Instead, she is frequently conflated with her first husband (referenced only insofar as she is one part of “the Thrales”) and always confined to social relations—a member of Johnson’s cultural clique, a close personal friend, a welcoming hostess (160, 161, 232). Her intellectual contributions, her cultural cachet, and her store of books are alluded to (34, 92-93, 161, 204, 218) but repeatedly reduced to delightful diversion in passages such as this one, which describes Johnson’s life after he agreed to revise the *Dictionary*: “During the following year and a half, he worked steadily at Johnson’s Court, interrupted at regular, pleasant intervals with trips to visit the Thrales at Southwark and Streatham” (93). These homes were where Johnson accessed the cultural authority, persons and books, Piozzi had herself assembled. *The Making of Johnson’s Dictionary* does not acknowledge the extent to which Johnson drew on the cultural authority that circulated in Piozzi’s parlors, nor does it acknowledge the extent to which Johnson’s *Dictionary* dismissed the importance of the parlor in his description of English.

Conclusion

In many ways Reddick’s *The Making of Johnson’s Dictionary* is an excellent addition to lexicographical scholarship. The book offers a richly intimate sense of a lexicographer at work in mid to late eighteenth-century England, and it does so by bringing to light surviving materials—drafts, editions, abridgments, and revisions of *A Dictionary of the English Language*—that help us to better understand Johnson’s lexicographical theory and method. Its focus on the heroic author becomes in many ways, however, a misrepresentation of the populated scene in which the Johnson’s *Dictionary* seems to have been made.

In undertaking such a large-scale lexicographical effort, Johnson was remodeling the workforce necessary to the task. He would need more than an armchair; indeed, he required a working home-office—large enough for himself, his books, and his team of amanuenses. He

would require that household expenses and services stretch to encompass the professional lexicographical project, and so women's work stretched to encompass professional work—manual and administrative labor in the domestic production of a dictionary. He also needed like-minded colleagues, close friends with whom he could speak about his lexicographical endeavors and theirs; again, women collaborated with Johnson in this capacity even when their own lexicographical efforts were dismissed, delayed, or diminished.

What we find when we attend to the domestic life of Johnson at work on the production of his dictionary is actually a slew of men and women at work on his dictionary. We encounter some gender stratifications that we might have expected in an eighteenth-century workplace (women sweep the floors, men read the books), but we encounter some that might be less expected (men copy books, women buy and lend them). What seems salient here is that roles in dictionary production become gendered and women's contributions then become invisible, ignored, or discounted—not by Johnson himself but by others who aggrandize the author to the exclusion of all or most of his coworkers. We see the author's work as lexicographical, the work of his male paid amanuenses as sort-of-but-less-so lexicographical, and the work of women—no matter its quantity, its quality, its variety, its remuneration—as *not* lexicographical.

The women connected to Johnson who endeavored more direct forms of lexicography reveal that the field may have been open to their participation behind the scenes but it was certainly hostile to them otherwise. Williams could not find support for her philosophical dictionary, and, while Piozzi succeeded in publishing her dictionary of synonymy, it ultimately testifies to the ways in which she understood dictionaries like Johnson's to be descriptions of masculinized Englishes inappropriate or inadequate to the parlors so important to her day-to-day experience of the language.

There is some charm to thinking about the bookish Johnson as a ladies' man. Certainly a number of stories attest to his preference for the company of women and his generosity to women as knowledge makers. But when we allow the characterization of Johnson as a ladies' man to shape lexicographical history, I believe we do so to our own detriment. For women held more than personal appeal for Johnson, they were professionally valuable to him and his dictionary. Moreover, dictionary making is not masculine charisma rewarded by willing feminine admiration; the kinds of jobs women performed in the service of Johnson's dictionary were not always voluntary, not always recognized, and not always rewarded in kind. Perhaps most importantly, dictionary making is not a romance, even between a man and a language. It is a rhetorical and material production that, in the case of Johnson, was underwritten by invisible women's labors even as it foreclosed on their participations in dictionary production and content.

It may or may not be problematic for women to get lost in biographical narrativizations of Johnson as a hero-lexicographer, but it is certainly so in lexicographical narrativizations of the making of his dictionary. Williams and Piozzi in particular seem helpful in thinking about how Johnson's lexicography was not a sole author affair but a social authorship affair in which many women participated as dictionary-making colleagues.

JAMES MURRAY: FAMILY MAN

The *Oxford English Dictionary* is perhaps, first and foremost, a thing of calculated abundance. We know it in numbers: The project is said to have begun with 54 pigeon holes able to hold 100,000 slips of paper; but it would take more than 1,000 pigeon holes and countless slips of paper collected over seven decades by as many editors before the first edition, 125 fascicles released

serially over 40 years, was complete. The *OED* was rereleased in 1933 in 12 volumes and a supplement (Murray et al. 1933); three decades later, a more ambitious supplement added four volumes and nearly 70,000 entries to the original work (Burchfield 1972–1986). The 20 volumes of the second edition (Simpson and Weiner 1989) are said to weigh exactly 62.6 kilos, 137.72 pounds. The *OED Online* purports to include “600,000 words...3 million quotations...over 1000 years of English.” The *Oxford English Dictionary* is typically toted up thus—with almost infinite precision. It is a known quantity in so far as it is known to be unequalled by any other record of the English language.

But if we have come to know the *OED* as hard numbers we have also come to know it as heart-warming narrative. K. M. Elisabeth Murray’s 1977 *Caught in the Web of Words* has played no small part in setting this tone. Her biography of her grandfather James Murray is little short of enchanting, full of fine-grained details about the dictionary maker. He was a born teacher, who, “the first time he saw his baby brother [...] brought his primer, saying, ‘I will show little brudder round O and crooked S’, as the greatest treat he could offer the baby” (10–11); he was a poet-archeologist, who, at 21, penned an “Address to a skeleton discovered in a stone cist in this vicinity” (36); he was an inveterate trespasser, who “used to lead his large family along the railway line, ordering the children to throw themselves into cover in the ditch if a train approached—not because of danger of being struck, but to avoid prosecution” (61); he was an avid bicyclist, who “never learnt to dismount, except by falling sideways, a manoeuver apt to take by surprise any unwary cyclist following him too closely” (328); he was a meticulous correspondent, who “wrote on an average thirty or forty letters a day [which often] ran to several pages in his minute handwriting” (181); he was a consummate classifier, who reflected on his own proclivities, “Man is fond to classify, to separate, to discriminate, to set apart in

little cells of memory the mass of facts he gathers from the field of nature. But nature has no such isolating method—her facts and laws are a continuous, all-connected network” (47); and he was, of course, a lexicographer among lexicographers, wearing a long white beard, a black velvet skull-cap, and a black frock coat, he who logged thirteen-hour days and “although there was a place for him at the tables where his assistants sat [...] preferred to work standing for hours at a time at a high desk which [...] held the large Dictionaries of Johnson, Littré, Webster and the *Century* open for reference” (298). Of his involvement with the *OED*, Murray said:

I think it was God’s will. In times of faith, I am sure of it. I look back & see that every step of my life has been as it were imposed upon me—not a thing of choice; and that the whole training of my life with its multifarious & irregular incursions into nearly every science & many arts, seems to have had the express purpose of fitting me to do this Dictionary...So I work with the firm belief (at most times) that I am doing what God has fitted me for, & so made my duty; & a hope that He will strengthen me to see the end of it... (341)

The unexpected fascinations to be found in the personalities who made the *OED* were later celebrated in Simon Winchester’s 1998 *The Surgeon of Crowthorne: A Tale of Murder, Madness, and the Love of Words* (its British title) or *The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary* (its American title). Winchester’s account became an international bestseller, and there was some excitement in the press for “OED, the movie” (July 1998).³⁷

Within both the numerical and narrative accounts of the *OED* we can begin to sense the necessities of women’s participation. The sheer magnitude and diversity of the lexicographical project made it impossible to undertake without the help of many men and women; and the man destined for and consumed in lexicography necessarily drew the men and women into that lexicographical life also. As with Johnson, it is the scale and domesticity of Murray’s work

³⁷ A film has yet to materialize.

that affords us access to women's roles within dictionary making—formally and informally serving as clerical staff, office managers, amanuenses, personal assistants, research assistants, readers, subeditors, advisors, and intimates. And when we see those roles, at once invited and circumscribed, we begin to make sense of the way in which the genre's major changes in content are made possible by gendered labor that often rewarded and recognized men while exploiting women.

Women at Work: The Oxford English Dictionary

To speak of “the making of the *OED*” is to speak expansively, across time, place, and persons. The project could be said to have started around 1842, with the establishment of the Philological Society, a group of gentlemen philologists who eventually planned and sponsored the dictionary in its early years, or perhaps in 1857 with the formation of the Unregistered Words Committee, which subgroup of the Philological Society was comprised of word collectors who quickly became dictionary critics. The end date of the project can comfortably be declared a fiction; work on the *OED* continues to this day and will continue for the foreseeable future. The work is and always has been spread out across the globe and shared among persons who may or may not ever meet one another in person.

And yet, this impossibly large project, unwieldy to the extreme, has consistently found a home in *homes*. To be sure, it was in an unheated upstairs room of the London Library that Richard Chenevix Trench delivered his Unregistered Words Committee report to the Philological Society (a lecture better known today by the title “On Some Deficiencies in our English Dictionaries”), but Committee meetings about “the Philological Society's Dictionary” were held in his own residence beside Westminster Abbey (Winchester 2003, 39, 49). By 1858, Herbert Coleridge had become editor, and, the private pale-yellow mansion at 10 Chester

Terrace, London, where he and his wife Ellen Persehouse (*née* Phillips) Coleridge lived, was, accordingly, the place where dictionary correspondence was delivered and the first pigeon holes (for filing slips of paper with word senses) erected (Winchester 2003, 50, 57). After Coleridge's untimely death in 1861, Frederick Furnivall had the dictionary materials relocated to the residence he occupied with his wife Eleanor Nickel Dalziel in St. George's Square (Murray 1977, 136-138). James and Ada Murray gave the *OED* a long-term home in theirs, building the first Scriptorium (a cold iron shed reserved for dictionary documents and workspace) onto the side of their house at Mill Hill in 1879 and sinking the second Scriptorium three-feet into their backyard at Oxford in 1885 (Murray 1977, 172-3, 241-242).

Henry Bradley was the first *OED* editor to work in an Oxford office; Bradley and his staff occupied a room in the Old Ashmolean Building beginning in 1896, while Murray and his staff continued at the Scriptorium until 1915 (Winchester 2003, 176, 229). The private residential accommodation of the Scriptorium was gradually supplanted as the primary site of dictionary work by professional office spaces afforded by various universities in England and the United States with which editors were affiliated. But even Robert Burchfield, editor of the second supplement and the second edition of the *OED*, began his tenure in 1957 in a house not an office. According to Charlotte Brewer:

On his first day, he reported to the Oxford University Press and was shown to 40 Walton Crescent, 'a small back house in a back street' nearby, with the disadvantages that it functioned partly as a private house and partly as a catch-all office for a number of other OUP projects. One of his first visitors was the caretaker's dog, followed soon after by the caretaker's baby grandson dressed in his pyjamas, along with other members of the same family who lived in the building. (2007, 152)

In 1957, something part-house-part-office may have seemed disadvantageous to Burchfield, but this blend was most definitely not without precedent in *OED* production nor was

the arrangement anything short of crucial to the *OED*'s success. The home-office model of the first edition, quite obviously, folded support of the dictionary into household management, such that the labor and cost of the physical space were absorbed by editors and their families. But, within the context of the home, editors' families were not just keeping house and managing money; they were often responsible for dictionary making—assisting as professionals in administrative and lexicographical work, often without pay or for pittance. Domestic arrangements were vital to the first edition of the *OED* on a grander scale. With the editor's home-office acting as a hub for home-offices around the world, dictionary readers, researchers, subeditors, reviewers, and proofers could work from home—and, in many cases, for free. Expenses were minimized without sacrifice to input.

These domestic arrangements attendant with familial relations, not only allowed for but required the participation of women in dictionary making. Thus the personal circumstances of individual women—as wives, daughters, sisters, widows, spinsters, and friends—enabled, encouraged, or demanded their professional contributions to the dictionary—as readers and writers, as researchers, as assistants and alphabetizers, as proof readers and subeditors, and, in a few instances, as paid members of the editorial staff.

Women Contributors and Dictionary War Work

While the *OED* was, in important ways, the undertaking of families, it was also an undertaking of strangers. In his 1857 Philological Society lecture “On Some Deficiencies in our English Dictionaries,” Trench described the work of the *OED* as the undertaking of an army. Less detailed critique than impassioned call, the address imagined the *OED* as the end product of a bizarre lexicographical brigade that “would join hand in hand till it covered the breath of the island, and would then in this fashion pass over it from end to end, rendering it impossible that

so much as one of those whom they desired to seize would escape” (Trench 1860, 69-70).

Trench urged:

it is only by such combined action, by such a joining of hand on the part of as many as are willing to take their share in this toil, that we can hope the innumerable words which have escaped us hitherto, which are lurking unnoticed in very corner of our literature, will ever be brought within our net.
(69-70)

While Trench may have fashioned these dictionary workers as a hand-holding army tasked with making visible the entirety of the English Language; the truth is that their dictionary work involved little hand holding and, in most instances, almost no face-to-face contact. The army succeeded in making much of English visible, but the army’s labor remains mostly invisible to dictionary users and historians of today. The names of these people and the roles they fulfilled are partially known—some formally acknowledged in introductions, some mentioned in books like *Caught in the Web of Words*, some collected into lists long after the fact by scholars and *OED* staff (e.g., Brewer 2007; Green 1996; Gilliver 2012). But just who these contributors were, what they did, and how and why they did it remain unclear. Most particularly if they were women.

Peter Gilliver has made a useful start at understanding these dictionary collaborators with his annotated list of biographical information about major contributors to the first edition. (Originally published as part of Lynda Mugglestone’s 2000 *Lexicography and the OED*, the list has been reproduced and expanded on the *OED Online*.) But it is not surprising that Gilliver’s list is better at describing men than it is women. The list, and the archive from which it is built, often only names men and alludes to their unnamed wives, daughters, or sisters as also engaged in the work. When women are named, it is often by marital title, an initial that may be a husband’s, and a last name. While seventy-five of the male contributors—roughly a

third of the total—appear in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, only five female contributors do.

What I would like to offer here is a quick sketch of the women who worked on the first edition of the *OED*, the kind of work they did, and how much of it. In so doing, I hope to offer a richer portrait of women working in all of the capacities recognized by *OED* historians—as staff who were paid for various kinds of clerical, managerial, and lexicographical work; as readers who collected citations; as subeditors who oversaw production of lettered subsections; as assistants who conducted research, arrangement, collation, proofreading, and correspondence as necessary. Individual women often fulfilled many of these roles, and they did so in addition, not merely to upper-class leisure or bored spinsterhood, but in the context of otherwise busy professional and personal lives.

Readers. The majority of women working on the first edition of the *OED* were a part of what the *OED* today styles as “The Reading Programme.” The program “recruits voluntary and paid readers, and these readers provide the *OED* editors with quotations which illustrate how words are used” (*OED Online*, “Reading Programme”). For the first edition, one, maybe two, women were paid. The rest (listed in figure 4.2) worked from home and for free. Fewer than thirty readers are credited with submitting more than ten-thousand citations, but, as Figure 4.2 attests, a fair amount of them were women: Eliza Felicia Burton, the daughters of Frederick Elworthy, Miss A. Foxall, Jennet Humphreys, E. Perronet Thompson, and Edith Thompson are among them.

4.2. Women Contributors to the First Edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* : Readers

Contributor(s)	Quotations	Contributor(s)	Quotations
Eleanor E. Barry	2,600	Jennett Humphreys	18,700
Maria Burnley Bathoe	5,000	Miss Ingall	~
Alice K. Blomfield	6,050 *	Miss Eva Jackson	~
Emily R. Blomfield	6,050 *	Miss Lees	~
Jane Charlotte Blomfield	6,050 *	Edith Madan	2,000
Mary Elizabeth Blomfield	6,050 *	Elizabeth O. Moore	2,200
Miss B. M. Bousfield	~	Mrs. (James) Ada Agnes Ruthven Murray	~
Miss L. Bousfield	~	Margaret Alice Murray	1,888
Eleanor Spencer Bradley	~	Rosfrith Murray	~
Mrs. Brandt	~	Miss C. Pemberton	~
Mrs. Brooks	5,000	Mrs. G. H. Pope	~
Elizabeth Brown	3,000	Ethelwyn Rebecca Steane (Mrs. L. F. Powell)	~
Jemima E. A. Brown	4,500	Henrietta May Poynter	2,500
Effie Browne (Mrs. W. R. Browne)	5,000	Mrs. Rackham	~
Eliza Felicia Burton	11,400	Mrs. C. F. Richardson	3,100
Miss A. Byington	2,450	Mrs. Herbert Frederick Peel Ruthven	~
Mrs. G. M. E. Campbell	4,000	Eliza M. Saunders	3,300
Miss Ellen Channon	~	Emily Saunders	9,300 *
Miss Susan Cunnington	~	Grace E. Saunders	9,300 *
Miss Ada Dewick	~	Frances E. Scott	3,300
Mrs. Edward Dowden	~	Lucy Toulmin Smith	~
Family of Robert Druitt (5 women, 4 men)	6,800 *	Miss L. M. Snow	~
Sophia Louisa Eisdell	5,000	Clara Southwell	2,400
Miss Ellis	~	Miss M. Stephenson	2,450
Daughters of Frederick Thomas Elworthy	12,000 *	Edith Thompson	15,000 *
Mrs. F. T. Elworthy	~	Elizabeth (or Ellen) Perronet Thompson	15,000 *
Miss E. Fowler	~	Hon. Mrs. L. Tollemache	~
Miss A. Foxall	11,250	Mrs. Toogood	~
Miss E. Gee	~	Miss S. M. Unwin	~
Miss L. Gee	~	Louisa G Walkey	~
Mary Giffard	2,900	Prudence Walter	3,700
Geraldine Hadsley Gosselin	3,500 *	Miss M. Westmacott	2,500
Mrs. Hellier R. H. Gosselin	~	Miss A. S. Weymouth	3,350 *
Mrs. Charles Gray	~	Miss B. M. Weymouth	3,350 *
Mrs. T. H. Green	~	Miss R. Weymouth	3,350 *
Catherine Gunning	7,500 *	Isabel E. Wilkinson	7,500
Margaret Haig (Mrs. Alexander Stuart)	~	Miss Wilson	~
Miss A. Hartley	2,500	Mrs. William Noel Woods	~

* Quotation number reflects family contribution.

(based in part on Gilliver 2012)

Subeditors. Most subeditors were unpaid dictionary enthusiasts who had come to the attention of *OED* editors either in professional or personal contexts, sometimes as particularly astute voluntary readers, and were thereafter entrusted with supervising the compilation of

lettered subsections of the dictionary. Subeditors worked from their own homes, where entries and subentries were sent to be collected, arranged, and set back to the primary editor as a more coherent whole. Women volunteered to subedit eleven letters of the alphabet (as shown in Figure 4.3). Many women undertook subediting alongside other unpaid dictionary work. Such was certainly the case with Edith Thompson who read for quotations and subedited C; she also acted as an assistant, reading proofs for D and most of the letters following, consulting with Murray on historical terms, and performing targeted research at his request.

4.3. Women Contributors to the First Edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*: Unpaid Subeditors

Subeditor(s)	Section(s)
Jemima E. A. Brown	B, C, D, I, P
Jessie Craigie	U
Family of Frederick Elworthy (wife and daughters)	D
Margaret Haig (Mrs. Alexander Stuart)	O
Mrs. G. H. Pope	C, N
Edith Thompson	C
Louisa G. Walkey	D, W
Miss M. Westmacott	T
Mrs. William Noel Woods	B, C, H
Charlotte M. Yonge	N

(based in part on Gilliver 2012)

Assistants. Assistants helped to carry out an array of tasks that might have been requested by *OED* editors (the most common of which are listed in figure 4.4). Many proofread and conducted focused lexicological research (of etymology, usage, spelling, and so on), like Edith Thompson. Others, like Ada Murray, combined research with administrative and ambassadorial tasks. Most participated in endless amounts of arranging and assembly. None were compensated for their work.

4.4. Women Contributors to the First Edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*: Unpaid Assistants

Assistant	Function(s)
Eleanor Nickel Dalziel Furnivall	research, arrangement
Ada Agnes Ruthven Murray	research, arrangement
Hilda Murray	research, arrangement
Henrietta May Poynter	research, arrangement
Lucy Toulmin Smith	research, collation
Edith Thompson	research, proofreading
Elizabeth (or Ellen) Perronet Thompson	proofreading
Louisa G. Walkey	arrangement
Miss M. Westmacott	arrangement

While some of the women who volunteered as *OED* readers, subeditors, and assistants may have done so in the leisure hours afforded to Victorian women of the upper class, evidence suggest that many of them paired their work on the *OED* with vibrant intellectual and professional lives. Charlotte Yonge was a successful novelist and a published onomastic historian (her dictionary of Christian names is included in Figure 3.1). Lucy Toulmin Smith was a scholar who had edited texts for (among others) the Early English Texts Society and was employed as a librarian at Oxford's Manchester College (Porter 2004). Edith Thompson was an active professional historian, a published author, and an accomplished artist; by the time she began work for the dictionary, her *History of England* (1872) was well-enough-known to London school children to be familiarly called their "Edith." While working on the *OED*, she continued to write and publish, revising and updating the *History of England* for domestic, American, and Canadian editions in addition to editing for Arnold's English Literature Series and co-authoring a historical guide to Bath (Capern 2008).

Women who volunteered for the *OED* were, thus, skilled (though, like Murray himself, they may have been largely self-taught); they were also busy (with undocumented domestic labor, no doubt, but also with other personal commitments and professional employments); and they were not without financial needs (as the professional authors among them demonstrate). That so much of the labor of the *OED* occurred through correspondence from private residence to private residence has had the effect of eclipsing women's labor (absorbing it into the contribution of the head of household and trivializing it as less than lexicographical).

Paid Staff. While the vast majority of women connected to the *OED* were unpaid laborers for it, a handful appear on *OED* payroll at various points during the making of the first edition (see

Figure 4.5). Their names, or parts of them, appear in lexicographical histories and on paperwork in the archives, but their lives and work are difficult to discern beyond that. Paid staff members seem to have

4.5. Women Contributors to the First Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary: Paid Staff

Staff Member	Supervising Editor(s)
Eleanor Spencer Bradley	Bradley, Onions
Miss M. D. Harris	Murray
Miss I. B. Hutchen	Craigie
Elsie Murray (Mrs. R. A. Barling)	Murray, Onions
Rosfrith Murray	Murray, Craigie, Onions
Miss Scott	Murray
Miss Skipper	Murray
Ethelwyn Rebecca Steane (Mrs. L. F. Powell)	Craigie, Onions
Miss A. M. Turner	Bradely

functioned similarly to unpaid assistants. Some were hired for small jobs of limited duration, nevertheless important to the project. Miss Scott and Miss Skipper, for example, were “two young ladies from the village” paid to transition the dictionary from the messy editorship of Frederick Furnivall (dead rats were involved) to James Murray’s “full orderly” Scriptorium (Murray 1977, 175, 177).

Women paid to work on the dictionary were more likely long-term employees. Eleanor Bradley, Rosfrith Murray, and Elsie Murray all began work on the dictionary in childhood (they were daughters of editors) and continued into their adulthood. Records show a Miss E. R. Steane joined the staff in 1901 and stayed on as an employee for more than three decades (Brewer 2007, 37, 58). Ethelwyn Rebecca Steane became Mrs. E. R. Powell after marrying dictionary coworker Lawrence Fitzroy Powell in 1909 (Gilliver 2012). Evidence suggests that she was paid as a slip sorter and, later, as a “regular researcher” working in the Bodelian Library (Brewer 2007, 39-40, 272-273). Miss Senior, later Mrs. Jessie Coulson, was hired in 1924 to work on what would become the 1932 supplement, while the first edition was still in progress (Brewer 2007, 38, 39). She made significant contributions to the making and completion of the supplement in addition to subsequent Oxford dictionaries. She was coeditor,

among men, for *The Little Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Ostler and Coulson 1930) and *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Little et al. 1933), and, for the *Oxford Illustrated Dictionary* (Coulson et al 1962), she was coeditor alongside women.

Notably, the work of Powell and Coulson was sometimes or mostly carried out in offices and not homes, marking the shifting scene of dictionary work. And, yet, the move away from domestic spaces in some ways threatened to curtail women's participation in lexicographical projects. The office was perceived as an inappropriate environment for them, no matter their experiences to the contrary. In 1932, after completion of the first supplement, the *OED* staff was mostly disbanded, and Powell expressed some anxiety about leaving the office: "I shall at first feel rather strange after so long a spell of work—after 31 years of one sort of life, there must needs be a complete readjustment of proceedings! No doubt I shall settle down to a home life—anyhow I must. My husband is frankly delighted to have me always at home" (Brewer 2007, 58). Powell, like Eleanor Bradley and Rosfrith Murray, likely continued to share findings from her own private reading with the *OED*. That is, for most or perhaps all of their lives, these women acted as unpaid readers, submitting new words or new word usages to the *OED* whether or not they were commissioned to do so (see Figure 4.2).

Wives and Dictionary Housework

Wives of *OED* editors were important if unrecognized staff members, performing an array of roles more or less directly lexicographical (see Figures 4.2-4.4). Eleanor Furnivall, wife of Frederick Furnivall from 1882 to 1883, was disparaged and dismissed as a "lady's maid" by her husband's friends and colleagues (Peterson 2007), but she was *not* a lady's maid (Peterson 2007) and likely acted in skilled capacities on behalf of her husband while he was editing and reading for the dictionary. She was his amanuensis, and reports from visitors to their home suggest

she was actively involved in other aspects of the project: They “watched her clear away the supper dishes (roast potatoes, asparagus, and coffee) only to replace them with piles of research papers, sorting, transcribing, and arranging the resulting material for use in the dictionary” (Green 1996, 372). When Mary Lilian “Teena” Rochfort-Smith replaced Eleanor Furnivall in Frederick Furnivall’s affections, she had already replaced her in secretarial and lexicographical capacities. Rochfort-Smith had been his secretary for some years, and the two went on to collaborate on a number of intellectual projects (Thompson 1998), likely the dictionary was among them. Jessie Craigie, the wife of editor William Craigie, is said to have described her own contribution, sorting all or part of U, as “war work” (Brewer 2007, 26).

Ada Murray’s dictionary work is particularly noteworthy. She functioned as a personal assistant to James Murray throughout his editorship, managing his finances, engagements, travel, and some of his correspondence (Murray 1977, 68, 181, 279, 296, 331). She served as his professional advisor, counseling him on his career and offering advice on important dictionary decisions (Murray 1977, 155, 206, 228, 331). She also oversaw the Scriptorium, cleaning it in spring (with the help of the eleven Murray children) and assisting in the packing and transport of its contents from Mill Hill to Oxford (Murray 1977, 243, 321). She served as an ambassador for the dictionary at public events when not detained in childbirth or childcare (Murray 1977, 185, 307, 333). Indeed, she was often detained from childcare by dictionary work:

For the younger ones the nurse, Emma, was their mother-figure, who fed, dressed, bathed and put them to bed. They remembered Ada busy at her desk in the dining room, doing the house-keeping accounts and helping to answer James’ voluminous correspondence, and when she had done with her writing, making smocks for the girls. (Murray 1977, 332)

Later, Ada Murray was an archivist of information about her husband and the *OED*, saving and storing paperwork as well as curating stories about the dictionary and her husband’s direction

of it (Murray 1977, 71, 331). Her role in many ways echoes Piozzi's, who was archivist of Johnson's life and work.

OED wives thus maintained households (with dictionary offices) and husbands (with dictionary duties and dictionary-related social obligations), but they also consistently offered explicitly lexicographical contributions to the first edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4), shaping not only the contents of the work but how we can understand its method and history.

Daughters and Dictionary Homework

The children of *OED* editors were no less instrumental to the work than were their mothers. *Caught in the Web of Words* gives us a great deal of insight here, describing what it was like for the Murrays' eleven children to grow up alongside the dictionary. There were five daughters—Hilda, Ethelwyn, Elsie, Rosfrith, and Gwyneth—and six sons—Harold, Ethelbert, Wilfrid, Oswyn, Aelfric, and Jowett (their father favored given names of the Anglo-Saxon period). According to *Caught in the Web of Words*, “As each child reached an age when he or she could read, they were pressed into service”: Instead of or in addition to more traditional chores, they daily sorted and alphabetized dictionary slips sent by readers to their home (178).

But for many of the Murray daughters, early enforced dictionary grunt work built to more complicated administrative and ambassadorial responsibilities and resolved as skilled lexicographical careers. Hilda, Rosfrith, and Elsie Murray began work on the dictionary by alphabetizing slips of paper alongside their brothers and sisters. Hilda later maintained the Scriptorium, and Rosfrith and Elsie acted tour guide to the scores of visitors that arrived at the Murray's Mill Hill and Oxford homes in hopes of seeing dictionary production in progress (Murray 1977, 279, 300, 321).

Hilda Murray eventually took on statistical analyses that informed fascicle introductions. The work required a high level of skill and a sophisticated knowledge of the English language, and Hilda had both. That is, she could and did scour page proofs to identify and tally current, obsolete, and alien words as well as primary entries, subsidiary entries, word combinations, and quotations (Murray 1977, 180). She, in effect, started the counting that continues to this day to shape how we understand the magnitude of the *OED*. At the time she did statistical work for the *OED*, Hilda Murray was enrolled at Oxford Home School where she eventually earned First Class Honours; she later became a lecturer at Cambridge and a headmistress at Girton College (Birchfield 2009). Her early lexicographical work thus opened onto another career in scholarship. She never sought full employment at the *OED* (see Figure 4.5), but she did revise her father's *Encyclopedia Britannica* entry on the English language (Birchfield 2009).

Rosfrith and Elsie Murray, on the other hand, did become formal employees of the dictionary (see Figure 4.2). They were members of the editorial staff; both were working with their father in the Scriptorium the day before he died, and both continued to work on the project afterward. None of Murray's sons did the same.³⁸ However, daughters of *other* *OED* editors did work for the dictionary. Notably, Eleanor Bradley worked as a member of the editorial staff from 1897 onward, first under the editorship of her father William Bradley then his successor C. T. Onions (Brewer 2007, 6).

The work of wives and daughters may have been recognized by husbands, fathers, and even coworkers, but it was most certainly second-class in terms of salary and prestige. Wives

³⁸ Harold Murray contributed some 27,000 citations as a volunteer reader for the *OED*, and had some responsibilities in the Scriptorium before going to college (Murray 1977, 180), but he was never formally employed as a member of the dictionary staff.

and children were rarely paid and their labor rarely credited in the finished work. The surviving payrolls indicate that Eleanor Bradley and Rosfrith Murray were consistently the lowest paid staff members working on the first edition and the 1932 supplement; they were also given far inferior severances—bonuses instead of pensions—at the close of the first edition (Brewer 2007, 35, 37). When the last fascicle was published in 1928 and a celebratory banquet staged at Goldsmith’s Hall, editors, publishers, poets, bishops, vice-chancellors, university chairs, professors, and other dignitaries—some 150 men in total—enjoyed caviar, quail, and champagne in the “faux-Palladian palace,” amid pillars and portraits, under chandeliers and tracery (Winchester 2003, xix). A handful of women—Eleanor Bradley, Jessie Craigie, and Rosfrith Murray (whose cumulative labor on the *OED* by that time likely exceeded a century) among them—were invited, not so much to attend the event as to look down on it from what the Goldsmiths themselves described as a “not very comfortable” and not very spacious minstrels’ gallery recessed high into a wall of the grand livery hall (Brewer 2007, 5). Goldsmith’s Hall belonged to the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths which did not permit women in their grand livery hall, no matter that the Latin engraving on the Goldsmiths’ own crest proclaimed “Justice, Queen of Virtues” (“*Justitia Virtutum Regina*”).

Regardless of the recognitions they may or may not have received in their time, it is important to recognize now that dictionary-making families were not engaged in simple childhood chores, general housekeeping, or light labor. Their work was often enough arduous and required skill. For wives and daughters, the work might well have been full time. Daughters appear to be unique in making careers of lexicographical work. The dictionary maker’s daughter, pressed into dictionary making herself was enough of a commonplace by the

turn of the twentieth century that it formed the premise for a popular romance by Beatrice Harraden called *The Scholar's Daughter* (1906).

Caught in the Catch Twenty-Two of Words: Beatrice Harraden's The Scholar's Daughter

Beatrice Harraden is listed among “the main contributors to the first edition” by Gilliver and the *OED Online*, but no documentation survives to suggest that Harraden read, subedited, proofed, or otherwise helped the dictionary in any manner akin to the contributions of the women described above. Gilliver's entry for Harraden reads as follows:

*Harraden, Beatrice (1864-1936), novelist (author of the bestselling *Ships that Pass in the Night*, 1893) and suffragette. Friend of Furnivall, who arranged for her to visit the offices of the Dictionary; she subsequently wrote a novel, *The Scholar's Daughter* (1906), whose principal characters are at work on or connected with ‘a dictionary which was to be the abiding pride of the Anglo-Saxon race’.

Harraden was indeed a friend to Frederick Furnivall and had been since her childhood.³⁹ His first letter to her gives some indication of Harraden's intellectual and cultural energies: “Although I am not a Greek root or a 'cello, and am therefore unworthy of your regard, I propose to come and drink a cup of tea and have a slice of bread and jam with you this afternoon” (Munro 1911, 68).

Harraden's childhood interest in Greek etymology continued at university; she studied Greek, Latin, and English Literature at the University of London, graduating with first honors in 1884. Over the course of her friendship with Furnivall, she wrote and published short stories, children's books, and novels (Hunter 2004), including *Ships that Pass in the Night* (1893), which tale of doomed love at a tuberculosis sanitarium originated the phrase (Hunter 2004).

³⁹ Harraden's account of their friendship suggests that they met in or around 1876 (Munro 1911, 68). Harraden would have been 12, Furnivall 51.

Perhaps because of her interests in languages and etymologies, Harraden had had the idea to write a novel about a dictionary maker's daughter. She had begun the work well *before* visiting the Scriptorium, and Furnivall had obligingly arranged a working visit for her.

Harraden described the visit thus:

I went to Oxford to the head-quarters of the great Dictionary; and there, as always, a post card [from Furnivall] had been duly received, stating my wants and disclosing with unguarded truthfulness the plot of my story! Some of the complications and secrets of dictionary-making were unfolded to me with a willing generosity which I shall never forget; and off I went, armed with fresh knowledge and with new friends. (Munro 1911, 71)

The Scholar's Daughter (1906) is not, however, a happy tale of dictionary-making complications, secrets, and friends. It, in fact, paints a very conflicted portrait of dictionary making—idealized as a scholarly domestic endeavor, satisfying to a woman, but also disparaged as a dehumanizing profession, especially for a woman. I'd like to briefly explore how Harraden's commentary on lexicographical work both attests to women's involvements in large-scale nineteenth-century dictionary making and draws attention to how the investments, roles, and rewards of dictionary making differed for differently gendered individuals. Ultimately, like Piozzi's *British Synonymy*, Harraden's *The Scholar's Daughter* is a commentary on the masculinization of the dictionary genre, one that complicates how we can understand women's increased participation in the production of comprehensive scholarly dictionaries of English at this time.

The novel begins with a homey portrait of lexicographical work, very much akin to descriptions of Johnson's garret and Murray's Scriptorium:

The sun of a summer's afternoon was streaming into the old oak-paneled library of the Yew House. It lit up the books, the first proofs, the revises, the rows of mysterious slips of paper, the endless volumes of reference and all the other paraphernalia of dictionary making. For here, in a picturesque old manor house dating back to the Tudors, in the heart of the country, remote from the railroads

and some distance off from any other habitation, Professor Grant and his secretaries had been for years engaged in completion of a dictionary which was to be the abiding pride of the Anglo-Saxon race. (Harraden 1906, 3-4)

Professor Grant and his colleagues, Mr. Durham, Mr. Gulliver, Mr. Heatherly, and Mr. Winter, have used this space not only for the making of a dictionary, but also for the rearing of a daughter, Geraldine. In the sun of this particular summer afternoon, the scholars are awaiting Geraldine's return from university, at which point she will render her decision about becoming a member of the dictionary's permanent staff.

All of the Yew House scholars hope that she "will settle down amongst us and join us in our great work" (5), and, indeed her father, Professor Grant, has intended her to do so all along. Leading her "to live the life of a scholar and a recluse" (87), he has secluded Geraldine within his lexicographical lair:

I have given her scholars as companions, playmates, friends[...] I have carefully kept her from her own frivolous sex with its frivolous influences. I have forgotten no detail in my scheme. No gossiping women servants have been allowed to invade our home, and no idle women visitors have been permitted to waste our time. I have thought of everything (42-43).

Indeed by "intending to leave all his money to the Dictionary," an act "unnaturally stern" in the eyes of his colleagues, Professor Grant leaves Geraldine no choice but to join its staff or manufacture another means of supporting herself (8).

Geraldine is described as both good at and good for dictionary work. She has "a wonderful grasp of etymology" and, "when she chooses, she can do a fine piece of scholarship" for the dictionary (5). While she is away at university, progress on the work slows (19-20). Her childhood colleagues remind her of her skill by way of enticing her to join the staff: "'We have been talking about your remarkable gifts this very afternoon,' said Mr. Gulliver, 'and we have

been hoping with all our hearts that you will feel inclined to stay at home and work at the Dictionary” (19).

Geraldine is tempted to take the position, in part because she loves the dictionary and dictionary work. “[A]lthough she pretended to despise the Dictionary, she had a real affection for it, and would not have allowed anyone but herself to insult it” (20). In her childhood, she had not “mind[ed] in the least working at the Dictionary by fits and starts,” but, in adulthood, she imagines it will be a “dull monotony” of fearful permanence (20). Fearful insofar as it will be poorly-compensated and permanent in its foreclosure on other possible futures—she will not be able to marry and she will not become, as she secretly hopes, an actress. She wishes to avoid in her life what Mr. Gulliver’s regrets in his: “I look back on my life and begin to wish that—that there were no such things as words, or at least that I had never had dealings with them professionally. They deaden one, or rather, people think they deaden one. And it comes to the same in the end” (29).

While taking up dictionary work is little but bleak from Geraldine’s perspective, it has distinct advantages for her father, who cannot otherwise afford the trained male professionals he will need to hire in order to complete the project. The Yew House scholars seem to appreciate the way in which Geraldine’s familial obligations might unfairly yolk her to a regrettable profession for her: “It would not be possible for her to fail us. She would stand by us to the last, and work for us day in and day out if we were ill and could not manage without her help. But you can’t wonder at her not wanting to lead a scholar’s life” (142).

The Scholar’s Daughter is, to me, striking in its portrayal of the way in which large-scale dictionary work was increasingly indebted to women’s labor and the way in which women were increasingly aware of the inordinate personal sacrifice entailed in lexicographical

careers. The fictional Geraldine is very much like the factual women who worked on the *OED*—women who often loved dictionary work, were good at it, helped to move it forward, and found it personally and intellectually rewarding, but, in only a very few instances, were willing to allow dictionary work to deaden them—to ensure economic dependence, to compromise the gendered attributes that made their humanity legible, to foreclose. As a social critique of the dictionary genre, Harraden’s novel shows us the sedimentation of popular sentiments about dictionary making as a masculinized field in which women nonetheless and necessarily participated. And it shows us that the dictionary is itself a product of Victorian gender norms as much as it is words, paper, proofs, revises, rows of mysterious slips of paper, and endless volumes of reference.

Women Described: Historicizations of Women’s Contributions to the OED

In an *International Journal of Lexicography* review of the twenty-fifth anniversary paperback reprint of Elisabeth Murray’s biography of her grandfather, N. E. Osselton wrote: “*Caught in the Web of Words*, which could then at first be taken as a moving (and very informative) granddaughterly tribute, has now itself become a part of the story: a primary source-book for any historian of lexicography” (2002, 333). Osselton here summarizes the remarkable move that *Caught in the Web of Words* has made: it was a heart-warming biography of a man, and it is now *the* scholarly history of the *OED* specifically and lexicography generally. That *Caught in the Web of Words* is valuable not just to historians of the *OED* but to *any* historian of lexicography suggests that the story of the man, the story of a dictionary, and the story of the English language dictionary genre are one and the same.

Charlotte Brewer's (2012a) online repository of *OED* scholarship, *Examining the OED*, makes a similar claim for the expanding value of *Caught in the Web of Words*. Brewer's biographical entry for James Augustus Henry Murray begins:

Of all those involved with the first edition of the *OED*, it was James Murray who made the greatest contribution. It has been explored in a masterly account of his life and work by his granddaughter Elisabeth Murray; everyone interested in the Dictionary should read this book, continuously in print since it was first published in 1977. (2012a, last updated 2008)

Brewer's description, like Osselton's, points to a series of conflations between individual life, individual labor, and massive project: James Murray is conflated with the making of the *OED*, and both Murray and the making are conflated with Elisabeth Murray's masterly account.

Caught in the Web of Words in some ways justifies such conflations. It describes James Murray's day-to-day activities in such detail that we begin to see the day-to-day production of the dictionary also. We watch Murray at work—filing countless slips of paper into countless pigeon holes, imploring multiplying Oxford delegates to foot multiplying expenses, tasking a cadre of children with a cadre of lexicographical responsibilities. Witnessing Murray at work seems little different from witnessing the work of dictionary making.⁴⁰ But, of course, in this chapter, I have been arguing that the work of the *OED* was not limited to the work of the primary editor or even to the work that the editor oversaw, but rather that women's labor on the project was a major component—mostly unseen, by Murray as by contemporary scholars, and, when seen, then as now, understood in terms of Victorian gender norms by which women's work is trivialized while men's work celebrated.

⁴⁰ That the diction between the man and the dictionary is lost in *Caught in the Web of Words* is apparent in chapter titles, the earliest of which name stages in Murray's life ("Round O and Crooked S': The Formative Years," "New Life in London," "Mill Hill: The Arcadian Years") while the later ones name stages in the dictionary's life ("Sundry Shocks and Serious Jars': The Raw Material for the Dictionary," "*Hoc Unum Facio*: Solving the Technical Problems," "Not the Least of the Glories of the University of Oxford").

Precisely because *Caught in the Web of Words* is of unrivaled value to anyone interested in the *OED* and any historian of lexicography, I think it important to understand how its interests in telling the story of a dictionary maker sometimes conflict with the story of a dictionary in the making. Academic work cannot assimilate biography into lexicographical history without recognizing how a granddaughterly tribute might mystify Murray and the *OED* at the same time our scholarly work seeks to clarify participants, products, and processes of dictionary making. In this final section, I will therefore briefly consider how *Caught in the Web of Words*' understandable biographical interest in describing the plight of James Murray prevents us from a full lexicographical understanding the work of individual women on and for the *OED*.

A framework of utmost importance to James Murray and likewise to *Caught in the Web of Words* is that of the Victorian family. As a result, the lexicographical labor rendered by Ada Murray and the Murray children becomes, first and foremost, a testimony to the success of the father. Ada Murray, juggling roles as dictionary reader, assistant, and oddjobber, thus becomes an angel in the house: an “over-busy housewife” (332) whose sacrifices are parenthetical to her husband’s necessities, as in: “He wrote on an average thirty or forty letters a day—he had no secretary and of course no typewriter—if he wanted to keep a copy he wrote the letter out all over again (occasionally Ada did this for him)” (181). James Murray *did* in fact have a secretary...and a research assistant, a travel planner, an office manager, an amanuensis, a publicist, and an intellectual colleague (not occasional but constant): Ada Murray. *Caught in the Web of Words* itself attests to these many roles of Ada Murray, but it also repeatedly casts them as personal domestic assistance to James Murray rather than professional contributions to the making of the *OED*. This might have been how James Murray himself understood Ada Murray’s work, and how a biography of the man might responsibly

understand the support of a wife, but it is not how lexicographical history should understand the contributions of Ada Murray to the *OED*.

Within *Caught in the Web of Words*, Murray's household governance and moral instruction likewise become the lens through which to understand the work of children and some volunteer readers. The chapter "'Sundry Shocks and Serious Jars': The Raw Materials for the Dictionary" shows Murray establishing his Scriptorium, undertaking "organisation of the mountain of slips and the host of readers" (188) by bringing them all together under his own roof. As head-of-dictionary-household, he doles out the "useful occupation" of slip sorting to the children and thereby increases their work ethic, enlarges their vocabularies, and improves their character (179). Anonymous contributors count among the children to be raised up in and around the Scriptorium; according to *Caught in the Web of Words*, James Murray "could not resist teaching: rather than throw a stupid letter in the waste-paper basket, he must show the writer why it was foolish," and so Murray, for example drafts a five-octavo-page reply to a Mrs. Pott, pointing out, "with all kindness," her "want of that preliminary study of the language which was surely necessary to enable any one to grapple with a delicate linguistic problem" (181). Framed as chores within the household, the labor of Murray's children accrues to their character and his rather more than it contributes to the production of the *OED*.

"'The Dic and the Little Dics': The Man and His Family," the final chapter of *Caught in the Web of Words*, begins with "a moment of nostalgic gloom." Seven years before his death, Murray reflected on his paternal performance:

The greatest sacrifice the Dictionary entailed upon me, by far, was the sacrifice of the constant companionship of my own children; and I doubt if it was worth the sacrifice. I have tried, as a husband & father, to do what should have been the work of a celibate and ascetic, a Dunstan or a Cuthbert: no wonder it has been a struggle. But has it been worth it? (314)

Earlier chapters having painted idyllic portraits of the happy family spending time together in the home and even on vacation, most readers of *Caught in the Web of Words* would find it doubtful that James Murray neglected his family or denied himself their companionship. But Elisabeth Murray also explicitly exonerates him from the accusation:

he was wrong in feeling that the Dictionary had prevented him from being as good a father as he would have wished. Just as his own character had been moulded by the influence of his parents, so he was a force in the lives of his children and they, and even their children, reflected his convictions and characteristics. It could even be argued that preoccupation with the Dictionary may have made James a better parent, since without it he might have dominated the family too much. (338)

Here, Murray's children are the means of demonstrating his dedication to his dictionary and, tautologically, a means of demonstrating his dedication to his family. The dictionary is here proudly and unproblematically a project of patriarchy.

Nineteenth-century ideologies of gender difference (including an exaggerated sense of women's time as leisure, women's work as inferior, women's economic remuneration as unnecessary) also structure some of the portraits of dictionary work that appear in *Caught in the Web of Words*. In remarking on the great number of women who participated in the *OED*'s reading programme, Elisabeth Murray writes: "higher education being still exceptional for them, there were many very intelligent ladies, lonely widows or spinsters living at home looking after parents or housekeeping for brothers or sisters, who found some fulfillment in contributing to the work" (185). Male contributors serving in the same capacity (as voluntary readers or subeditors) are described as selfless, "Some could only find time for the work with difficulty" (184).

This portrait accords with how men's and women's labor would have been understood nineteenth-century England but it is not the way in which we should today appraise that labor.

As I indicated above, biographical details that remain about women contributors suggest that many of them were educated and employed; they found time for dictionary work within busy lives as authors and scholars, as well as within busy lives as domestic caretakers and homemakers. Some women may have been widows or spinsters, but there is no glut of evidence to suggest they were lonely. And while most women readers and subeditors undoubtedly found fulfillment in the work, the personal fulfillment of individual persons should not eclipse the practical benefit they rendered to the *OED*'s production.

In these instances, Victorian ideals of gender that hold within the time of the dictionary maker and therefore shape his biography seem to override lexicographical realities that suggest Ada Murray, the Murray children, and women contributors fulfilled a variety of important dictionary making functions beyond personal support of the lexicographer, even if those functions were then understood as due obligations of family and gender.

Many, even most, lexicographical histories of the *OED* acknowledge that women participated in the *OED*'s reading program and that *OED* editors' families also contributed to the project (e.g., Béjoint 2010; Brewer 2007; Green 1996; Laski 1968; Mugglestone 2000; Mugglestone 2005; Willinsky 1994; Winchester 1998; Winchester 2003), but no lexicographical history of the *OED* has adequately considered the way in which Victorian gender norms secured the labor of women necessary to complete the project or the way in which Victorian gender norms continue to structure our understanding of how women participated in the project.

This seems a particularly strange oversight given the abundance of interest in how sexist norms work *within* the pages of the *OED*—in representations of gender, sex-role stereotyping, use of women's writing as a source of quotations (Baigent, Brewer, and Larminie 2005; Brewer 2009a; Brewer 2009b; Brewer 2009c; Brewer 2012b; Fowler 2002; Fournier and

Russell 1992; Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1990). These analyses frequently stop short of connecting the gender biases within the *OED* to those that underwrote its original production. Considering the gendered content of the dictionary alongside the gendered labor divisions that produced the dictionary seems, to me, necessary.

CONCLUSION

According to James Murray, “the scientific and historical spirit of the nineteenth century has at once called for and rendered possible the *Oxford English Dictionary*” (1900). As I’ve here argued, gendered labor also played a key part in rendering the *OED* possible. Like *A Dictionary of the English Language*, the *OED* increased the scale of the English language dictionary to such a degree that the project required a remodeling of the workforce. Like Johnson’s dictionary, Murray’s dictionary took shape in domestic spaces. In both instances, women made an array of professional contributions from within those domestic spaces. And, again, in both cases, the domestication of women also played to the gendering of the genre’s production in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries such that women’s work, while necessary, tended to be unpaid, undervalued, and invisible.

Women were important to large-scale male-attributed dictionary making throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tied to dictionary work by their relationships to lexicographers (as wives, daughters, housemates, friends), women helped to make dictionaries (they kept and managed the domestic spaces in which dictionary work was carried out; they provided personal support and intellectual stimulation to dictionary-making men; they acted as amanuenses, secretaries, researchers, and lexicographers). Women fulfilled many of these employments without leaving home, and, among those women who became paid members of the *OED* staff working in institutional space, most began work within private residences as the

daughters of dictionary editors. The production of the dictionary within a domestic setting thus afforded access to and ensured the invisibility of women's labor, but it also became a point of entry to lexicographical work for some women, though, as *The Scholar's Daughter* suggests, the profession of lexicography likely required greater sacrifices of women than it did men while paying women lesser rewards than those accorded to men.

British Synonymy strongly suggests that, by the turn of the nineteenth century, the dictionary itself had become a genre gendered masculine, the preserve of an abstracted lexicon written by and for men. But the perception of the genre did not necessarily reconcile with the necessities of production. Piozzi's own participations in Johnson's lexicographical work, as a lexicographical colleague and taste maker, signal that men and women both participated in the project. Men and women also worked side-by-side on the *OED* (literally and figuratively), but, as Harraden suggests, the profession of lexicography was not necessarily hospitable to women even when it most needed them.

In offering a more comprehensive and nuanced portrait of the kinds of work women preformed in relation to *A Dictionary of the English Language* and the *OED*, I hope to have revealed the biography of an individual lexicographer as tending to eclipse a more robust portrait of collaborative lexicographical processes and outcomes as well as the gendered social hierarchies that support them. The biography of the ladies' man and the biography of the family man come to the same in the end; we understand the dictionary as a man and his life work (both moving toward a complete record of the English language), and we miss the ways in which the

genre is situated within gendered domestic spaces sustained by a hierarchically gendered division of nonetheless collaborative labor.⁴¹

⁴¹ We may thus also miss the ways in which dictionary making continues to be so gendered. In a biographical sketch of the editor of *Green's Dictionary of Slang* (2010), Green's wife makes an appearance fit for Boswell: "Jonathon's good humoured yet pale faced wife Susan Ford, who refers to herself succinctly [*sic*] as 'the slave', visited the British Library five or six days a week for ten years to pursue research for the dictionary" (*Spitalfields Life* 2011).

WYMYN, WEBSTERS, AND GENRE BENDERS: FEMINIST LEXICOGRAPHY, 1970–2010

In early photographs of the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s editorial staff, women, two maybe three, stand in the back of groups of men. Unpictured, of course, are the many women who were described in Chapter 4 as contributing to the first edition in capacities other than paid staff. On the basis of prefaces to first-edition installments as well as archival material from the Oxford University Press listing reader, subeditor, and staff names, Elizabeth Baigent, Charlotte Brewer, and Vivienne Larminie (2005) have estimated that women comprised nine to thirteen percent of its workforce (21). Seventeen of the forty editorial staff members, library researchers, and volunteer readers of the 1933 *Supplement* were women (21), but, by 2005, women made up approximately two thirds of the *OED3*'s editorial staff (Ferguson and Best 2005). The workforce behind large-scale English language lexicography opened to women quite dramatically at the end of the twentieth century.

Many of the women tied to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century dictionary projects described in Chapter 4 sometimes understood their increasing participation in dictionary making to have little effect on the masculinization of the dictionary genre. So too were

women's participations in dictionary making at the turn of the twenty-first century paired with an awareness of the sexism and androcentrism of lexicographical theory and practice. In this chapter, I would like to suggest that feminist dictionaries are extensions of the kind of commentary offered by Hester Piozzi's *British Synonymy* (1794) and Beatrice Harraden's *The Scholar's Daughter* (1906), which pointed to domestic labor and parlor English as important to dictionaries (see Chapter 4). I would also like to consider how feminist dictionaries revive some of the generic configurations attendant with early dictionaries addressed to women, like Mary Evelyn's "The Fop-Dictionary" (1690) or John Dunton's *The Ladies Dictionary* (1694), both of which marked early alternatives for the dictionary's audience, exigence, and content (see Chapter 2). And, finally, I would like to explore how feminist dictionaries take up some of the lexicographical priorities apparent in dictionaries attributed to women prior to the twentieth century, which imagined lexical material to be inseparable from practical and conversational contexts (Chapter 3).

In drawing these connections, I do not mean to suggest that feminist lexicographers of the last half century were necessarily aware of the long history of women in relation to the English language dictionary that this project has outlined. But I do mean to indicate that the historical gendering of the English dictionaries lives in present-day attempts to *re*gender English dictionaries.

HERSTORY⁴²: THE APPEARANCE AND DISAPPEARANCE OF FEMINIST DICTIONARIES

Appearance

There was a flurry of feminist dictionary making throughout the last decades of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first. In the years between 1970 and 2006, more

⁴² Lennert and Willson (1993) define *herstory* as "1. The past as seen through the eyes of women. 2. The removal of male self-glorifications from history."

than a dozen feminist dictionary titles were published, including: “A Dictionary of Women’s Liberation,” *A Woman’s New World Dictionary*, *A Feminist Dictionary*, *Websters’ First New Intergalactic Wickedary of the English Language*, *Historical Dictionary of Feminism*. These feminist dictionaries of the English language theorized not only what the dictionary product is but also the relations that allow that product to come into existence, to participate in meaning making, and to advocate conceptions of language itself.

The flurry of feminist dictionary making was remarkable but of bounded success. The fate of *A Feminist Dictionary*, originally published in 1985 and reissued in 1992 as *Amazons, Bluestockings and Crones*, is, I think, telling of how the radical revolution proposed by feminist English language lexicography was (and is) tamed: As *A Feminist Dictionary*, the text threatens a theoretical frame (feminist) with which to supplant both the theoretical principles of lexicography and the kinds of dictionaries such principles have traditionally produced, but as *Amazons, Bluestockings and Crones*, the text becomes rather more like a harmless helpmate to the lexicographical tradition, a specialized dictionary of boutique terms (*Amazon*, *bluestocking*, *crone*) that dress up (or down) other more sober and conventional tomes. In this move from suffragist to supplement, feminist dictionaries have lost not only their revolutionary theoretical sophistication but also their potential to act as a useable past by which we can better understand the history of and imagine a future for the dictionary genre.

Disappearance

The argument that feminist dictionaries could play a rich and noteworthy part in the history of English language dictionaries is necessitated by something like a two part disappearance: They were published and then they were not; they were acknowledged in scholarship and then they

were not. That is, at present, feminist dictionaries are a rare find on bookshelves and bibliographies alike.

By the turn of this century, the modest commercial and scholarly support given to feminist dictionaries all but dried up: their projects seem to have run out of money, their editors and contributors out of time, and their objectives out of fashion. The disappearance of feminist dictionaries might have been affected by and was certainly coincident with an environment increasingly wary of any unified notion of “feminism.” Regardless of whether or not individual feminist dictionary projects were in fact “guilty” of strategic essentialism, the lexicons could be seen (by commercial publishers, readers, and even makers of feminist dictionaries) as participating in a damaging essentialization of women, an essentialization often enough underwritten by the exclusion of women of color, women of lower or working classes, women gendered queer or trans. Thus, as commercial projects feminist dictionaries might have become untenable and as political projects they might have become suspect.

Certainly, as intellectual projects of lexicographical merit, feminist dictionaries (like most dictionaries attributed to women) were and continue to be neglected.⁴³ While some feminist dictionaries were reviewed in lexicographical journals at the time of their publication (Nichols 1987, Dutton 1988, Lamy 1992), they were and are rarely cited in subsequent lexicographical or metalexicographical work (notable exceptions being Treichler 1989,

⁴³ Feminist dictionaries have been considered in fields beyond lexicography and lexicology. In language studies broadly conceived, the publication of feminist dictionaries garnered some interest, and reviews appeared in *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* (Johnson 1986), *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* (Kolodny 1987), and *Women and Language* (Anonymous 1993). Feminist dictionaries were also reviewed by an array of popular periodicals (including the *New York Times Book Review*, *Utne Reader*, *New Statesman*), library book reviews (including *Booklist*, *Library Journal*), and specialized booklists (including *Women’s Review of Books*, *Lambda Book Report*, and *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*). They have also been cited in scholarly journals of sociology, psychology, theology, pedagogy, law, public relations, business management, art, utopian studies, and women’s studies.

Cameron 1992, and Green 2005). Nor are feminist dictionaries mentioned in historical accounts of English language lexicography; they are absent not only from brief sketches embedded within scholarly introductions to the field (such as Béjoint 2000, Hartmann 2001, Jackson 2002, Béjoint 2010) but also from book-length and multivolume dictionary histories (such as Hausmann et al. 1990, Green 1996, Coleman 2004a, 2004b, 2009, 2010, Cowie 2009).⁴⁴

The exclusion of feminist dictionaries from Cowie's (2009) *Oxford History of English Lexicography* seems especially problematic, if not particularly unique. This text, described by Oxford University Press as "the fullest account yet published" and hailed by the *International Journal of Lexicography* as "the most comprehensive treatment to date" (Adamska-Salaciak 2009, 467), seems well-positioned to become a definitive resource in determining what "counts" as an important English language dictionary. For the most part, the book lives up to this classic dictionary hyperbole: In covering fifteen centuries of lexicography, it references dictionaries of agriculture, botany, chemistry, cant, catch-phrases, ecclesiastics, engineering, farming, forenames, geography, geology, husbandry, law, maritime terms, mathematics, medicine, mineralogy, music, physics, place names, regional dialect, rhyme, slang, surnames, and zoology. It describes dictionaries designed for or by children, criminals, college students, English language learners, internet users, military officers, monks, scientists, spellers, and

⁴⁴ Béjoint 2010 does offer a brief description of how 'For a long time, women were badly treated in dictionaries' (213-215). Related work on feminism and lexicon making would be Graham 1974 which chronicles the purging of sexist stereotypes from the *American Heritage School Dictionary*, Stanley 1977 which compares terms like *masculine* and *feminine* in the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*, Whitcut 1983 which describes the special responsibilities of lexicographers in 'the present antisexist climate', White 1984 which describes the attempt to eliminate sexism from a Basque-English English-Basque dictionary, and any number of popular press interviews with Susan M. Lloyd after her 1982 revision of *Roget's Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*.

travelers. Not a single feminist dictionary is included in any of the chapters, lists of dictionaries, or catalogues of other references of the *Oxford History of English Lexicography*.⁴⁵

Part of what seems to render feminist dictionaries invisible is the structure of the *Oxford History*, which unfolds in two parts: a first volume for “general-purpose” dictionaries and a second for “specialized” ones. The division is in keeping with common metalexicographical practice. General words—words “aimed at the native speaker adult user” (Jackson 2002, 24), “representative of the lexis of a language” (Béjoint 2010, 46), and “answering all sorts of questions about everything in the culture” (Béjoint 2000, 108)—are held separate from specialized ones—words “restricted” to certain speakers, semantic fields, or purposes (Béjoint 2010, 46-47). The *Oxford History of English Lexicography* itself does not offer explicit definitions of either “general-purpose dictionary” or “specialized dictionary,” but, in reading the volumes, the criteria for inclusion become clear. To merit consideration, general-purpose dictionaries must be typical of a period or a place (e.g., the eighteenth century, the Caribbean) or extraordinary by virtue of creator or title (e.g., Samuel Johnson, the *Oxford English Dictionary*). Specialized dictionaries must treat a narrow semantic field (i.e., that of science, technology, or names), draw from a coherent speech community (i.e., one bounded by region, dialect, profession, criminal status, nation, or age), or perform a single dictionary function (i.e., guide usage; explain words appropriate to college populations; clarify meaning, grammar,

⁴⁵ One of the essays collected in Hartmann et al. (Radtke 1990) does cite a feminist dictionary, and two of the articles in Cowie mention matters relevant to feminist lexicographical considerations: Osselton (2009, 133) acknowledges in passing that the earliest dictionaries (most notably Cawdrey’s *Table Alphabeticall*, possibly the first monolingual English dictionary) were often written for women (and ‘other unskilfull persons’) and Brewer (2009c, 275-277) treats biases encoded in illustrative quotations of the *OED* supplement, comparing the neutral quotations under *homosexual* to those under *lesbian* (e.g., ‘I shall never write real poetry. Women never do, unless they’re invalids or Lesbians or something’). Brewer is generous in wondering about Burchfield’s selection motivation: ‘Were such examples the only ones available to him? Or do they illustrate a personal, or perhaps more general societal view?’

phraseology, and patterns for advanced English-language learners; document words and meanings on the basis of corpus frequencies; or allow dictionary referencing through various electronic media).

Some feminist dictionaries might reasonably have fit within this typology. A catalogue of the technical jargon of feminist theory, for example, might bear mentioning as a dictionary specialized for a community of professionals. But, for the most part, feminist dictionaries *cannot* fit into this either-or typology. In tending to describe broad semantic fields, record and serve multiple and competing speech communities, and foster an array of potential purposes for use, many feminist dictionaries do not fully specialize. But in being atypical of a “period,” uninterested in geographical boundaries, multiply authored by generally unfamous creator-compilers, and published under titles whimsical and unstable rather than renowned, most feminist dictionaries are not general in the *Oxford History of English Lexicography*’s sense. Their exclusion from lexicographical scholarship is thus, in part, a function of their theorization, and, in part, a function of the dominant mode through which histories, theories, and bibliographies of the field construct and tell the story of the dictionary genre.

Revival?

In reading feminist dictionaries, one quickly understands a reason they may be overlooked: They are hard to read. Their titles may beckon us to enter a recognizable genre—a “dictionary,” a “word finder,” a “vocabulary”—but once we enter, we find ourselves in a generic hodgepodge, with a strain of familiar lexicographical documentation appearing and disappearing in a muddle of memoiric reflection, political declaration, and literary creation. The often mercurial methodologies of feminist dictionaries readily defy hallowed principles of consistency in classification and treatment at the same time they paper over the

incommensurability of “real” words in common use and ones that are “simply” made-up or wished-for. Consulting a feminist dictionary for a word—obvious, obscure, political, prosaic—may yield:

- (a) the familiar lemma with numbered definitions, pronunciation notes, etymological details, and illustrative quotations,
- (b) illustrative quotations only,
- (c) encyclopedic discussion of culturally-linked semantic change,
- (d) a short story,
- (e) a (tongue-in-cheek?) one-liner or cartoon,
- (f) a thoroughly circular definition requiring consultation of a number of terms found only within the same dictionary,
- (g) prescriptive usage suggestions or preferable synonyms,
- (h) the familiar lemma followed by a startlingly blank page,
- (i) all, some, or none of the above.

In short, feminist dictionaries seem to do whatever they want, whenever they feel like it—indulging in what John Algeo has termed “the Johnsonian effect” (1990, 214) in which the dictionary becomes a conveyance for a lexicographer’s personal, political, socio-cultural preferences, not just within definitions of individual words or phrases but across microstructural features including definitions, parts of speech, pronunciation, etymology, etc.⁴⁶

For many and valid reasons, then, feminist dictionaries can be an agony to read, but I am here suggesting that we understand that agony as a productive disruption of our narrow conception of the genre. In the discussion that follows, I’d like to establish feminist dictionaries as remodeling the English language dictionary, painting a new portrait of the genre that proposes and enacts innovative principles of lexicography by suggesting that dictionaries should (1) disclose and foreground their circumstances of production, (2) allow

⁴⁶ Johnsonian echoes are not the only ways in which feminist dictionaries can be said to participate in lexicographical tradition even as they seek to reinvent it. While the focus here is to understand how feminist dictionaries are *unlike* other dictionaries, that certainly does not mean they aren’t also interestingly and importantly very much *like* other lexicographical products.

and foster active, opinionated, and exploratory dictionary use, and (3) highlight the meanings they create and circulate as extant only within and because of contexts and contests, persons and perspectives. These principles address persistent problems of sexism and androcentrism⁴⁷ in the field of lexicography. They likewise speak to many of the considerations I have addressed in earlier chapters—the invisibility of women’s domestic labor in dictionary making (cf Chapter 4), the possibility of linguistically-competent women dictionary readers (cf Chapter 2), the persistent the integration, within dictionaries attributed to women, of lexicography with general lifework references and meaning with contexts of use (cf Chapter 3). More than echoing ideas of the past, the feminist principles of lexicography present workable alternatives for how the genre of the dictionary might be theorized and enacted now and in the future.

WEBSTERS⁴⁸: THE ERA OF FEMINIST INTERROGATIONS AND ITERATIONS OF THE DICTIONARY

Interrogations

Important antecedents to the heyday of feminist lexicons were the 1970s feminist critiques of general-purpose dictionaries as encoding sexism and androcentrism. H. Lee Gershuny, most notably, undertook a number of projects (1974; 1975; 1977; 1978; 1980) investigating the semantic sexism of prominent general-purpose English language dictionaries, finding that female-associated words were consistently defined in terms of women’s sexual relationships to men, that women were rendered linguistically invisible by so-called generic terms, that female markers such as *-ess* commonly served to flag women’s achievements as deviant, and that

⁴⁷ I distinguish the terms sexism and androcentrism to suggest that dictionaries are often *both* sexist—in the sense of exhibiting prejudice against certain sexes, genders, and sexualities, particularly by fostering stereotypical conceptions of sex roles—and androcentric—in the sense of representing knowledge of the world in terms of men, maleness, and masculinity and *under* representing knowledges of women, femaleness, and femininity.

⁴⁸ Daly (1987) defines *webster* as ‘a woman whose occupation is to Weave, esp. a Weaver of Words and Word-Webs’.

illustrative quotations under neutral headwords often reinforced stereotypical sex-roles. The work of Gershuny and others served to highlight a significant problem present across the wide range of general-purpose dictionaries. And while some of those dictionaries have since made an effort to “eliminate” sexism in definitions, illustrations, and quotations (Benson 1990, 51), they have not succeeded.⁴⁹

These issues of sexism and androcentrism in general-purpose dictionaries should not be discounted as peripheral concerns to the lexicographical project at large, constituting as they do a continual deficiency of the dictionary as “record of the language”⁵⁰ as well as a circumscription of what dictionaries can be. Sexism and androcentrism have narrowed the kinds of people allowed to publish, the kinds of labor recognized as lexicographical, and the kinds of texts counted among dictionaries (general or specialized). The feminist dictionaries that might be seen as “responding” to issues of sexism and androcentrism did much more than purge sexist and androcentric definitions from their dictionaries; many undertook expansive projects of reimagining the lexicographical principles by which dictionaries had traditionally been produced and consumed.

⁴⁹ Recent work on the persistent sexism of dictionaries (including Baron 1986; Braun and Kitzinger 2001; Cameron 1992; Martin 2005; Prechter 1999) is outlined in the introductory chapter of this work (cf page 12).

⁵⁰ The idea that the dictionary should serve as a record of the language arose in the eighteenth century, alongside a general feeling that the language had reached perfection, was in danger of deterioration, and had therefore ‘to be recorded, so that the record would serve as a firm basis for teaching and conversation; in short, the language needed a grammar and a dictionary, but a dictionary of a new type: one that would record all the language, not just a few hard words’ (Béjoint 2010, 95). Dictionaries attributed to women did not necessarily participate in this shift from hard-word to comprehensive lexicography, nor did they think that the comprehensive record of the language was possible, desirable, or of utmost importance (cf Chapter 3).

Iterations

Within the term “feminist dictionary,” I would include all of the texts listed in Figure 5.1:⁵¹

Figure 5.1. Feminist Dictionaries, 1970-2006

Date	Author(s)	Title
1970	Marleen and Joreen Dixon	"A Dictionary of Women's Liberation" ⁵²
1973	Ruth Todasco	<i>An Intelligent Woman's Guide to Dirty Words</i> ⁵³
1973	Midge Lennert and Norma Willson	<i>A Woman's New World Dictionary</i> ⁵⁴
1979	Monique Wittig and Sande Zeig	<i>Lesbian Peoples: Material for a Dictionary</i> ⁵⁵
1985	Cheris Kramarae and Paula A. Treichler	<i>A Feminist Dictionary</i> ⁵⁶
1986	Lisa Tuttle	<i>Encyclopedia of Feminism</i>
1987	Elizabeth Baldwin	<i>Movement Words: A Short Dictionary of Feminist and Progressive Terms</i>
1987	Rosalie Maggio	<i>The Nonsexist Word Finder: A Dictionary of Gender-Free Usage</i>
1987	Mary Daly "in cahoots with" Jane Caputi	<i>Websters' First New Intergalactic Wickedary of the English Language</i>
1989	Maggie Humm	<i>The Dictionary of Feminist Theory</i>
1989	Jane Miller	<i>Womanwords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Patriarchal Society</i> ⁵⁷

⁵¹ Other projects that might be considered feminist dictionaries have been left off this list with reservation but reason. I have excluded feminist dictionary projects in languages other than English (e.g., Hervé et al. 1994; Lascault 1978). The distinction between dictionary and encyclopedia is a famously murky one (Béjoint 2000, 30-32), and it is perhaps murkier still in the realm of dictionaries attributed to women as well as feminist reference; here, I have included lexicons labeled encyclopedia when the information provided under the headword was primarily an explanation of word meaning, and I have excluded texts that provided multipage multipart essays and reference lists about topics, persons, events, or organizations instead of meanings (e.g., Kramarae and Spender 2000; McFadden 1997; O'Brien 2009; Tierney 1989). Finally, I have excluded a number of projects closely related to feminist lexicography in aim but markedly different in genre—"how-to" collections (e.g., Paulsen and Kuhn 1976), entertaining lists and almanacs (e.g., Weiser and Arbeiter 1981), bibliographies (e.g., Capek 1987), alphabet books (e.g., Jacobs 2000), biographical dictionaries (e.g., Law 2000).

⁵² 'A Dictionary of Women's Liberation' was published in an issue of the now defunct journal *Everywoman*.

⁵³ *An Intelligent Woman's Guide to Dirty Words* was also published under the title *The Feminist English Dictionary*.

⁵⁴ *A Woman's New World Dictionary* was published as two editions of the now defunct journal *51%: A Paper of Joyful Noise for the Majority Sex*.

⁵⁵ *Lesbian Peoples* was originally published in 1976 in French as *Brouillon Pour Un Dictionnaire Des Amantes*.

⁵⁶ *A Feminist Dictionary* was republished in 1992 under the title *Amazons, Bluestockings and Crones: A Feminist Dictionary*.

⁵⁷ This is the title and date of the first British edition of *Womanwords*. Its first American edition was released in 1992 as *Womanwords: A Dictionary of Words About Women*. As with *A Feminist*

Date	Author(s)	Title
1989	Kate Musgrave	<i>Womb with Views: Contradictionary of English Language</i>
1996	Janet K. Boles, Diane Long Hoeveler, and Rebecca Bardwell	<i>From the Goddess to the Glass Ceiling: A Dictionary of Feminism or Historical Dictionary of Feminism</i> ⁵⁸
1997	Sonya Andermahr, Terry Lovell, and Carol Wolkowitz	<i>A Glossary of Feminist Theory</i>
1998	Carol Faulkenberry	<i>An Uppity Old Atheist Woman's Dictionary</i>
2000	Sarah Gamble	<i>Routledge Critical Dictionary of Feminism and Postfeminism</i>
2001	Philip H. Herbst	<i>Wimmin, Wimps and Wallflowers</i>
2006	Leslie Heywood	<i>The Women's Movement Today</i>

There is significant variation among the texts I have listed here: Some take on explicitly creative and utopian projects (*Lesbian Peoples*, for example, describes the lexicon of an exclusively lesbian world), others concentrate on providing the means to more inclusive language (*The Nonsexist Word Finder*, for example, suggests gender-neutral alternatives to otherwise gender-exclusive words and phrases), and still others catalogue only disparaging terms about women, sex roles, and sexuality (*An Intelligent Woman's Guide to Dirty Words*, for example, compiles other dictionaries' sexist definitions of words describing women).

If feminist dictionaries are strikingly different from one another in some ways, they are remarkably similar in others. In collecting, ordering, and describing units of linguistic information to be consulted by readers, they share basic features of a dictionary.⁵⁹ But feminist dictionaries pair these lexical objectives with the intellectual and political aims of feminism. Their political demand is for recognition of “the full humanity of women” (Cameron 1992, 4), and they make this demand most obviously by setting words and meanings by and about women at the center of the dictionary project rather than pushing those words and meanings to the margins or exiling them altogether. (Such is the case with two of the dictionaries

Dictionary, this name change seems to me to enact a trivialization of the project, moving it away from the broadly relevant ‘vocabulary of culture’ to the limited interest of ‘words about women’.

⁵⁸ *From the Goddess to the Glass Ceiling* was the American title and *Historical Dictionary of Feminism* the British one. A 2006 edition of the same text was titled *The A to Z of Feminism*.

⁵⁹ This description of dictionary features draws on Béjoint who is careful to insist that the word *dictionary* is “inevitably polysemous” (2000, 10-26).

described in Chapter 2, Evelyn's and Dunton's, and several of the cooktionaries and conduct dictionaries described in Chapter 3). The intellectual concern of feminist dictionaries is to "understand how current relations between men and women are constructed rather than natural" and thus potentially changeable (Cameron 1992, 4). Feminist dictionaries carry out this intellectual project by highlighting the role of meaning making and lexicon building in constructing gender and gendered relations, and many feminist dictionaries begin the work of change by mapping points of conflicting meaning, tracing paths of semantic derogation and reclamation, and suggesting strategies for more conscientious language use.

Importantly, the publication histories of feminist dictionaries show them to have been more than one-off texts: *Lesbian Peoples* was translated from French into three English editions (two in England, one in the United States) and into a German edition in 1983. *A Feminist Dictionary* was published twice under that title and once under the new title with a new foreword. The *Encyclopedia of Feminism* enjoyed two British editions, one American, and a translation into Japanese in 1991. *The Nonsexist Word Finder* was printed in the United States in 1987, 1989, and 1990, and translated into Japanese in 1991. *Websters' First New Intergalactic Wickedary* was published in 1987, 1988, and 1994. *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory's* second edition was published in 1995, 1999, and 2003. *Womanwords'* British edition appeared in 1989 and two American editions were printed in 1992 and 1993. *Womb with Views* was printed in 1989 and converted to a digital edition in 2002. *From the Goddess to the Glass Ceiling* was published in 1996 under the title *Historical Dictionary of Feminism*, the second edition of which was released in 2004, and a revised paperback edition of the same text appeared in 2006 under the title *The A to Z of Feminism*. *A Glossary of Feminist Theory*, reprinted in 2000 and 2001, was released alongside *A Concise Glossary of Feminist Theory*, which was translated into Japanese in 2000. While my

initial list of feminist dictionaries might suggest a particular boundedness to their project, this rough sketch of the publication history of feminist dictionaries signals the persistence of their aims over time and into this century.

BAREFOOT AND PREGNANT⁶⁰: FEMINIST DICTIONARY MAKING AS ADDITION, IMITATION, AND CRITIQUE

Feminist dictionaries tend to be read not as marking out a new form of lexicographical practice but rather as working *with* the grain of lexicography to simply reproduce or supplement “real” dictionaries or as working *against* the grain of lexicography to critique existing dictionaries and dictionary practices. Both readings frame feminist dictionaries as happy counterparts, dependent upon “real” general-purpose dictionaries—even as feminist dictionaries support, mock, and condemn them. Because feminist dictionaries are indeed indebted to and engaged with traditional lexicography, there is validity to such readings, but the lexicographical potential of feminist dictionaries exceeds these othering roles.

Addition and Imitation

The aim of mimicking or complementing the general English language dictionary is sometimes taken as the primary goal of feminist dictionaries, but I would like to challenge the conclusions that are reached in some reviews of feminist dictionaries: that they only “imitate the alphabetized reference book and its apparatus, leaning on the traditions that have contributed to its development” (Anderson 1991, 124); that they do “not attempt to replace the masculinist dictionaries of English” (Nichols 1987: 270); that they only seek to “supplement” and

⁶⁰ Boles and Hoeveler 1996 define *barefoot and pregnant* as “A short-hand expression for the subjugation of women, restricted to a domestic role with limited mobility. In the early history of the National Organization for Women, local chapters frequently gave ‘Barefoot and Pregnant Awards’ to men for acts of egregious sexism. (See also *Kinder-Küche-Kirche*.)”

“influence” other lexicons and lexicographical practices (Nichols 1987: 270); that a feminist dictionary “is for the most part not really a dictionary” (Dutton 1988: 214).

Feminist dictionaries do indeed offer information that could be added to general dictionaries. They often provide new headwords (like *bourgeois feminism*), alternative spellings (such as *womyn* for *women*), or different senses and contextual details of common headwords (e.g., a definition of *escalator* which cites a 1914 women’s periodical: “Constantly moving stairs, run by electricity, ‘dangerous to the nervous, the slightly infirm, or to the woman carrying or leading young children,’” [Kramarae and Treichler 1985]) that don’t appear in other (nonfeminist) dictionaries. Feminist dictionaries also tend to *look* like general dictionaries. Most represent a varied and comprehensive lexis (touching on subject matter widely relevant to native adult speakers, regardless of profession, politics, and even gender) and compile a range of lexical information. That information tends to be organized into paragraphs featuring a word or phrase (usually set off by some special typeface) followed by a further explanation of meaning. By Béjoint’s definition (2000: 40-41), many of these texts might “qualify” as general dictionaries, and I think we stand to gain something if we read them as such. (Though, as I will explain in greater detail below, feminist dictionaries seem to me to refigure the idea of “general” such that it accords less with the idea of comprehensive scholarship for an un(der)educated reader than it does with an idea of the dictionary as a part of general reference for equal access among linguistically-competent readers. As described in Chapter 3, earlier dictionaries attributed to women were engaged in similar work.)

Critique

It is, however, reductive to read feminist dictionaries as mere imitations of general dictionaries or as specialized dictionaries that simply spice up the general lexicon with the information

“restricted” to women in their lived experiences of everyday life.⁶¹ Feminist dictionaries are obviously and significantly projects of critique.

Feminist dictionaries often begin by critiquing general lexicons on plainly feminist grounds, describing them as androcentric and sexist. We see the former in Miller’s *Womanwords*, the introduction to which explains that “dictionary definitions largely [represent] male rather than female experience and language use” (1989: xiii). We see the latter in Kramarae and Treichler’s opening words to the first edition of *A Feminist Dictionary* which argues that “the systematic—even when inadvertent—exclusion of one sex replicates and preserves the linguistic and cultural rule of the other” (1985: 3). In this way, feminist dictionaries assert that the masculine norm doesn’t just hide in but is constructed by dictionaries of seemingly neutral description—“general,” “general-purpose,” “historical,” “monolingual,” “unabridged,” “universal.” Feminist dictionaries critique “neutral” dictionaries for absencing women as a significant component of humanity and for constructing women, men, and relations between the two in damaging ways.

Feminist dictionaries also critique general dictionaries on lexicographical grounds, arguing that they mask the sociocultural and material circumstances that determine dictionary production and consumption and thereby skew the nature and value of their own content. According to *A Feminist Dictionary*, “Manglish dictionaries [...], despite their bias and incompleteness, are presented as authoritative works by masters of language who set proprietary standards about what is proper, correct, expert, respectable, reputable, standard and prescriptive” (1985, 12-13). Daly’s preface to the *Wickedary* argues that “ordinary

⁶¹ One of the many grounds on which the marking out of women and the meanings they hold as “specialized” or “restricted” (rather than “general,” “universal,” or even “normal”) is statistical and encapsulated in the title of the feminist journal that published one of the earliest feminist dictionaries (Lennert and Willson 1973), *51%: A Paper of Joyful Noise for the Majority Sex*.

dictionaries” thus come to be “characterized by artificiality, lack of depth, of aura, of interconnectedness with living be-ing” (1987, xix). General dictionaries, in abstracting people (lexicographers and language users both) from the creation and circulation of meaning, pretend to an immaculacy that affords false authority on one hand and flat English on the other.

Just as the work of addendum or imitation cannot be seen as the only or even primary aim of feminist dictionaries, so too the work of critique cannot be seen as their most significant substance. Feminist dictionaries use criticism as a point of *departure* from (masculine) traditions of lexicography, and their contents constitute an alternative set of lexicographical principles that might displace masculinist dictionary practice.

GIRLITZ⁶²: THE PRINCIPLES OF FEMINIST DICTIONARY MAKING

Collectively (and sometimes individually) feminist dictionaries offer several important innovations in dictionary making.⁶³ I’ve described these innovations as alternative principles of lexicography to avoid R. R. K. Hartmann’s bifurcation of the field of lexicography; these principles apply not only to the “practical branch” of dictionary making but also to the “theoretical branch” of dictionary research (2001, 4). Feminists have never been fond of the partitioning of theory from practice, and, in the realm of dictionaries, such a partition might seem to suggest that dictionary makers do not (need to) see what dictionary users, teachers, and researchers are doing with the texts produced. Feminist dictionary principles not only

⁶² Musgrave (1989) defines *girlitz* as a “Free crash course in women’s way of talking that men refuse to enroll in; woman-made language omitted from male dictionaries.”

⁶³ I do not mean to suggest that absolutely no other dictionary (general, specific, bilingual, collegiate, corpus, children’s, etc.) manifests the following features of feminist dictionaries, indeed many of these features appear in dictionaries described in Chapter 3. But feminist dictionaries seem to constitute the only recognizable variety English language dictionary where these features are manifested together more or less consistently across texts.

thread together these considerations of production and consumption but they also highlight how the sociocultural and material circumstances of creation and use inform how we can understand the genre of the dictionary and the nature of the meanings that dictionaries come to contain. Dictionaries and dictionary commentary of earlier periods (e.g., Bryan 1797; Palmer 1839; Woolley 1670 in Chapter 3; Piozzi 1974 and Harraden 1906 in Chapter 4) anticipated these sorts of concomitant considerations, threading meaning into use, creation into content, personal into professional.

Production

A first principle of feminist lexicography is thus:

A dictionary should disclose and, where possible, foreground the circumstances of its own production:

- (a) People with perspectives, purposes, biases, and opinions about meaning have made the text.
- (b) Social and cultural systems, often bounded by time and place, have affected the people who made the text and thus also the text produced.
- (c) Money and time, in amounts sometimes more or less disproportionate to one another, were required to make the text.
- (d) The scope of the text is both enabled and constrained by these personal, social, and material conditions.

Feminist dictionaries tend to provide a strong sense of the people who made them, how they were made, and why.

Nonfeminist dictionaries sometimes acknowledge details of their construction, but those details tend to describe content decisions as methodologically rather than personally motivated, material resources as ensuring rather than limiting the quality of the text, and social biases as a necessary part of (neutral) language rather than a cultural practice (actively) supported by dictionaries. In this way, many dictionaries disclose circumstances of production in order to absent personal identity and strengthen professional authority. Feminist dictionary

makers, on the other hand, tend to disclose an array of production and producer details that are not always clearly professional or positive and that often enough work to eschew any sense of the dictionary as a definitive authority.

Compiler-creator identities are underscored most prominently in the front matter of feminist dictionaries, where acknowledgements, prefaces, forewords, introductions, and user's guides make liberal use of first person pronouns, often identify domestic scenes of dictionary production (cf Chapter 4), and openly declare feminist biases. Kramarae and Treichler admit, "Our 1980s feminism has inevitably pulled us toward the material that seems most useful and enriching to us" (1985: 3), and Miller emphasizes that "The process of selection inevitably reflected my own interests and concerns as a feminist passionately interested in language and in the past and present history of the woman's struggle" (1989, xii).

Calling attention to the opinionated and political individuals who compiled their lexicons is part of a larger process in which feminist dictionaries aim to highlight that those individuals are shaped by and responding to specific physical, institutional, economic, and sociocultural circumstances. Just how these contextual details influence the kind of dictionary project that is undertaken as well as the kind of dictionary product that can ultimately be published is something that feminist dictionaries happily dwell upon. The circumstances are sometimes personal, material, domestic, and plainly generative in effect, as in Daly's preface to the *Wickedary*:

The trees, the moon, and the stars shining on Crystal Lake gave immeasurable inspiration. A constant companion throughout the trip has been my Domestic Familiar, a Furry/Grimalkin known as Ms. Wild Cat, who has sat faithfully on dictionaries, dipping her tail into cups of coffee, and Cat/atonically encouraging the work. (1987, xv-xvi)

These cringe-able authorial intimacies serve to undercut reader expectations conditioned both by the conventions of scholarship and by the genre of the dictionary. Daly disables the idea of the abstract, universal, professional scholar as well as the notion of the dictionary as immaculately conceived.

At other times, disclosures of the circumstances of production are focused on highlighting structural and economic obstacles to the work, as in Kramarae and Treichler's opening to *A Feminist Dictionary*:

we did not undertake this dictionary as a lifelong project and thus had to limit what we could do. [...] though many dictionaries are funded by continuing financial support from publishers, academic societies, or national governments, the feminist dictionary project is not thus institutionalized. (1985, 19)

This reflection on their project clearly situates the dictionary makers within scholarly and commercial settings that are not without biases of their own.

In many instances, the circumstances of production for feminist dictionaries might be both generative and restrictive. In Tuttle's introduction to the *Encyclopedia of Feminism*, personal needs and political aims come up against institutional absences and professional insecurities:

Who am I to write such a book—even a modest, scaled-down version? I am a feminist, but not a famous one; I'm not a committee or a co-operative, not a superwoman, not even a scholar. Aware of the hubris—or at least chutzpah—inherent in such a venture, I embarked upon it anyway. I did so partly as a political act, to help in women's liberation, but mostly because I wanted an *Encyclopedia of Feminism* to exist. It was a book I needed. Rather than wait patiently (as women are supposed to do) for people better qualified than myself to produce it in the distant future, I set out to write it myself. (1986, 8)

The work of the dictionary maker is thus clearly both mobilized and tempered by her personal, sociocultural, and material circumstances.

To disclose these contextual details is not simply of narrative interest to the few people who happen to actually read the front matter of dictionaries.⁶⁴ Feminist dictionaries may establish a habit of self-reflexivity in the prefatory materials, but they maintain it in their lexical contents as well. This sometimes takes the form of first person pronouns appearing within entries to mark out the presence of the personal in the act of definition. For the *Wickedary*, which frequently begins a definition by citing “the common patriarchal dictionary’s standard English definition” before going on to negate it, this takes the form of occasionally approving of a “standard” definition and awarding it “Websters’ Intergalactic Seal of Approval” (Daly 1987, xxiii-xxiv). The *Wickedary* is thus constantly flagging meaning as a matter of opinions—personal and institutional—in conflict (cf.4.3). *A Feminist Dictionary* demonstrates its self-awareness, in part, by including the headword *dictionary, feminist*, the definition for which outlines the bias of feminist dictionaries (as “gynocentric”), the aims of the project (as “more than an alternative lexicon” because it attempts to “seize the language” and “call attention to the ways language functions in the world”), the history of feminist dictionary making, the constraints on feminist dictionary production (set in direct comparison to the hours, editors, and funds available to the *OED* and *Webster’s Third*), and an affirmation of the power of lexicon work in the study of discourse and the production of language. Of the decision to include this entry, the editors of *A Feminist Dictionary* write, “this is intended as a deliberately self-subverting process, to remind readers (and ourselves) that this dictionary is a constructed

⁶⁴ Landau writes, “Front-matter articles are seldom read by dictionary users but are almost always regarded as important by reviewers. In reviewing the dictionary of sixteen hundred double-column pages, the critic seizes on the most conspicuous elements to read” (2001, 116).

product” (Kramarae and Treichler 1985, 21).⁶⁵ And while feminist dictionary definitions of headwords like *money*, *time*, and *education* don’t usually specify precisely how much of these were available to feminist dictionary makers, the entries do point to these means and systems of production as differentially available to different members of society. This kind of definition draws attention to feminist texts themselves as extant within such structures.

Consumption

If the first principle of feminist lexicography concentrates on opening up about the who, how, when, where, and why of dictionary creators and compilers, the second principle does the same for dictionary readers and users. The second principle holds:

A dictionary should allow and, where possible, foster active, opinionated, and exploratory dictionary consumption:

- (a) People bring perspectives, purposes, biases, and opinions about meaning to the text.
- (b) People use the text as a point of authority and arbitration, but also as a site of exploration and inspiration.
- (c) People will be actively engaged in contributing to the text by interpreting, extending, and using its contents.
- (d) The scope of the text is both enabled and constrained by the interpretations and contributions made by its users as well as by the uses to which those users put the text.

Feminist dictionaries are strikingly interested in the ideas, opinions, and participation of their readers.

Of course, many other dictionaries have recognized the value of reader contributions—thousands of everyday English language users (men and women alike) helped populate Murray’s pigeonholes (cf Chapter 4) and hundreds of them have sat on American Heritage’s usage panels, for example. But feminist dictionaries tend to solicit reader input well beyond

⁶⁵ Entries for *American Heritage Dictionary*, *American Heritage School Dictionary*, *dictionary*, *dictionary of man-made concerns*, *Doublespeak Dictionary*, and *Oxford English Dictionary* remind readers that other dictionaries are constructed products also.

formal stages of submission, consultation, and revision, recognizing and celebrating its impact in stages of interpretation, exploration, and inspiration which occur both within and beyond the dictionary itself.⁶⁶ Feminist dictionaries thus position reader contributions as an unavoidable and invaluable part of what the dictionary is. The dictionary derives its authority not from an impersonal author but rather from personal experiences, chiefly of users. Like the Countess of Bedford (cf Chapter 2), feminist dictionary readers are language users of unquestionable competence who, rather than needing a dictionary to correct wrongs, need a dictionary in the course of active negotiations of life, to help over obstacles and through darkneses.

Feminist dictionaries understand their own readers as bringing to the dictionary a set of meanings and opinions which they seek to affirm, explore, or inspire rather than have adjudicated or arbitrated. An enabling assumption of any feminist dictionary is that women want to see words, phrases, and meanings that describe their own experience of life and language. This assumption requires an understanding of dictionary users as consulting the reference not just to learn about something *unknown* but importantly to confirm what *is* known. Readers will have opinions about the meanings recorded in feminist dictionaries, and the front matter of these dictionaries highlights this circumstance: *Womanwords* maintains that “Many readers will have their own personal favourite ‘womanwords’” (Miller 1989, xvi) and the *Encyclopedia of Feminism* acknowledges that “If you think I am wrong [about a definition], you are probably right” (Tuttle 1986, 8).

By feminist dictionary principles, readers are not only entitled to hold these (contrary) opinions, but they are welcome to register those opinions within the dictionaries themselves.

⁶⁶ For extended consideration of how uses of the dictionary—especially exploration and inspiration—have been difficult to ascertain, see Béjoint 2010 or Jackson 2002.

Feminist lexicographers commonly invite additions by readers: Kramarae and Treichler (1985) allots the last few blank pages of *A Feminist Dictionary* to “Readers’ Notes and Definitions” where might be recorded alternative definitions of various headwords, ideas for new meanings, thoughts on existing ones, and so on. Reader thoughts and contributions are also commonly solicited by feminist dictionary front matter, where street addresses are cited along with invitations to submission that highlight the importance of readers in not only balancing the perspective of the dictionary maker(s) but also making visible the knowledge of dictionary users.

Feminist dictionaries are also plainly interested in readers as carrying out important acts of interpretation as they engage with the text’s contents. This is often evident in a definition-writing style that leaves quite a bit of lexicographical work to the reader. Feminist dictionaries tend to offer entries that prompt as many questions as they might answer; indeed, definitions sometimes *are* questions, as in this example:

LINGUISTIC CREATIVITY

A woman undergraduate asks, “Haven’t I as good a right to make a word as any one else?” (L.M. Montgomery 1915, 288) (Kramarae and Treichler 1985, parenthetical citation in original)

Definitions sometimes simply point to conflicts within and beyond a given headword, as in this example:

male feminists

Rare. According to some, a contradiction in terms. Whether or not they exist depends on the definition of feminism. [...] (Tuttle 1986)

In inviting readers to ask questions, to see conflicts, and to feel confusion, feminist dictionaries disallow a reading of different meanings as simply discrete (falling into numbered paragraphs under a single headword, for example) and instead task readers with understanding a word as infinitely tangled up with other, sometimes opposite, meanings within and across headwords.

Semantic knowledge is produced not through reading and remembering but through reading and ruminating.

Some feminist dictionaries also refrain from the common lexicographic practices of offering guides to pronunciation, documenting scholarly claims about orthography or etymology, and assigning headwords or meanings to certain word classes or usage categories. The absence of pronunciation information is, for *A Feminist Dictionary*, a means by which they might “encourage experimentation” with language; by way of example, they suggest that *civil rights* might legitimately sound something like “silver writes” and shouldn’t be specified as *not* doing so (Kramarae and Treichler 1985, 20-21). In the *Wickedary*, spelling and etymology become malleable matters rather than researched facts: if *succeed* means “to conform to the role requirement for an up-and-coming young snool,”⁶⁷ then it might as well be spelled *suckseed*; and if *prude* once meant “wise or good woman” why shouldn’t it, in spite of centuries of derogation, mean that again? (Daly 1987). By not assigning or affirming certain word classes or usage categories, feminist dictionaries not only leave labels like “derogatory” and “vulgar” to readers for application, but they also leave part of speech to creative use.

Feminist dictionaries trade the role of final authority for the role of departure point—for further reading, more questioning, and different meaning making. The additional reading they encourage is both internal and external. Feminist dictionaries are often exuberantly cross referenced, suggesting that readers who start with a term like *sex* consult lengthy appendices on the subject of *sex* versus *gender* or other headwords like *gender*, *sex/gender systems*, *sexuality* (which headwords might then reference *Chowdrow*, *female*, *feminine*, *frigidity*, *gender marking*, *patriarchy*, *penis*, *prude*, *sex-role*, *social mythology*, *transexualism*, and so on). Feminist dictionaries

⁶⁷ Daly (1987) defines *snool* as “normal inhabitant of sadosociety, characterized by sadism and masochism combined; stereotypic hero and/or saint of the sadostate.”

that cite heavily often propose that readers study original sources in their entirety. Beyond the bibliographic facilitation of exploration, feminist dictionaries offer themselves as inspiration for more critical or creative continuations, evidenced by the *Encyclopedia of Feminism*'s "My hope with this book is not to offer any final answers, but to contribute to the construction of feminist alternatives by encouraging more questions" (Tuttle 1986, 8) and the *Wickedary*'s "Reaching the end of the *Wickedary* is arriving at the beginning, for the work of Wicked Schemers/Skeinners continues. Our Wording Spirals on" (Daly 1987, xix-xx).

Embedded

A third principle of feminist lexicography brings these concerns about people and purposes directly into our understanding of the lexicon itself. This principle holds:

A dictionary should highlight meaning as a universal and collaborative construction, highly embedded, frequently personal, commonly contested, and only partly linguistic.

- (a) All kinds of people use and produce meanings relevant to others and worthy of inclusion in a "general-purpose" text.
- (b) Meaning is inseparable from contexts including personal and/or cultural opinions, perspectives, experiences, and estimations.⁶⁸
- (c) Meanings exist in conversation and, often enough, in contest with one another.
- (d) Silences often carry meaning and therefore constitute a part of a language's lexicon.
- (e) The scope of the text is both enabled and constrained by the inclusive and indivisible nature of meaning.

Feminist dictionaries at once indulge in and resist the lexicographical impulse to take an infinite and infinitely imbricated web of significations and organize it into neat lexical nuggets by way of certain exclusions and abstractions.

Like all other dictionaries, feminist dictionaries are doomed to be incomplete and inaccurate—not only because the full range of communicative acts exceeds the natural lexicon

⁶⁸ This feature of language is sometimes encapsulated in terms like "pragmatics," "materiality," "radical indeterminacy."

and *all* natural lexicons clearly exceed the artificial lexicon of a single dictionary but also because there is a materiality and pragmatism to meaning; its personal, experiential, social, performative, contextual, and contingent details elude tidy documentation, especially for “general” purposes. But while other dictionary makers may own up to the linguistic limitations of their projects outside of the text⁶⁹ or in front matter moments,⁷⁰ feminist dictionaries, as we’ve already seen, foreground their incompleteness, sometimes even in their titles: *Lesbian Peoples: Material for a Dictionary*, *Websters’ First New Intergalactic Wickedary*, and *A Feminist Dictionary* all clearly identify themselves as parts—a draft, a first edition, an indefinite member—of an ongoing project. Moreover, while many specialized dictionaries (particularly corpus, children’s, slang, and English language learners’ dictionaries) have worked to construct definition strategies that accommodate the material and pragmatic aspects of meaning, feminist dictionaries are notable for reviving those concerns in relation to the general lexicon.

Perhaps inseparable from the feminist dictionary insistence on the inclusion of women and women’s words in the general lexicon is their insistence on the importance of context in creating meaning. One of the ways in which they attempt to contextualize meaning seems to be a concerted effort to identify the purposes and participants involved in the use of certain

⁶⁹ Gove, candidly described dictionary making as “an intricate and sometimes overpowering art, requiring subjective analysis, arbitrary decisions, and intuitive reasoning” in his book *The Role of the Dictionary* (1967, 7), but the words *subjective*, *arbitrary*, and *intuitive* appear nowhere in his vaunted preface to *Webster’s Third* (Gove 1961) nor in any of the definitions of *dictionary* offered in the slew of Merriam-Webster products subsequently produced.

⁷⁰ Simpson’s (2000) “Preface to the Third Edition of the OED” cautions readers “that fully comprehensive coverage of all elements of the language is a chimera” which point is “not intended as a disclaimer, but as a corrective to those who expect more of a dictionary than it is bound to deliver.” But this “corrective” to foolhardy readers is buried at the very end of the online preface—after sections on revisions and updates, headwords and entries, etymology, documentation, chronology, varieties of English, scientific terminology, definitions, variant spellings, pronunciations, and bibliography and textual accuracy—in a segment bearing the rather dismissive and generally uninformative title “Distractions.”

words and meanings. As is the case in many earlier dictionaries attributed to women (cf Chapter 3), definitions rarely stop at describing what a headword *is*, they attempt to account for what it *does* in the world, for whom, to whom, why, and how. The following examples are evidence of this:

names

Names in our society are the property of men. Fathers give their names to their children as a means of acknowledging and legitimating them. Although both girls and boys bear the father's name, traditionally boys are expected to bring honor to that name as men, whereas women are expected to exchange their father's name for their husband's. [...]

Names have long been a feminist issue. In 1847 Elizabeth Cady STANTON wrote to a friend, "I have very serious objections, dear Rebecca, to being called Henry. There is a great deal in a name . . . The custom of calling women Mrs. John This or Mrs Tom That, and colored men Sambo and Zip Coon, is founded on the principle that white men are lords of all. I cannot acknowledge this principle as just, therefore, I cannot bear the name of another." Some feminists went further: as early as 1832, Jeanne DEROIN refused to change her last name upon marriage, and Lucy STONE made her name among American feminists by retaining it when she married in 1855. [...] (Tuttle 1986)

Yahweh (YHWH) because this personal name for God is not gender-specific, it has grown popular with groups seeking inclusive terms for God. However practicing Jews neither use nor speak this sacred word, and out of respect for this belief system, it is recommended that others forego its use also. Jews use instead the term "Ha-Shem" ("The Name"). [...] (Maggio 1987)

dick-tionary *n* : any patriarchal dictionary: a derivative, tamed, and muted lexicon compiled by dicks, which, despite its distortions, contains clues for Word-Weaving Websters/Wickedarians. *Examples: Webster's, Oxford English Dictionary, Cirlot's Dictionary of Symbols. Compare Wickedary* (Daly 1987)

In these examples, the lexical unit is not only defined, but it is directly situated within social practices and personal decisions. Participation in the use of the term or its referent is not here abstracted from material contexts nor is the material context relegated to illustrative quotations tertiary to edited definitions.

In fact, another means by which feminist dictionaries emphasize context is precisely through this liberal use and general privileging of citations. This is apparent in the *names*

example above which quotes Elizabeth Cady Stanton and is evident also in *A Feminist Dictionary* which eliminates the physical separation between editorially constructed definitions and illustrative quotations or invented examples of words and phrases in use. Rather, *A Feminist Dictionary* consistently privileges quotative definitions over editorial ones, such that the meanings of a headword are most often rendered as direct quotations or paraphrases of clearly identified individual speakers and writers, speaking and writing in clearly identified years, as evidenced here:

POWERLESSNESS

“Not biology, but ignorance of our selves, has been the key to our powerlessness.” (Adrienne Rich 1979, 240)

“Is a dirty word.” (Florynce R. Kennedy; quoted in Gloria Steinem 1973, 89)

“To understand the workings of power as a relationship one must also consider the situation of the weak, the other, second, member of the process by which society at once exists and changes. And women are the oldest, largest, and most central group of human creatures in the wide category of the weak and the ruled.” (Elizabeth Janeway 1980, 4) [...] (Kramarae and Treichler 1985, parenthetical citations original)

Thus the words and phrases defined in *A Feminist Dictionary* are always squarely situated in use, employed—and thus defined—by specified persons speaking or writing at specified points in time. Earlier dictionaries attributed to women achieved a similar effect by appending glossaries to lectures, dialogues, and other forms of reference (cf Chapter 3).

Feminist dictionary definitions that aren’t quotations are often constructed such that the headword becomes a part of a full grammatical sentence. And that sentence generally opens onto an extended discussion of the headword’s history, relevance, and use by others, as in:

SILENCE⁷¹

Is not golden.

⁷¹ This definition of silence fills more than one entire page of *A Feminist Dictionary*, continuing, after this excerpt, to consider class-related silences and present eleven different defining quotations from four different decades by poets, novelists, musicians, activists, academics, and even penitentiary policy manuals (Kramarae and Treichler 1985).

(See CONVERSATION, INEXPRESSIVE MALE, OPPRESSION, SPEAKING, SUPPRESSION OF WOMEN'S WRITING.)

Below are some definitions and observations on the muffling of women's voices—from women who have managed to publish their words. While this dictionary as whole recognizes many words, definitions and authors ignored or muffled by white male culture, we cannot hear the erased voices nor recreate the unrecorded voices of the past. [...] (Kramarae and Treichler 1985)

Thus, throughout *A Feminist Dictionary*, definition and quotation are inseparable from one another just as meanings are inseparable from the contexts of their use.

This practice of contextual citation often furthers the feminist dictionary aim of highlighting meaning as, frequently, a matter of opinions and experiences in conflict with one another. Defining (as opposed to illustrative) quotations often bring personal perspectives directly into the text, where they sit side-by-side with other personal perspectives under a single headword. Such is the case in *A Feminist Dictionary*, as in the examples above but also in the entry of a headword like *home*, defined as a place of work for women but also a place of rest for men; a space “headed” by men but also a space increasingly absent of them; a “cage” for “women political reformers” but nevertheless the place where their revolution begins; a space to “be ourselves” but also “a comfortable concentration camp.” *Home* houses all of these divergent definitions and thus shows us how meanings can be matters of experience and estimation. Kramarae and Treichler point out that not all of these options are perfect: “We do not “agree with” all the definitions included but we do appreciate the discoveries and shrewdness they embody” (1985, 16). In *A Feminist Dictionary*, then, meanings are not simply multiple, but they are also often matters of opinion: We must sometimes choose meanings to hold, just as we choose opinions to hold. In pulling all of these opinions together into one text, feminist dictionaries insist that cultural and personal contests don't simply *inflect* the lexicon

but often enough *constitute* it. The debates we have about the units of meaning within a language are precisely what frames and forms it.

Importantly for feminist dictionaries, debates about meaning don't only take place in words, they also take place in silences. That silences carry linguistic content is evident in the following examples:

CUCKOLD

The husband of an unfaithful wife. The wife of an unfaithful husband is just called *wife*. (Kramarae and Treichler 1985)

FAMILY MAN

Refers to a man who shows more concern with other members of the family than is normal. There is no label *family woman*, since that would be heard as a redundancy. (Kramarae and Treichler 1985)

HAPPILY EVER AFTER

"Is a BF (before feminism) concept." (Michelene Wandor 1980, 135) (Kramarae and Treichler 1985, parenthetical citation original)

SAPPHO

[followed by an entire page without text] (Wittig and Zeig 1979)

squire (noun) always a man; there is no parallel for a woman. (Maggio 1987)

In defining *family man*, we know *family woman* to be an unnecessary phrase; in defining *squire*, we find there to be no female equivalent; in defining *cuckold*, we discover *wife* to have hidden attributes; in defining *Sappho*, we realize a lacuna of history; in defining *happily ever after*, we learn that it no longer exists. Words and meanings are thus not so nicely contained within the text as the text itself is shown to be full of gaps and silences. *A Feminist Dictionary* includes a lengthy entry under the headword *needed words* that asks for ways to speak about "the deception many women must practice to survive psychologically," "the fact that whatever a woman does, it is all her fault," "the condition of not having two breasts," "the decision not to have children and for the state of not having children," "the erasure—inadvertent or

systematic—of women from history”; the entry calls for more words or phrases “to introduce and describe partners and other relationships without using the possessive,” “to express female sexual activity,” “to designate something which is too masculine,” “to describe the strategy through which women workers and professionals are “re-sexualized” to keep them in their place” (Kramarae and Treichler 1985). This catalogue of silences points to the fact that there are gaps in dictionaries because there are often gaps in the lexicon itself.

To accommodate these silences, connections, contexts, and contests, feminist dictionaries often have to break with lexicographical expectations, offering entries that don’t always look or function alike. Some collect an array of meanings, some filter and organize those meanings, some suggest a consensus of meaning, some document only a single individual’s meaning. Regardless of the variation in entry style within any given feminist dictionary, it is rare to find within them a set of impersonal or authoritative meanings listed as discreet from one another, from other dictionary contents, and from the world in which the lexicon circulates. In insisting on messiness, feminist dictionaries begin to seem incapable of or at least uninterested in doing careful lexicographical work, but to read them as incapable or uninterested is to miss the ways in which they are thoroughly intentional, pushing readers toward a semantic knowledge richly aware of variation, contest, and power.

CONTRADICTIONARY⁷²: THE FUTURE OF FEMINIST DICTIONARIES AS FURTHERING CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARSHIP

Feminist dictionaries may disclose a downright indecent amount of information about the persons who make them; they may ask indecorously much from the persons who use them; and

⁷² Musgrave (1989) defines *contradictionary* as ‘Woman’s reference book of words wherein the semantic inconsistencies or discrepancies between female and male consciousnesses or realities are exposed; living book that solicits ovaryone’s linguistic contributions. See: a-wry woman; Big Red Writing Hood; differntiation; Enguish; Girlitz; Womb with Views.’

they may lead us into an inordinately messy lexical web that muddles our sense of meaning as much as it might clarify it. But feminist dictionaries may also engage in a serious, systemic reconfiguration of the dictionary genre, demanding it accommodate not just women's perspectives and voices but also an understanding of meanings *and* dictionaries as messily entangled with the social, cultural, personal, and material.

By way of conclusion, I'd like to suggest how this analysis of the characteristics of feminist dictionaries is only a beginning. While I have here pointed to similarities across feminist dictionaries, they are each unique texts, interesting on their own terms. An exploration of their diversity and difference is as important as a statement of their similarities. Perhaps most obviously, feminist dictionaries seem to fit into different trajectories of feminism; some spotlight a coherent individual voice speaking from personal experience (e.g., Faulkenberry 1998), some seem to work toward a collective voice speaking from shared experience (e.g., Wittig and Zeig 1979), and some seem to highlight a plurality of conflicting voices speaking about varied personal and shared experiences and politics (e.g., Kramarae and Treichler 1985). The cultivation of different identities, communities, and contests is accommodated by different lexicographical formations.

While the principles of lexicography I've chosen to emphasize here are one way to understand feminist dictionaries, there are others worthy of future research. This project suggests that historical antecedents of feminist dictionaries are sixteenth- and seventeenth-century bi- and monolingual English dictionaries addressed to women (cf Chapter 2). Principles of feminist lexicography are also anticipated in many pre-twentieth-century English dictionaries attributed to women which use illustrative corpora to describe marginalized language users (cf Chapter 3). But we might also trace feminist dictionaries to nineteenth-

century suffragist investments in changing word meanings, such as arguments over the legal definition of *freeman* (e.g., Burnham 1873) or to flapper dictionaries, which documented the ideological terminology of a “new breed” of transgressive women. I have alluded to the way in which feminist dictionaries echo investments of earlier dictionaries attributed to women, but the extent to which early women lexicographers intended their work to enact such principles and the extent to which feminist lexicographers were aware of earlier women’s dictionaries remain unclear. We cannot yet account for feminist dictionaries in languages other than English, and we do not know to what extent those dictionaries demonstrate similar lexicographical principles or exhibit analogous flurries and disappearances.

We might also ask how feminist dictionaries align with other developments in English language lexicography in the late twentieth or the early twenty-first century. Histories of lexicography often emphasize the rise (and rising influence) of monolingual learners’ dictionaries, such as the *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary* (Sinclair et al. 1987) which:

was not just the first dictionary to be based on a computer corpus; it innovated in a number of other ways as well. First, all the definitions are complete sentences; they are intended to sound like the teacher explaining the meaning in the classroom, and they give some idea of typical contexts. (Jackson 2002, 131)

Monolingual learners’ dictionaries of the late twentieth century thus exhibited characteristics remarkably similar to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century bilingual dictionaries addressed to women as well as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century monolingual dictionaries attributed to women and appended to dialogues, lectures, and etiquette manuals and, finally, turn-of-the twenty-first-century feminist dictionaries. The extent to which monolingual learners’ dictionaries through to feminist dictionaries share investments in presenting definitions as sentences, in making the explanation of meaning “sound” conversational, in privileging access

to typical contexts (often by emphasizing lexical relations and following patterns of folk definition), in offering “a reaction against the invented, often stilted, examples of other dictionaries” (Béjoint 2010, 178) has yet to be fully examined.

Contemporary scholarship is often also preoccupied with the evolution and lexicographical effects of online crowd-sourced reference works, such as *Wikipedia*, whose users “expect to move among texts as interest and curiosity direct, not to be constrained by linear, editorially directed matter of the old-fashioned kind [...and] to participate in the public construction of knowledge, contributing and editing Web content whenever they feel competent to do so” (Adams 2007, 9). Feminist dictionaries might well be understood as anticipating some of these user inclinations, by fostering user explorations motivated by interest and curiosity and by understanding users’ personal competencies as relevant to and indeed constituting public knowledge.

Adams argues that new Web user inclinations demand “a new type” of dictionary, one that “would accumulate, organize, and interconnect all sorts of lexical facts, complications of those facts, and commentary about the complicated lexical material we have caught in the Web” in order to “promote rather than resist the restructuring of knowledge and knowing.” The “Critical Dictionary” Adams imagines for the future “is critical of the value of the material it includes; it is critical of the methods used to understand that material; and it is critical of the conclusions to which lexical semantic and historical analysis come” (2007, 9-10). Are not feminist dictionaries a form of critical dictionary, not of the future but of the past? Do they not model how to accumulate, organize, and interconnect lexical facts, complications, and connections in the interest of promoting rather than resisting the restructuring of knowledge and knowing? I began this discussion of feminist dictionaries by claiming that histories of

English language lexicography are notably impoverished by the exclusion of feminist lexicographical thought, but I would also suggest that contemporary attempts to imagine the future of lexicography are similarly impoverished by that exclusion. Feminist dictionaries show us a form of knowing that decenters the authority of the dictionary and the impersonal dictionary maker and that welcomes the authority of the experienced language user and the creative dictionary “reader.” Feminist dictionaries exemplify how to invite a chorus of voices into the dictionary project, and how to use that chorus to sound out concentrations of contested meaning. Not only are feminist dictionaries critical about their own materials, methods, and ultimate effects, but they also suggest concrete ways in which to carry out self-reflexivity as well as specific aspects of dictionary production, consumption, and content about which we should be self-reflexive. Like many crowd-sourced online lexicons, they work in a place where authority is derived from personal experience, where roles of production and consumption are blurred, where personal intimacies become the basis of collective knowledge, where conflict and contest are not only welcome but required, and where the dictionary is an acknowledged cultural participant. The exciting flurry of feminist dictionaries may have been of bounded success in its time, but it is of abundant value now.

Conclusion

THE WAKING DICTIONARY: RETHINKING THE GENRE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DICTIONARY

This project was presaged by a number of encounters. Like other scholars—and often *because of* them—I was vaguely aware that women had been an early audience for dictionaries; I first encountered this in the full title of Robert Cawdrey’s 1604 *Table Alphabeticall [...] for the benefit and help of Ladies, Gentlewomen, and any other vnskilful persons*. Anne Fisher’s (1750) grammar, the first to prescribe the masculine generic pronoun, introduced me to the fact that women had authored dictionaries and other lexicographical projects. I knew that women had constituted a significant if informal portion of prominent dictionary-making workforces ever since reading Elisabeth Murray’s 1977 *Caught in the Web of Words*, and Deborah Cameron’s (1992) *Feminism and Linguistic Theory* made me aware that women had reimagined dictionaries in accordance with feminist aims.

I was, then, surprised to find that my—not dim but not sharp—sense of women in relation to the English dictionary was mostly repeated (and sometimes ignored) in dictionary histories. Many scholars acknowledged but none properly considered the place of women in establishing lexicographical audience, exigence, content, or creation. And so, to a surprising degree, James Murray’s rise-or-sink explanation for the appearance and disappearance of

women from English lexicography (i.e., that women were no longer visible in dictionaries because they had risen in status equal with men or because they had sunk back into illiteracy) seemed to prevail—and not as an important component of the dictionary’s history but as a curiosity of some ostensibly more important history.

My intention here has been to move past a sense of women as curiosity and toward a treatment of their vital relation to the English dictionary as a genre. Accordingly, this project has not been about sexist definitions of women or sexist definitions of otherwise neutral terms, though I think such work is important and should be continued. (That the *OED3* has not identified gender as a priority in revision [Baigent, Brewer, Larminie 2005] seems a grave miscalculation of the problematics of gender in the original work, the supplement, and the second edition.) My attention to dictionaries as a rhetorical genre has meant that I have been less interested in the textual features of specific entries in individual dictionaries than I have been in individual attempts to construct (anew or by revision) the possibilities of the dictionary genre.

This sort of understanding of the English dictionary was called for not only by rhetorical genre theorists but by Murray himself, a lexicographer and a historian of the English language. Like Murray, I have been looking for stones to the lexicographical cairn (1900), and I have found them in dictionaries attributed to men but addressed to women, dictionaries attributed to women and addressed to a variety of audiences, dictionaries attributed to men or massive workforces but underwritten by women’s labor, and dictionaries claimed as feminist. In my findings, the cairn is rather more wide and lumpy than progressively monumental. The dictionaries I’ve described imagine (sometimes similar but more often quite) different possibilities for the English dictionary than we encounter in basic definitions, in biographical

histories, in scholarly taxonomies, in practical guides, or in popular conceptions of “the dictionary.”

As possible directions for the English dictionary, the set of texts I have here considered points us toward an English dictionary that, at its emergence, is kairotically situated in early modern monarchies. In this context, the motivation of the dictionary is neither to educate nor to correct (women specifically or audiences generally) but to commemorate competencies (of women whose honor and eloquence accrue to the nation). That is, women seem to model an agentive dictionary reader whose authority is not immediately trumped by the authority of the dictionary genre, text, or author. As the British empire at once expands and fractures (politically, religiously, geographically and linguistically), the dictionary addressed to women presents itself as an instrument of national unification (by way of filial obligation), of rarified social refinement, of commemorating and disseminating the elite education of men. The dictionary, in other words, seems to favor consolidations by exclusions—patriotism articulated against the foreign, taste articulated against the low, and knowledge articulated against those denied education.

But, even in the early modern period and even among dictionaries that address the same audience of women, this story of consolidation (favored by many dictionary historians, then and now) does not hold. Two early dictionaries, Mary Evelyn’s (1690) and John Dunton’s (1694), suggest that the genre could document different semantic fields (ephemeral, domestic, and practical content rather than ancient or prestigious arts and sciences) and could serve different purposes (entertainment or ready reference as opposed to life learning or cultural cachet). The idea of the dictionary as fated for scholarly comprehensiveness is an unnecessarily narrow one.

Since as early as the fifteenth century, English dictionaries have been attributed to women, and, in that time, women have added stones to the lexicographical cairn, some nearby to Johnson's, Webster's, and Murray's stones, some not. That is, some women's dictionaries seem to have drawn from the same or similar antecedent genres presumed to have given way to today's general purpose dictionaries, multipurpose schoolbooks for children. But, while most historians tend to position boys' textbooks (perhaps alongside monastic glossaries) as the primary antecedent genre, dictionaries addressed to women point to other important antecedents in women's religious guides and conduct books. Dictionaries attributed to women often use similar lexicographical form and content as dictionaries attributed to men; they describe Standard English and they offer illustrative quotations and prescriptions of use. But, again, taking dictionaries attributed to women as direction markers, we see a high degree of interest in describing not just Standard English, but ephemeral, oral, dialectal, practical, and marginal Englishes. Moreover, we see illustrative usage not in the form of decontextualized literary quotation, but in related texts—lectures, dialogues, essays, other reference works—that stand alongside the glossaries that support them. This form of illustrative usage is rarely considered in lexicographical theory or practice. Finally, feminist dictionaries seem to me to have marked a new path for the English dictionary—one that is most definitely participating in the same genre but reconfiguring some of the genre's constraints and expectations to allow for a less authoritarian tradition.

Feminist historiography suggests that, in uncovering the deficiencies of histories, we might expect to find structures of power and domination reified “through an acceptance and valuation of the public over the private, the expert over the amateur, the episodic over the everyday” (Rakow 2008, 115). In dictionary histories, this is often enough the case, hence

emphasis falls to “universal” audiences, “comprehensive” content, “scholarly” method, and “authoritative” author-editors. But a feminist history of dictionaries that emphasizes only the private, the amateur, and the everyday would only serve to shore up those same structures of power and domination. To be certain, it is important to acknowledge that many dictionaries attributed to women are indeed authored by persons who were not trained or paid primarily as lexicographers, and many dictionaries attributed to women are interested in semantic fields which circulate in private homes and describe everyday English. But this feminist historiography has, I hope, revealed that these distinctions are out of place in the realm of lexicography. Women’s kitchens are, for example, no more private than men’s classrooms. Autodidactic women who acquired as much expertise in Old English as, say, the autodidact James Murray, were no more amateur than he in lexicographical research—a fact he recognized in regularly calling for their assistance. Episodic interests are manifest in dictionaries attributed to women (e.g., the colonial dictionary, the cooktionary) even if those episodic interests are different from those in dictionaries attributed to men (e.g., the hard words dictionary, the historical dictionary). Likewise, I hope to have shown that the valuation of freestanding over integrated, academic over practical, comprehensive over particular, literary over conversational, and alphabetic over thematic dictionaries has participated in reification of structures of power in lexicography that are all marked by gender.

The mode of heroic biography seems to me to have eclipsed not only these binaries of power but also many of the realities of lexicographical production. Notably, the most significant content shift of English lexicography—from documenting hard words to documenting the entirety of the lexicon—is often pinned to the “pioneering” editors of comprehensive dictionaries, even when those editors perforce turned to *teams* of

lexicographical laborers (including women) to produce comprehensive dictionaries. Theirs was a curious kind of pioneering, begun by never actually leaving home; they explored the unfamiliar territories of domestic lexicographical labor and reaped manifold benefits. The benefits were not commensurate with those of the women who so encountered dictionary work. But women nonetheless participated in these lexicographical projects and the highlight the ways in which large-scale English lexicography was then and is now predicated on gendered divisions of labor.

A genre theory of the English language dictionary that accounts for women recognizes the ways in which the material circumstances of production are not irrelevant to the end product, and that the end product is not itself the sum of the rhetorical event and social action.

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- . 1670. *The Queen-Like Closet; or, Rich Cabinet Stored with All Manner of Rare Receipts for Preserving, Candying & Cookery. Very Pleasant and Beneficial to All Ingenious Persons of the Female Sex. By Hannah Wolley..* London: printed for R. Lowndes at the White Lion in Duck-Lane, near West-Smithfield, 1670.
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LINDSAY ROSE RUSSELL

Department of English, University of Washington

Box 354330 Seattle WA 98195-4330

russellr@uw.edu

education

- Ph.D. Candidate in English Language and Literature, University of Washington** expected Jun 2012
Dissertation: “The Sleeping Dictionary: Women in the English Language Dictionary”
(Chairs Anis Bawarshi and Colette Moore)
Exam Areas: Rhetorical Theory, Histories and Configurations of the English Language, Histories of
and Approaches to Teaching Composition
- M.A. in English Language and Literature, University of Washington** May 2008
Masters Essay: “Toward a Critical Dictionary as Imagined by a Feminist One” (Chair Colette Moore)
- B.A. in English and Psychology, Georgetown University** Jun 2003
Honors Thesis: “Stark Raving: The Language of Madness in Contemporary First-Person Narrative Fiction”
(Advisor Pamela Fox)
- Coursework in English and Psychology, The University of Dublin, Trinity College** 2001–2002

awards and honors

- Department of English, University of Washington**
Afton Woolley Crooks Dissertation Fellowship Jun 2011
Teaching Assistantship Fall 2006–Present
Travel Grant Mar 2010
- Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric**
Feminisms and Rhetorics Graduate Student Scholarship Oct 2011
- Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington**
Graduate Student Interest Group Sponsorship, “Queer Pedagogical Performance” 2011-2012
Graduate Student Interest Group Sponsorship, “Queer Public Pedagogy” 2010-2011
Interdisciplinary Research Cluster Sponsorship, “Queer Public Performance” 2009-2010
- Georgetown University**
Graduated *Magna Cum Laude* May 2003
The Phi Beta Kappa Society May 2003
Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology May 2003
John Carroll Scholar 1999-2003

publications

Articles

“This Is What A Dictionary Looks Like: The Lexicographical Contributions of Feminist Dictionaries.”
Forthcoming Mar 2012. *International Journal of Lexicography* 25.1: 29 pages. (Advance access available Jul 2011:
<http://ijl.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2011/07/05/ijl.ecr013>)

Reviews

Guest Editor, “James Ray Watkins’ *A Taste for Language: Literacy, Class, and English Studies*.” Aug 2011.
Studies in Writing and Rhetoric Series Web Feature, *Conference on College Composition and Communication*,
National Council of Teachers of English. <http://www.ncte.org/cccc/swr/watkins>.

graduate courses taken

University of Washington

Current Rhetorical Theory (English 564): Rhetoric in Public Culture	Candice Rai	Winter 2009
Topics in Language and Rhetoric (English 569): History of the English Language	Colette Moore	Winter 2009
Graduate English Studies (English 592): Theory and Practice of Teaching English Language and Literature	Kimberlee Gillis-Bridges	Winter 2009
Special Topics in Humanities (Humanities 597): Hypertext	Brian Reed	Spring 2008
Classical Rhetoric (Communications 532)	Matthew McGarrity	Fall 2008
Digital Humanities (DXArts 511)	Stacy Waters	Fall 2008
Current Rhetorical Theory (English 564): Rhetorical Genre Theory	Anis Bawarshi	Spring 2008
Cross Disciplinary Feminist Theory (Women 502)	Tani Barlow	Winter 2008
Independent Study/Research (English 600): Old English II	Paul Remley	Winter 2008
Independent Study/Research (English 600): Old English I	Paul Remley	Fall 2007
Cultural Studies (English 556): Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere	Thomas Foster	Fall 2007
Discourse Analysis (English 562)	Gail Stygall	Spring 2007
Topics in Twentieth-Century Literature (English 546): Writing for Academic Publication	Carolyn Allen	Spring 2007
Topics in Language and Rhetoric (English 569): Language and Gender	Colette Moore	Winter 2007
Current Rhetorical Theory (English 564): Visual and Digital Rhetoric	George Dillon	Winter 2007
Theory and Practice of Teaching Composition (English 567)	Anis Bawarshi	Fall 2006
Modern and Contemporary Theory (English 506)	Gillian Harkins	Fall 2006

academic appointments

Graduate Instructor, Department of English, University of Washington

Fall 2006–Present

Courses Designed and Taught

Language, Literature, and Theory

“Introduction to Rhetoric” (English 306)

Spring 2012

“The Uses of the English Language” (English 270)

Winter 2011

Intermediate Composition

introduction to rhetorical awareness, writerly experimentation, multimodal communication

“Rhetorical Theory as Revision” (English 281)

Spring 2009

First-Year Composition

introduction to academic argumentation, rhetorical awareness, and research methods

“Acts of Definition” (English 131)

Fall 2011

“Acts of Definition” (English 131)

Summer 2010

“College and the Capitalist Consumer” (English 131)

2006-2007

Introductory Composition (Educational Opportunity Program)

two-quarter introduction to academic argumentation, rhetorical awareness, and research methods

“Matters of Taste” (English 110, computer-integrated)

Winter 2009

“The Mess of Mass: Community, Knowledge, and the Internet” (English 109)

Fall 2008

“Internet-Enabled Productions of Knowledge” (English 109, computer-integrated)

Spring 2008

“You Can’t Believe Everything You Read in the Dictionary” (English 110)

Winter 2008

“Education and Subversion” (English 109, computer-integrated)

Fall 2007

Courses Assisted

“The Language of Shakespeare” (English 225)

Fall 2009

Assistant Director, Expository Writing Program, Department of English, University of Washington 2009–2011
 Provided teacher training and mentoring to graduate-student instructors of 100-level English courses; co-designed and co-taught new teacher orientations; offered individual consultation on lesson planning and assignment sequencing; conducted classroom observations and initiated a program for peer-to-peer teaching observations. Participated in ongoing curricular development, assistant director hiring, and cross-campus collaborations. Led development of online teaching resources for instructors including eportfolio programs and templates.

Graduate Tutor, Student Athlete Academic Services, University of Washington Aug 2007–Present

presentations and institutes

Conference Presentations

- “Late Twentieth-Century Feminist Lexicography” Jan 2012
 Modern Language Association Annual Convention; Seattle, Washington
- “Ladies, Gentlewomen, and Other Unskillful Persons: Women as Audience of the Emerging Dictionary Genre” Oct 2011
 Feminisms and Rhetorics; Mankato, Minnesota
- “‘And the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor Goes to...’: The Roles of Current-Traditional Rhetoric” Apr 2011
 Conference on College Composition and Communication; Atlanta, Georgia
- “Urban Dictionary and the Reconfiguration of the Dictionary as Democratic Public” May 2010
 Rhetoric Society of America; Minneapolis, Minnesota
- “Child Peacemakers among Warring Parts of Speech in 19th Century Grammars” Mar 2010
 Conference on College Composition and Communication; Louisville, Kentucky
- “The Rhetorical Publics of the Dictionary” May 2009
 UW Graduate Conference for Interdisciplinary Studies; Seattle, Washington

Invited Institutes

- “Emerging Genres” facilitated by Carolyn R. Miller and Victoria Gallagher Jun 2011
 Rhetoric Society of America Institute, University of Colorado; Boulder, Colorado

workshop organization and facilitation

National Professional Interest Groups

- “Gateways, Gates, and Gatekeeping: Mentoring and Diversity as a Feminist Future” Apr 2012
 CCCC Feminist Workshop, sponsored by the Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession
 Conference on College Composition and Communication; St. Louis, Missouri
 (Co-Chairs Patti-Hanlon Baker, Tammie Marie Kennedy, Jason Barrett-Fox)
- “Women and Lexicography,” Modern Language Association Discussion Group on Lexicography Jan 2012
 Modern Language Association Annual Convention; Seattle, Washington
- “20th Anniversary Feminist Workshop Retrospective: The History and Future of a Space and Its Knowledges” Apr 2011
 CCCC Feminist Workshop, sponsored by the Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession
 Conference on College Composition and Communication; Atlanta, Georgia
 (Co-Chairs Patti-Hanlon Baker, Tammie Marie Kennedy, Jason Barrett-Fox)

University-Wide Pedagogy Presentations and Workshops, University of Washington

- University of Washington Center for Teaching and Learning TA/RA Conference*
- “Responding to Longer Student Writing and Assigning Grades” Sept 2011
- “Teaching Your Own Class” Sept 2011
- Queer Pedagogical Performance, University of Washington*
 (Co-Facilitators Heather Arvidson, Annie Dwyer, Chelsea Jennings, Japhet Johnstone, Eric Sheufler)
- “Engaging Queer Pedagogy” Mar 2012

“Queering Knowledge and Power in the Academy”	Feb 2012
“Negotiating Instructor Identities”	Nov 2011
“Fostering Anti-Homophobic Classrooms”	Oct 2011
<i>Queer Public Pedagogy, University of Washington (Co-Facilitator Annie Dwyer)</i>	
“Planning and Implementing Queer Pedagogy”	Mar 2011
“Defining Queer Pedagogy”	Feb 2011
“Narrating Trauma, Training for Safety: The Trouble with Queering the Academic Public”	Jan 2011
“Safe Zone Training” sponsored by the University of Washington Q Center	Nov 2010
“Queering the Classroom: People, Pedagogy, and Politics”	Nov 2010

Expository Writing Program Pedagogy Presentations and Workshops, University of Washington

Expository Writing Program Workshop Series, University of Washington

“Effective Lesson Planning” (Co-Facilitators Chelsea Jennings and Nancy Fox)	Feb 2011
“Working with Students One-on One” (Co-Presenter Chelsea Jennings)	Jan 2011
“Designing and Scaffolding for Portfolio Assignments” (Co-Presenter Chelsea Jennings)	Nov 2010
“Revising Your Teaching Materials” (Co-Facilitator Nancy Fox)	Oct 2010
“Commenting on Student Drafts: Focusing Feedback in Portfolio Coursework” (Co-Presenters Chelsea Jennings and Nancy Fox)	Oct 2010
“Ten-Minute Paper Commenting” (Co-Presenter Allison Gross)	May 2010
“Integrating Reflective Writing on Writing into the Classroom” (Co-Presenter Allison Gross)	Jan 2010
“Teaching, Collecting, and Grading Composition Portfolios” (Co-Presenter Allison Gross)	Nov 2009
“Teaching Materials Workshop: Assignment Prompts” (Co-Facilitators Allison Gross and Raj Chetty)	Oct 2009
“Catering to Different Learning Levels” (Co-Presenters Allison Gross and Raj Chetty)	Oct 2009

university service

University of Washington

Department of English

Graduate Student Representative, Undergraduate Education Committee	Sept 2007–Present
Executive Officer, Graduate Student Organization	Jun 2007– Present

Expository Writing Program

Co-Author, Primary Curator, and Web Designer, Online Teaching Resources	Sept 2009– Present
Creator and Organizer, In the Classroom: Peer and Mentor Teaching Observation Program	2009–2011
Chair, Classroom Technologies Committee	2009–2011

University of Washington Libraries, Undergraduate Instruction Program

Consultant, Expository Writing Program Instructor Web Resource	2010–2011
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University of Washington Honors Program

Consultant, Online Advising for Coursework in Writing	2009–2010
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Learning and Scholarly Technologies

Member, Google Sites Pilot Committee	2008–2011
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Georgetown University

Alumni Admissions Program

Applicant Interviewer	Jul 2010– Present
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John Carroll Scholars Program (now the Carroll Fellows Initiative)

Scholar	1999–2003
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professional service

Modern Language Association

Chair, Executive Committee, Discussion Group on Lexicography	2012–2013
Secretary, Executive Committee, Discussion Group on Lexicography	2011–2012

The Feminist Workshop of Conference on College Composition and Communication
Co-Chair, Planning Committee

2010–Present

professional affiliations

Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric
Conference on College Composition and Communication
Modern Language Association
National Council of Teachers of English
National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
Rhetoric Society of America

references

Anis Bawarshi

Professor, Department of English
Director, Expository Writing Program
University of Washington
bawarshi@uw.edu, 206.543.2190

Colette Moore

Associate Professor, Department of English
University of Washington
cvmooore@uw.edu, 206.543.2274

Candice Rai

Assistant Professor, Department of English
University of Washington
crai@uw.edu, 206.543.2707

Tani E. Barlow

T. T. and W. F. Chao Professor of Asian Studies, Department of History
Director, Chao Center for Asian Studies
Rice University
tb5@rice.edu, 713.348.4947 ext. 2269