

# Lexicography as a Form of Sentimental Education in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century: *The Dictionary of Love*

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. *Why study The Dictionary of Love*

Far more than a mere collection of words and their definitions or equivalents, every dictionary paints a vivid picture of the culture it is a manifestation of and the society it was compiled for; this is part of the didactic goals of dictionaries, whose normative role goes well beyond the linguistic code(s) analysed. And since every dictionary is the product of both a lexicographer's work and (usually) the tradition of preceding dictionaries, there is also room for individual creativity, itself influencing as well as being influenced by the intellectual history and the social order of the time.

This is true of such landmarks in the history of English lexicography as Samuel Johnson's masterpiece or the *OED*, but even truer of smaller, humbler dictionaries, arguably more representative of the social issues and ideological differences in a given period of time and speech community. Among these lesser works, *The Dictionary of Love*, published in London in 1753 (Anon. 1753), is particularly interesting for more than one reason: (1) from a lexicographical point of view, its title and content show that, a century and a half after the beginnings of monolingual English dictionary-making,<sup>1</sup> the concept of monolingual lexicography itself had been widening to include instructional material, thus building on but at the same time going beyond the limits of traditional lexicographical description; (2) from a lexicological point of view, most entries in *The Dictionary of Love* provide reliable information and shrewd, albeit cynical comments on the ambiguity and semantic evolution of words; (3) from a linguistic point of view, in many entries the compiler deals with what may be defined as the pragmatics of communication between the sexes; moreover, since the dictionary was compiled by Englishing a French source (Anon. 1741), this feature adds a further dimension to the linguistic analysis of this book; (4) finally, from a cultural point of view, *The Dictionary of Love*, while offering young ladies alphabetically-ordered bits and pieces of social and moral advice, paints a composite picture of contemporary manners, both polite and otherwise.

### 1.2. *Socio-cultural framework*

Since *The Dictionary of Love* was specifically addressed to "Young people, and especially of the fair sex" (Anon. 1753: x–xi), its compiler, while translating from and adapting his source for his readership, followed in the footsteps of the English writers of conduct literature. Undoubtedly, the most famous of them in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was Lord Chesterfield, whose *Letters to His Son on the Fine Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman* were first published in 1749. Yet, most books of this kind were addressed to young ladies: one might mention, for example, *The Lady's New-years Gift: or, Advice to a Daughter*, by George Savile, Lord Halifax, which was first published in 1688 but was readily available in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century (more than 15 editions being published between 1688 and 1791); or *The Matrimonial Preceptor: A Collection of Examples and Precepts Relating to the Married State, from the Most Celebrated Writers Ancient and Modern* (London, 1755).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Although the classic Starnes and Noyes (1946/1991) is still useful, the relevant chapters in Cowie (2009) and Béjoint (2010) provide updated surveys of the early history of monolingual English lexicography.

<sup>2</sup> A number of similar works are commented on in Vivien Jones's (1990) anthology.

Historical research has largely reconstructed the socio-cultural framework in which such a book as *The Dictionary of Love* was expected to appeal to contemporary female readership: following Lawrence Stone's 1977 tour de force, much has been written on the social condition of 18<sup>th</sup> century British women, especially as far as love, courtship, marriage, sexuality and family life are concerned (Sommerville 1995, Gowing 1996, Hitchcock 1997, Evans 2005). It is also to be remembered that *The Dictionary of Love* was published in the same year as, and only a few months after, Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753 which, while successfully trying to prevent clandestine marriage and bigamy, did not succeed in modifying the use of marriage for economic and political advantage (see Lemmings 1996 as well as Gillis 1987 and Stone 1992)—an issue alluded to in quite a few dictionary definitions, not to mention the equation of prostitution with marriage that was commonplace in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is exemplified in such a novel as Defoe's *Moll Flanders*.

In recent years, the ideological basis of women's subjection has been studied by analysing its economic, work-related features (Hill 1989, Erickson 1993, Froide 2005); also considerable is the research on the interplay between the new 'culture of sensibility' (to borrow Barker-Benfield 1992's title) and the age-old moral double standards in 18<sup>th</sup> century patriarchal society (Thomas 1959, Spacks 1974–5, Todd 1986, Mullan 1988, Carter 1999, Harvey 2005, Wagner 1988, Shoemaker 1998, Henderson 1999). As this latter aspect is largely criticized in *The Dictionary of Love*, itself a translation from a French source, the impact of the Enlightenment on gender issues both in France (Agin 2011) and in Britain or Europe in general (LeGates 1976, Hagstrum 1980, Porter 1982, Borsay 2002, Knott and Taylor 2005) should not be overlooked.

### 1.3. Lexicographical framework

If such was the socio-cultural framework in which the publication of *The Dictionary of Love* is to be set, something else must be added in order to understand why a dictionary might be considered a suitable way to address the above-mentioned social and ideological issues.

In very general terms, it can first of all be argued that the 18<sup>th</sup> century British readership liked dictionaries: annotated copies of dictionaries, which are quite easily found, demonstrate that dictionaries were often read as books, not simply looked up as reference works;<sup>3</sup> they were meant to provide, apart from lexicographical information, pleasure and instruction, as Johnson clearly states in *The Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language* (1747): when citing from his authorities, he will select "such sentences, as, besides their immediate use, may give pleasure or instruction by conveying some elegance of language, or some precept of prudence, or piety" (Johnson 1747: 33).

It is also to be highlighted that, from Cawdrey's *A Table Alphabeticall* onwards, ladies and gentlewomen have figured prominently among the prospective users and dedicatees of dictionaries (see Fleming 1993 and Osselton 2009). And if Elisha Coles might argue in 1677 that using his dictionary to understand the canting terms "may chance to save your throat from being cut, or (at least) your Pocket from being pickt" (Coles 1677: To the Reader), the compiler of *The Dictionary of Love* might well try and prevent his female reader from being deceived and lured into a loveless, unhappy marriage.

A more general, but somewhat vague educational purpose was behind what is probably the first English dictionary, or perhaps encyclopedia, meant for an all-female readership, i.e., *The Ladies Dictionary; Being a General Entertainment For the Fair-Sex*, compiled by an anonymous N.H. and published in London by John Dunton in 1694: this thick book includes nearly 2000 lexical and encyclopedic entries, most of them taken from other published books (see Considine and Brown eds. 2010).

In more than one way, then, *The Dictionary of Love* was compiled and published to meet a need; and while becoming part of the tradition of English lexicography, it contributed to preserve and enrich

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<sup>3</sup> Béjoint refers to "people who said that they had read a dictionary from cover to cover" (2010:10); as to annotated copies of dictionaries, Johnson's was systematically emended and added entries and notes by his friends and admirers Edmund Burke, Samuel Dyer and Edmond Malone (see Iamartino 1995 and 2010).

it with its successful selling and further editions, at least six of them published before the end of the century, and a few more even later.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. *The Dictionary of Love*: its source and author

As has already been mentioned, *The Dictionary of Love* is based on a French source, i.e. *Dictionnaire d'Amour* written by Jean François Dreux du Radier and anonymously published at The Hague in 1741 (Anon. 1741).<sup>5</sup> Although the English *Dictionary of Love* was published with no author's name on the title-page, the translation can safely be attributed to John Cleland, the famous—once, infamous—author of the *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748–49).<sup>6</sup> The attribution is based on a handwritten annotation that Ralph Griffiths, the publisher of both *The Dictionary of Love* and *The Monthly Review*, made in his own copy of the December 1753 issue of the magazine where Griffiths himself had reviewed the dictionary. Although this annotation was only made known in 1979 (Lonsdale 1979: 285), it was not long before the early readers of *The Dictionary of Love* could discover who had compiled it, since Basker (1987: 184) found that its second edition was advertised as follows in *The London Evening Post* for May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1754:

*This Day was publish'd, / Beautifully printed in a neat small Pocket Size, / Price sew'd 2s bound 2s. 6d. / THE DICTIONARY of LOVE; explaining / the Terms in that Language. / By the author of MEMOIRS of a Coxcomb; or the History of / Sir William Delamore. / Printed for R. Griffiths, in Pater-noster-row. / Of whom may be had, in one neat Pocket Volume, / The Memoirs of a Coxcomb. Price 3s. sew'd.*

Mentioning the *Memoirs of a Coxcomb*, written by Cleland and published in 1751, served different, though related purposes in the advertisement: (1) it identified John Cleland as the compiler of the dictionary; (2) it proved the compiler to be an expert on the language of love and polite society, as this novel is a portrait of British aristocracy in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century and a chronicle of the love affairs of the young protagonist, Sir William Delamore; and (3) it must have aroused the readers' curiosity, or even whetted their appetite for *The Dictionary of Love*, because the author of the *Memoirs of a Coxcomb* was notorious for “that most licentious and inflaming book”, as James Boswell defined the titillating story of Fanny Hill (Boswell 1959: 81–82).

As a matter of fact, however, there are no prurient interests in the *Dictionary*, quite the reverse: what is found in it is moral advice and acerbic social satire, as a comparison between *Dictionnaire d'Amour* and *The Dictionary of Love* will soon make clear.

## 3. Comparing *Dictionnaire d'Amour* and *The Dictionary of Love*

### 3.1. Macro- and micro-structure

The source and target texts can only be compared in very general terms. Cleland is ready to keep the macrostructure of *Dictionnaire d'Amour* as it is, that is to say an alphabetical sequence of entries

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<sup>4</sup> The publication history of *The Dictionary of Love* is concisely dealt with in Lonsdale (1979: 287) and, more extensively, in Davis (2007: 15–19). This is perhaps the place to add that *An Historical Dictionary of Love*, again a translation from a French source, came out in London around 1780, and that the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the publication of a few compilations bearing the same or a very similar title, though completely unrelated to the 18<sup>th</sup> century dictionary.

<sup>5</sup> Dreux du Radier was born in 1714 in a small village in northern France. After attending the military academy of Angers, he worked as a lawyer in Paris; however, he must have lived by his pen, since he published 38 works, most of them being historical and political in character, but also literary ones, *Dictionnaire d'Amour* among them. He died in 1781. (See Davis 2007: 37).

<sup>6</sup> This was followed in 1750 by the *Memoirs of Fanny Hill*, Cleland's bowdlerized and abridged version of the former novel. Bio-bibliographical information on John Cleland (1709–1789) can be found in two book-length studies—Gladfelder 2012, largely replacing Epstein 1974—and in the following articles: Lonsdale 1979, Wagner 1986, Basker 1987, Sabor 1987 and 2004. On Cleland's publisher see also Foster 2006.

dealing with love and the relationships between the sexes; but there are striking differences in the number of entries and in their treatment: adaptation, rather than translation, is the word that best describes Cleland's work.

It is first to be noted that 44 out of the 216 entries in *Dictionnaire d'Amour* find no place in *The Dictionary of Love*, for various reasons: (1) they may simply be cross-references to other entries (LEGER, MAITRESSE, PARURE, PEINES, RETENUE, SERMENS, TROMPER, VIS-À-VIS, VOLAGE); (2) they are omitted in favour of another entry-word of similar meaning or import (ATTRAITES, BIJOUX, COQUETTERIE, HELAS!, REGARDS); (3) they depend on French words and phrases with no immediate English equivalents (ARMES, BADINAGE, CAPOT, ENLEVER, FRIPON), (4) at least as far their specialized meaning is concerned (ABBÉ, AMOURETTE, BOUQUET, CAROSSE, CAVALIER, OCCASION, REGIME, VOIR), (5) especially if it is Dreux du Radier who gives them one (DONNER, DUPE, EMPRESSEMENT, NOEUDS, RAISONNABLE, TEMPERAMENT); (6) they may be instances of culture-bound words (FLEURETTES) and (7) refer to French or classical literary masterpieces (AGNÉS, HYMEN, MAL, VEUVE) or (8) French places and institutions (THUILERIES); finally, (9) there are a few entries that cannot fall into any of the above categories and seem to have been left out by Cleland simply because they tend to show women in a bad light (CONFIDENTE, GUERIR, MEDIRE, PLEURS, PUDEUR).<sup>7</sup>

These discarded entries were in a way counterbalanced by 54 entries<sup>8</sup> especially compiled by Cleland for *The Dictionary of Love*, on which Lonsdale (1979: 286) writes:

The alphabetical redistribution of the translated entry headings makes exact comparison with the French original a laborious matter, but it would appear that about a quarter of the definitions are basically Cleland's own, usually somewhat less cynical and more genuinely pessimistic about modern decadence than those translated faithfully.

If these 54 entries are added to the 172 that correspond in the source and target texts,<sup>9</sup> one gets a total of 226 entries that make up *The Dictionary of Love*. From a purely quantitative point of view,

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<sup>7</sup> Naturally enough, a few of these entries might fit in more than one category. Two instances will suffice to prove this, as well as to show Dreux du Radier's style and frame of mind when compiling *Dictionnaire d'Amour*:

CONFIDENTE, nom honnête qu'on donne souvent à un Sujet qui ne l'est pas trop; on laisse la glose au Lecteur.

COQUETTERIE, dessein général de plaire, & de traîner à sa suite une foule d'Amans, manières engageantes qui semblent tout dire, & ne disent rien. On lit dans l'Histoire, que pendant le cours de sept cens ans, on ne maria pas dans l'Isle de *Chio* une seule fille qui eût donné dans la *Coquetterie*, & que pendant le même tems, pas une femme ne coquetta; si cela est, voilà une réponse à bien des calomnies: où en est Juvenal, & sa mordante satire qui borne le regne de la *non Coquetterie*, & de la sévère pudeur, à celui de Saturne & de Rhée? où en est Sarrasin avec son Sonnet tant de fois répété? où en est Monsieur Destouches qui dit que *Toute femme est coquette, ou par raffinement, / Ou par ambition, ou par temperament*. Pour moi j'avoue que je ne sçai où j'en suis, si l'Histoire est véritable.

<sup>8</sup> ADVANCES, AMOROUS, ASSIGNATION, BILLET-DOUX, CONSTRAINT, COXCOMB, CULLY, TO CURE, DALLIANCE, DANGLERS, DIFFICULTIES, FAULTS, A FOP, FRIBBLE, GIDDY, TO GLOAT, GRADATIONS, HUNTING, IMPORTUNITY, INSTINCT, KNEELING, TO LEAVE, LOVELY, LUCRETIA, LUST, MAGGOT, MAIDENHEAD, MISTRESS, OATHS, TO OGLE, PARAMOUR, PITY, PROVOCATIVES, RAKES, RECONCILIATION, REPROACHES, RESERVE, RESISTANCE, ROGUE, TO RUIN, RUN-AWAY, SCANDAL, SERAGLIO, SICK, SICKNESS, A SIMPLETON, TO TOY, TRUCE, VANITY, VIRGINITY, WANTS, YELLOW, YIELDING, YOUTH, ZONE. Among these, Gladfelder finds most interesting "a group of entries addressing errant or failed forms of masculinity: *beau, coxcomb, fop, fribble, and rake*" (2012: 171) and then expands on FRIBBLE (2012: 172–173, 262).

<sup>9</sup> Here is the full list of the corresponding entry-words: ABANDONNER / FORSAKE, ABORD / COUNTENANCE, ABSENCE / ABSENCE, ABUSER / TO ABUSE, ACCORDER / TO GRANT, ACCROIRE / TO DECEIVE, ADORATEUR / ADORER, ADORER / TO ADORE, ADRESSER / TO ADDRESS ONE'S SELF, AFFLIGER. AFFLICTION / AFFLICT. AFFLICTION, AGE / AGE, AGITATION / AGITATION, AGREMENS / AGREEABLE, AH! / EXCLAIMS, AIMABLE / AMIABLE, AIMER / TO LOVE, AJUSTEMENS / DRESS, ALARMES / ALARMS, AMANT / LOVER, AMI / FRIEND, AMOUR / LOVE, APPAS / ATTRACTIONS, ARDEUR / ARDOR, ARGENT / MONEY, ARGUS / ARGUS, ATTACHEMENT / ATTACHMENT, AVANTURE / ADVENTURES, AVEU / CONFESSION, BADIN / TO JEST, BAIL D'AMOUR / LEASE OF LOVE, BAISER / KISS, BARBARE / BARBAROUS, BEAU. BELLE / BEAU, BEAUTÉ / BEAUTY, BERGER / SHEPHERD, BLAMER / TO BLAME, BLONDE / FAIR, BONHEUR / HAPPY, BRACELET / BRACELET, BROULLERIE / QUARRELS, BRULER / BURN, BRUNE / BROWN, BRUSQUER / TO BRISK AN ATTACK, CALME / CALM, CAPRICE / CAPRICE, CAPTIF / SLAVE, CAQUET / TATTLE, CHAINE / CHAINS, CHANGER / CHANGE, CHARMES / CHARMS, CHEVALIER ERRANT / KNIGHTS-ERRANT, CHOIX / CHOICE, COEUR / HEART,

then, 80% of the French entries found their way into the English dictionary—which, as will be shown below, does not mean that they were “translated faithfully”, *pace* Lonsdale—while one quarter of the English entries (actually, 24% of them) were penned by Cleland independently of his source.

### 3.2. *The preface*

John Cleland felt also free to modify Dreux du Radier’s Preface, while translating it, as he thought best. He cut some literary allusions and quotations, and added two initial paragraphs, the second of them admitting that:

The following work then owes its existence to an idea taken from one of their [= French] authors, whose notions are adopted, or followed, as near as could comport with the difference of language and idiom. (Anon. 1753: iv)

This is followed by a paragraph, duly translated from the source, where the rationale for *The Dictionary of Love* is clearly stated:

All Arts are distinguished by terms peculiar to them. Physic and Heraldry are scarcely sciences, but in virtue of their hard technical nomenclatures. Love itself, having lost its plain unsophisticate nature, and being now reduced into an art, has, like other arts, had recourse to particular words and expressions: of which it no more behoves lovers to be ignorant, than for seamen to be unacquainted with the terms of navigation. Neither is the glossary of it so easily acquired as might be imagined. (Anon. 1753: iv–v)

If Cleland here seems to be looking back on the 17th century English tradition of hard-word dictionaries and their long lists of terms of art (or, possibly, the first encyclopedias of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century), the lexicographer gives way to the man of the world when writing, in another interpolated passage in his Preface, that:

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CONFIDENCE / CONFIDENCE, CONNOITRE / TO KNOW, CONQUETES / CONQUEST, CONSTANCE / CONSTANCY, CONVERSATION / CONVERSATION, COQUETTE / COQUETTE, CRUAUTÉ / CRUELTY, CRUELLE / CRUEL, CUPIDON / CUPID, CURIOSITÉ / CURIOSITY, DECLARATION / DECLARATION OF LOVE, DEDAIGNEUX / DISDAINFUL, DEFENDRE / DEFENCE, DELICATESSE / DELICACY, DESESPERER / DESPAIR, DESIR / DESIRE, DESTIN / FATE, DEVOIR / DUTY, DISCRET / DISCREET, DOUCEREUX / GENERAL, EGALER / LEVEL, ELOQUENCE / ELOQUENCE, EMPIRE / EMPIRE, ENCHANTEUR / ENCHANTMENT, ENGAGEMENT / ENGAGEMENT, EPERDUEMENT / DISTRACTION, EPOUSER / MARRY, ESPERANCE / HOPE, ESPRIT / WIT, ESTIMER / ESTEEM, ETERNEL / ETERNAL, FAVEURS / FAVOURS, FEMME / WOMEN, FEUX / FLAME, FIDELE / FAITHFUL, FIERTÉ / HAUGHTINESS, FILLE / MAID, FOU / MAD, FORTUNE / FORTUNE, GAGE / PLEDGE, GALANT / GALLANT, GALANTRIE / GALLANTRY, GRACES / GRACES, GRATIS / GRATIS, GRONDEUR / TROUBLESOME, HAINE / HATRED, HAIR / TO HATE, HOMMAGE / HOMMAGE, HONNEUR / HONOUR, HONTE / SHAME, JALOUSIE / JEALOUSY, JE NE SÇAI QUOI / UNACCOUNTABLE, INCLINATION / INCLINATION, INCONSTANT / UNCONSTANT, INDIFFERENT / INDIFFERENT, INDISCRET / INDISCRETION, INFIDELITÉ / UNFAITHFUL, INJUSTICE / UNJUSTICE, INQUIETUDE / ANXIETY, INTEREST / INTEREST, JURER / SWEAR, LANGUEUR / LANGUOR, LANGUIR / LANGUISH, LARMES / TEARS, LETTRES D’AMOUR / LOVE-LETTERS, LIBERTÉ / LIBERTY, LOUANGE / PRAISE, MAIS / BUT, MARI / HUSBAND, MARIAGE / MATRIMONY, MODE / FASHION, MOMENT / CRITICAL MINUTE, MOURIR / DEATH, NATURE / NATURE, NEGLIGÉ / UNDRESS, NON / NO, OBEIR / OBEY, OBJET / OBJECT, OBSTACLE / OBSTACLES, OFFRIR / OFFER, OR / GOLD, PASSION / PASSION, PASSETEMPS / AMUSEMENT, PLAINDRES / PLAINTIVE, PLAIRE / TO PLEASE, PRESENS / PRESENTS, PROMESSE D’EPOUSER / PROMISES OF MATRIMONY, PRUDE / PRUDE, QUALITES / QUALITIES, QUARTIER / QUARTER, QU’EN DIRA-T-ON / REPUTATION, QUE SÇAIT-ON / WHO KNOWS..., RAISON / REASON, RENDEZ-VOUS / RENDEZVOUS, RESPECT / RESPECT, RETOUR / RETURN, RIEN / NOTHING, RIGUEURS / RIGOUR, RIVAL / RIVAL, SACRIFIER / SACRIFICE, SEDUISANT / WINNING, SEVERITÉ / SEVERITY, SIMPATIE / SYMPATHY, SOINS / ASSIDUITIES, SOLEIL / SUN, SOUHAITER / WISH, SOUMIS / SUBMISSIVE, SOUPIRS / SIGHS, TEMERITÉ / BOLDNESS, TENDRESSE / TENDERNESS, TESTE-A-TESTE / TETE-A-TETE, TOILETTE / TOILETTE, TOURMENS / TORMENTS, TRANSPORTS / TRANSPORTS, VERS GALANS / VERSES, VERTU / VIRTUE, UNION / UNION, YEUX / EYES, ZELE / ZEAL.

All the tribute that is now paid to Nature, is only a preservation of the appearances of it, to hinder Art from defeating its ends by being too transparent: as ladies, who are artists in laying on their paint, endeavor to avoid, if possible, the suspicion of it, nor plaister so coarsely as to have it seen. (Anon. 1753: vi–vii)

Then, as it were, the man of the world turns *philosophe*, and states:

Those who will compare this work to what their own observation and experience will have taught them, will readily acknowledge the usefulness of it, especially to those whose hearts are yet in their novitiate. (Anon. 1753: vii)

Finally, after reminding his readers of the tragedy of poor Queen Dido deserted by Aeneas (Anon. 1753: viii–x), Cleland amplifies Dreux du Radier’s conclusion by insisting on the dictionary’s usefulness for young people, and especially young ladies, its intended readership:

This Dictionary then may be of use to prevent these disastrous accidents. Young people, and especially of the fair sex, whose mistakes are the most dangerous, may find their account in reading it. Those who have no tincture of knowledge in the terms of this important language, will be sufficiently instructed, and taught to distinguish the Birmingham-trash, so often palmed upon them, for the true lawful coin of the kingdom of Love, in which nothing is commoner than false coiners, whose number keeps them in countenance, and makes this crime of high-treason pass at worst for no more than a venial error. They may here have the advantage of learning, by a salutary perusal, what is but too often the fruit of a practice never but attended with the greatest danger to them. (Anon. 1753: ix–xi)

Interestingly enough, Cleland’s amplification of Dreux du Radier’s final lines is centred around a monetary metaphor: the fine words of the deceiving lover are equated with “the Birmingham-trash” of counterfeit money,<sup>10</sup> thus confirming, albeit indirectly, how often economic advantage was the motive behind courtship and marriage. Still, “the true lawful coin of the kingdom of Love” is available, and young ladies should be taught to recognize it. As a matter of fact, however, the entries in both *Dictionnaire d’Amour* and *The Dictionary of Love* are aimed at exposing the impostors and their nefarious intentions<sup>11</sup> rather than directly promoting the language of true love.

### 3.3. Comparing entries

In order to move away from the Preface and into the dictionary proper, some French-English pairs of corresponding entry-words<sup>12</sup> may be commented on. In quite a few instances the French entry-word has a formally exact equivalent in English, even etymologically speaking as in AGE / AGE, BLAMER / TO BLAME, LIBERTÉ / LIBERTY and SIMPATHE / SYMPATHY or as far as word-classes are concerned, as in ADORER / TO ADORE, AMOUR / LOVE, MODE / FASHION, RIEN / NOTHING or SOLEIL / SUN. Cleland, however, is more keen on establishing conceptual correspondences rather than linguistic ones, or readers would not find, as entry-words, an English adjective for a French noun (BONHEUR / HAPPY, INFIDELITÉ / UNFAITHFUL), a plural noun for a singular one (FEMME / WOMEN, CHEVALIER ERRANT / KNIGHTS-ERRANT) or vice versa (CONQUETES / CONQUEST, RIGUEURS / RIGOUR), a noun for a verb (DESESPÉRER / DESPAIR, MOURIR / DEATH) or an adjective or noun for a phrase (JE NE SÇAI QUOI / UNACCOUNTABLE, QU’EN DIRA-T-ON / REPUTATION).

<sup>10</sup> In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the old form for Birmingham, i.e. Brummagem, came to denote sham, cheap goods, and especially counterfeit coins (see *OED*, s.v. BRUMMAGEM).

<sup>11</sup> Gladfelder (2010: 170) can even argue that “the problem Cleland confronts in creating a dictionary of love is not primarily lexical—not a matter of defining unfamiliar terms, as it might be in heraldry or medicine—but forensic: the challenge of unmasking the essentially criminal aims underlying the cant of professed lovers, whom he equates with counterfeiters.”

<sup>12</sup> For the full list, see footnote 9 above.

Anyway, even a cursory examination of the French and English texts will show that sometimes Cleland's translation follows his source quite closely but, more often than not, he departs from it until only a limited correspondence can be found, or none at all, as the following examples demonstrate:

**CRUAUTE.** Ce terme ne marque pas tant l'insensibilité d'une Maîtresse, que l'impatience d'un Amant.

**CRUELTY.** This expression does not so much signify the insensibility of a mistress, as the impatience of a lover.

**ATTACHEMENT,** voyez Amour. Les Amans persuades qu'il ne se faut faire qu'un plaisir du commerce des Dames, & qu'un long *attachement* est d'ordinaire suivi d'ennui, & de dégoût, *Cherissent l'inconstance, & sans se corriger / Leur seul attachement est de toujours changer.*

**ATTACHMENT.** See LOVE. The lovers of these days, persuaded that a commerce of love with the fair is never more flourishing than when it is a free trade, look upon an attachment to one person as too hard a restriction to unload at one port, tho' a gale of desire should blow strongly towards another. Long attachments, then, are now treated as tiresome and insipid: in short, matters are now so managed by consent of all parties, that there is no such thing as making a breach in constancy; since the whole of that old wall is entirely pulled down.

**HONTE,** s'emploie rarement pour marquer cette sottise pudeur du vieux tems. Une Marquise qui dit à un Cavalier: *Voir une Bourgeoise! n'avez-vous point de honte?* cela veut dire: "N'ai-je pas assez de charmes pour posséder un coeur tout entier, & mon mérite n'est-il pas au dessus de la concurrence?" Dans un rendez-vous. *Moi la première au rendez-vous, cela est honteux!* c'est-à-dire: "Honteux pour moi qui vous ai attendu."

**SHAME,** Is one of the principal restraints, placed by nature and the world, to defend women by the apprehension of it, from doing silly things. A woman who knows her interest, will preserve at least the shadow of it, even in the instants she sends the substance of it a packing. *Are not you ashamed of yourself?* said by a Fair-one, in certain circumstances, and with a certain tone, is a hint to proceed, which the shame would be not to understand.

Even a cursory examination of the wording of these (and many more) entries will show that Cleland's style is both more colloquial and to the point than Dreux du Radier's: "Les Amans" of the French ATTACHMENT entry become "The lovers of these days" in the English translation, thus emphasizing Cleland's pessimistic view of contemporary society and juxtaposing them with those of the good old days; in the same English entry a variation on one of Cleland's favourite metaphors, that of life as a ship's voyage (see Gladfelder 2012: 171), is introduced; and the entry SHAME, while completely rephrasing Dreux du Radier's HONTE, is centred around the concepts of "nature" and "the world"—i.e., women's (supposedly) natural inclination on the one side, and social stigma on the other; these, if correctly and duly understood, might help women behave properly and prevent them from getting caught in the snares of disingenuous male speakers.

#### 4. Cleland as a moralist: encyclopedic entries in *The Dictionary of Love*

The English audience of *The Dictionary of Love*, of course, had no idea of Cleland's adaption of and additions to the French text. As a consequence, the source text may safely be left aside, and a number of English entries can be analysed in order to highlight Cleland's linguistic and lexicographical approach in *The Dictionary of Love*.

Published as a small 12mo book and “elegantly printed, in a very small pocket-size”,<sup>13</sup> *The Dictionary of Love* (the Preface and the final advertisement of the latest books published by Griffiths excepted) is 226 pages long, by coincidence the same number as its entries; on average, therefore, one entry per page, each page usually consisting of 20 lines of print. However, the majority of entries are much shorter than one page, and some 70 are longer, the longest ones—quite unsurprisingly—being BEAUTY (which extends over 6 pages, 96 lines) and LOVE (6 pages, 100 lines).

The very length of these two entries proves that *The Dictionary of Love* is largely encyclopedic in character,<sup>14</sup> a feature often shared by shorter entries, as Cleland is keen on expanding upon his deep distrust of modern lovers and the real reasons behind what they say and do. A couple of examples<sup>15</sup> will show that he does often avoid all linguistic comments and concentrates on concepts and ideas rather than on words themselves, as a true lexicographer should:

**PITY.** One of the great avenues to Love. The women, naturally susceptible of the softer impressions, are most liable to this passion. They compassionate strongly those whom they see suffer: and it is a weak side, of which the men take advantage, who feign sufferings, to bring them to real ones. Pity then, like charity, should begin at home.

**PRESENTS.** A term of great power and energy, and, generally speaking, the shortest way for a lover to get to his journey’s end. They are proportioned to the fortune and rank of the person upon whom the design is. A duchess may fall to a diamond necklace, and a chambermaid to a taudry ribbon. It has even been known, that a silly girl has been seduced by a dozen of stick-cherries. In short, the great art is how to adapt, place, proportion, and time them.

The encyclopedic character of Cleland’s *Dictionary* is also clearly to be seen in the entries dealing with mythology and classical antiquity, among them ARGUS, CRUEL, CUPID, GRACES and LUCRETIA. One example will suffice:

**LUCRETIA.** A name used to express a model of virtue: not very properly however, since she was, strictly and in fact, rather a martyr to her reputation than her chastity; whilst, to avoid the scandal with which Tarquin threatened her, on non-compliance, she gave up the *thing* itself to preserve the *name*, and wisely swallowed the affront, though afterwards she gave herself the air of dying of an indigestion of it.

All the above entries, and many more, testify to Cleland’s pessimism over the real nature of love relationships in his times. Possibly the difficulties of his early years and the stigma that *Fanny Hill*

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<sup>13</sup> This is from the review that Ralph Griffiths, already mentioned as the publisher of both *The Dictionary of Love* and *The Monthly Review*, wrote in the December 1753 issue of the journal. The very short review is perhaps worth quoting in full: “Art. LXXII. *The dictionary of love. In which is contained the explanation of the terms used in that language. Small 12mo. 2s. sew’d.* Griffiths. The idea of this work, as the ingenious author informs us in the preface, is taken from a *French* performance: its design is to rally and expose the common-place love-phrases, modes of address, &c. as used by the gay and gallant of both sexes. With what humour, spirit, or elegance he has done this, the reader will discover, from the few following explanations, selected from as many different parts of the book, which is elegantly printed, in a very small pocket-size.” (Pp. 464–465). The entries TO DECEIVE, DELICACY, CONSTANCY, ETERNAL, OFFER, FORTUNE, VIRTUE, BEAU, COXCOMB, FOP, HUSBAND and FRIBBLE follow on pp. 465–470.

<sup>14</sup> The theoretical distinction between dictionaries and encyclopedias—quite fuzzy in the early days of lexicography (see Osselton 2009: 142 ff and Mugglestone 2010: 322–323)—is not clear at all even nowadays: see Bejoint 2010: 27–30.

<sup>15</sup> For practical reasons, the entries chosen for exemplification are usually short or shortened. In most cases, more entries might be quoted: here, for example, HOPE, KNEELING and OBSTACLES might be listed with PITY and PRESENTS.

brought on his name for the rest of his life (if one is to believe Nichols 1789: 180) strengthened his negative psychological attitude and made him feel alienated from society. Although Cleland was only 43 when *The Dictionary of Love* was published, his misfortunes made him a true *laudator temporis acti*.<sup>16</sup> As a matter of fact, his compilation is full of entries where the relationships between men and women have been adversely affected by socio-cultural changes. What many entries—e.g., BRACELET and ENGAGEMENT (but see also ADVENTURES, KNIGHTS-ERRANT and VERSES)—repeatedly emphasize is the contrast between past and present times:

**BRACELET.** In times of yore, a lover was in heaven, if he could obtain a bracelet of his mistress's hair. An *Infanta* never granted her Knight this favour, till he had cleaved half a dozen giants in two, and killed as many dragons. Those times are over. At present, Love is a carpet-road, in which the journey is performed much quicker, and without those dangers of broken bones.

**ENGAGEMENT,** Was formerly a word of serious import: at present it is but little respected; since lovers found out the commodious expedient of having a number on their hands at once. *I am engaged*, often means no more than a temporary put-off, without consequence to a future accommodation. Sometimes too it is only used as a whet to give a lover the pleasure of surmounting an obstacle, or to humour his vanity with a sacrifice.

and the crucial role played by money in interpersonal relationships, as attested by such entries as CHARMS and GRATIS here (see also DECLARATION OF LOVE and MONEY among others):

**CHARMS.** An harmonious word, rather hackneyed; indifferently lavished; and signifies no more than *attractions*. The solid, substantial charms, in these times, are those in *Lombard-street*; or, to use Sir Tunbely's phrase, those which are stitched to the charmer's tail, whether bags, bills, bonds, parchments, &c.

**GRATIS.** A word long exploded, out of the dictionary of love. Nothing for nothing is now the grand maxim in love as well as in politics. To love *gratis*, is to love without return, which need happen to none but those unfortunate, who have not at command the eloquence of a rich Jew, or stock-jobber.

the two themes unsurprisingly merging together in the entry TO LOVE:

**TO LOVE,** In times of yore, signified an invincible inclination: at present it has quite another meaning, and often no meaning at all. There is as much difference between what we call *Love*, and what our fore-fathers called so, as between our dress and theirs; between our snug frocks and cut bobs, and their slashed doublets and natural hair. Every sublunary thing changes; but our manner is so easy and commodious, that it threatens a long duration. Most of the present Love is what our blunt ancestors called by another very coarse name, or what is infinitely coarser yet, though unblushingly pronounced, Sordid Interest. [...]<sup>17</sup>

These entries depict John Cleland as a moralist and social satirist, or a would-be reformer that exploited the potential of a hybrid form between a dictionary and an encyclopedia to vent his spleen on contemporary society. Still, *The Dictionary of Love* may also prove Cleland's worth as a lexicographer, as the next section will show.

<sup>16</sup> Cleland's latest biographer starts his book by describing the visit that James Boswell paid to Cleland in 1778, when the latter author was 68, and writes that "Boswell draws Cleland as a 'figure' out of time, out of place in the modern world" (Gladfelder 2012: 2).

<sup>17</sup> This entry is too long to be reproduced in full. If love is here described as a form of sexual and/or economic exploitation, it is also made to metaphorically correlate with war or a fight in many entries, ATTRACTIVE, CONQUEST, CRITICAL MINUTE, DEFENCE, DUTY, PRAISE and TRUCE among them.

## 5. Cleland as a lexicographer: a taxonomy of his dictionary entries

### 5.1. Defining words

In fact, despite his moralizing, bitter attitude, John Cleland *can* practice the art and craft of lexicography—specialized lexicography, if one is ready to accept love and gender relations as a suitable subject field for a specialized dictionary.<sup>18</sup> The following words are given suitable lexicographical definitions, even though they only refer to the chosen field of the dictionary, and the proper definitions themselves may be followed by more general comments (sometimes omitted here below):

**CALM.** The state of an heart without a passion. Whatever praises women may give to this tranquillity, it is a thousand times more insupportable to them, than all the anxieties of love. [...]

**CHOICE.** The action of the mind, that determines it to one object sooner than to another. [...]

**TO GLOAT,** to leer, or look liquorish upon a woman. It is a kind of goatish stare, chiefly used by superannuated lechers.

**MAID,** Is a general term of women before they are married; and often no more than a nominal title. The condition of a *Maid* is a state of fears, wishes, subjection, and slavery. A maid is often one who is heartily tired of domestic regularity. Marriage is the great gate by which she gets out of her captivity, tho' some make their escape out of it through the sally-port of an intrigue. *Old maid*, is an atrociously abusive expression, generally employed to signify one who could get no-body to make her otherwise; and always means a *repenting one*.

**TO OGLE,** To fix one's eyes amorously upon a woman, to catch hers, and strive to fix them. This is one of the first methods of attack practiced by fortune-hunters.

The true lexicographic nature of these definitions may also be recognized if they are compared with those in the best touchstone of all, Johnson's dictionary, and a selection of dictionaries published in the two decades before *The Dictionary of Love*. It may be argued that Cleland's definitions are comparatively more 'philosophical' in the case of CALM and CHOICE, and more precise in TO GLOAT and TO OGLE.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> And suitable it was for Cleland, who argued in his Preface that love had "lost its plain unsophisticate nature" and had been "reduced into an art" (Anon. 1753: v); therefore, his compilation might be said to correspond to Nathan Bailey's (1730) definition of **DICTIONARY** as "a collection of all the words in a language, or of the terms of art in any science explained and commonly digested in an alphabetical order".

<sup>19</sup> Dyche and Pardon (1735):

**CALM** (S.) A Sea Term; when for want of Wind, the Ship can't make way, they say there is a Calm, or the Ship is becalmed; so a Person of a genteel, quiet, easy Disposition, is said to be a calm Person.

**CHOICE** (S.) Freedom to do a Thing or let it alone at the Will, Option, or Election of a Person.

**OGLE** (V.) To look wishfully or hard at a Person, but commonly means to look slyly and amorously.

Martin (1749):

**CALM**, subj tranquility, peace, serenity.

**CHOICE** (of *choix*, F.) 1 election, chusing. 2 diversity, or variety. 3 exquisite, rare, extraordinary.

**TO GLOAT** [sic!], to look askew.

**TO OGLE**, to look hard at.

Anon. (1753):

**CALM**, (S.) 1. Tranquility, peace. 2. At sea, when there is not a breath of wind stirring. *F.*

**CHOICE**, (S.) 1. Chusing, 2. Variety, 3. Exquisite, valuable. *F.*

**GLOAT**, (V.) To stare in an impudent lascivious manner.

**OGLE**, (V.) To look hard, and amorously at.

Johnson (1755):

### 5.2. Defining words by synonyms

As it often happened, and still happens, in monolingual English lexicography, entry-words may be defined by synonyms; as usual in *The Dictionary of Love*, the instances shown here (and others, such as GALLANTRY or PRAISE) often have a sting in their tail, since synonymy may be the result of corrupt manners:

**ARDOR.** Is a synonymous term to love, commonly employed to avoid tautology, or raise a climax. Your sayers of fine things are very fond of this term; which, however, is very much descended into subaltern gallantry.

**SHEPHERD. SWAIN.** Terms synonymous to Lover, and borrowed from the country, to preserve at least, in the words, some idea of rural sincerity and innocence.

### 5.3. Defining phrases

Quite often Cleland does not define single words but phrases. Again, such phrases are given the status of entry-words only in so far as they refer to gender relations. What Cleland's comments tend to highlight in such entries as BARBAROUS or SICK. SICKNESS (see also BOLDNESS and RETURN) is the gap between their literal or usual meaning and the one implied in the deceitful language of modern courtship and love:

**BARBAROUS.** A Word of a great sound, and little meaning; used to express the discontent of a lover. *How barbarous you are!* signifies, "You surprise me; I did not expect such a long resistance: my pride begins to murmur at it."

**SICK. SICKNESS.** *I am sick with Love. Sure you cannot refuse to cure the pains you cause.* — All this pretended sickness, and pain, never intrench an instant on the lover's pleasure. They never confine him to his room. He can, for all them, go to the plays, gardens, masquerades, and even to a bagnio. [...] In short, love-sick and sham-sick are synonymous terms. [...]

Women, alas, may share some of the blame for their own 'ruin', unless, Cleland argues, their 'inclination' is assisted by the use of reason:

**TO RUIN** a woman, to rob her of her honour, or (what is worse to many of them) of the reputation of it. Terrible as this word sounds, there are of them, who would look on no unhappiness so great, as that of having no reason ever to fear it would be attempted. *Do you want to ruin me?* is a phrase of capitulation: a kind of dying-speech of a virtue, just going to be turned off.

**CALM.** *n.s.* 1. Serenity; stillness; freedom from violent motion. [...] 2. Freedom from disturbance; quiet; repose; applied to the passions. [...]

**CHOICE.** *n.s.* [*choix*, French.] 1. The act of choosing; determination between different things proposed; election. [...] 2. The power of choosing; election. [...] 3. Care in choosing; curiosity of distinction. [...] 4. The thing chosen; the thing taken or approved, in preference to others. [...] 5. The best part of any thing, that is more properly the object of choice. [...] 6. Several things proposed at once, as objects of judgment and elections. [...] 7. *To make Choice of.* To choose, to take from several things proposed. [...]

**TO GLOAT.** *v.n.* [This word I conceive to be ignorantly written for *glear*.] To cast side glances as a timorous lover. [...]

**TO OGLE.** *v.a.* [*oogh*, an eye, Dutch.] To view with side glances, as in fondness; or with a design not to be heeded. [...]

A succinct, well-informed discussion of the various modes of definition in 18<sup>th</sup> century English lexicography is found in Mugglestone 2010: 323–326.

**BUT.** *But if this should be known. But if you should be unconstant.* All these Buts are nothing less than invincible objections. She has already surrendered, who makes any doubt about her surrendering. *The woman that deliberates is lost.*

**INCLINATION.** To have an inclination, is to declare one's self, openly or secretly, in favour of the person one loves; to take a bent towards him, like a tree to the water. When reason leans with it, it is even a virtue.

#### 5.4. Words in sentences

The counterfeit language of love is most clearly exposed when Cleland, instead of defining his entry-words per se, introduces them in a context, and makes a full sentence the object of his analysis. A professed lover has more than one string to his bow—figurative language (as in UNION), hyperboles (as in SLAVE; see also TORMENTS), or that sort of astute double-speak that makes use of sentences actually carrying little or no meaning at all (as in OFFER and DISTRACTION; see also DELICACY):

**UNION.** *Can you deny yourself the pleasure there is in the union of two hearts?* means, “I am drawing you the luscious picture of Love, such as it was in times of yore, that I may disguise to you the present state of it, which might not serve my purpose so well.”

**SLAVE.** *I am your slave; you use your slave too cruelly;* signifies, “The more power I can make you believe you have over me, the more I shall gain over you.”

**OFFER.** *I offer you a heart penetrated with the tenderest passion.* Words of course that signify very little. *I offer you my purse,* not only sounds better, but expresses more sincerity.

**DISTRACTION.** *I love you to distraction;* signifies about as much as the superlative employed in concluding a letter: that is to say, nothing at all.

Ladies can detect their pretended lovers' cant (as in TATTLE; see also HEART); yet, they often fall prey to men all the same, as Cleland finds them guilty of the identical sort of double-speak (as in WINNING and WISH; see also TRUCE):

**TATTLE.** *He is nothing but a Tattle,* means, First, that there is no safety with him. Secondly, that he talks too much to be a solid performer. This is almost the worst character a man can have with the women.

**WINNING.** *How winning you are!* The English of this is, *How weak am I!*

**WISH.** *I wish I could love you,* in the mouth of a fair one, signifies, “I actually do love you.” *I wish I could hate you,* signifies precisely the same as above.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Many more examples might be provided in this section, among them s.v. TO CURE, GIDDY, PLEDGE, SACRIFICE, SWEAR, TRANSPORTS and UNCONSTANT. The entry EMPIRE may perhaps be quoted from, because it draws an analogy between the counterfeit language of love and the cant of politicians:

**EMPIRE.** “*You have a perfect empire over me.*” These expressions in love are of the nature of the false humility of those politicians, who pave their way to sovereign power, by airs of submission and lowliness; and act the slaves, that they may become the tyrants of the people, whom they have flattered out of their fears. [...]

See also the entry GRATIS, quoted in section 4 above, where latter-day professed lovers and politicians share something else.

### 5.5. *Semantics*

Even though Cleland's compilation is a specialized dictionary—hence restricted meanings should be expected of the words analysed—in a few instances the lexicographer seems to be giving up his job as a semanticist, when words are of such general import as to defy description (DRESS; see also COXCOMB) or “would be obscured by definitions” (TO PLEASE):

**DRESS.** A general term, which comprehends all the ornaments employed to set off one's person. There is no giving all the point of it here: that would require a dictionary apart; and then it would be like hedging the cuckoo: for the fashions are so fleeting, and the terms so changeable, that before the impression was worked off, the old ones would be of no significance. [...]

**TO PLEASE,** Constitutes the whole art of Love. It is one of those words that would be obscured by definitions. He who possesses the power of pleasing has every thing that is necessary to his success in Love. *I desire nothing but to please you*, is equivalent to saying, I love you. See TO LOVE. [...]

Other entries—AFFLICT. AFFLICTION and GALLANT among them (see also AGE)—explicitly compare and contrast the meanings words have in the ordinary language and in the jargon of love, the specialized meaning being sometimes the exact opposite of the usual one (as in the case of ROGUE; see also TROUBLESOME):

**AFFLICT. AFFLICTION.** By these words is commonly understood the effect upon our mind of some disagreeable object. It is only in the mouth, or letters of a lover, that they have little or no meaning.

**GALLANT,** Is in plain English a favoured lover. A professed gallant is one who is master of the whole academy of Love; who is perfectly versed in the language and practice of that art. He abounds in *sentimental* expression, without having one grain of sentiment [...]

**ROGUE,** Is generally a term of honour, or at least of tenderness. *He is a happy rogue*, —the rogue of my heart, and the like. [...]

Quite naturally, many more entries in Cleland's compilation—e.g., AMUSEMENT, CONVERSATION, TO HATE, LIBERTY and TENDERNES (see also HAPPY, HOMMAGE and OBEY)—focus on the specialized, sometimes figurative meaning(s) that entry-words have in the language and “the present system of Love”:

**AMUSEMENT.** Love, Passion, are often terms used to cover what is no more than an amusement. It is generally only used by way of confidence to intimate friends: as, *I court such an one: I visit her: she is an amusement for me.*

**CONVERSATION.** In love, has a more extensive signification than it seems to have; not that by conversation must be understood that time lost, in which wit evaporates in long dissertations upon esteem, delicacy, respect, and splitting of hairs upon sentiments. Even romances are purged from these conversations, that rendered them so long and so tedious. All lovers have now the same way of thinking as the princess *Isenguion*, a Spanish lady, who reading the discourses of two of these romantic lovers, said, *To what purpose all this stuff, when they are alone?* In short, conversation now oftenest signifies, the disclosure towards the end of the last act. There is nothing more dangerous than these moments of conversation.

**TO HATE**, Is never understood in a literal sense, but when employed against the ugly and old. In general it is construed in a contrary sense. [...]

**LIBERTY**. The state of a heart which has never loved, or has ceased loving. See CALM. It is often used in a libertine sense, as in this phrase: *I dread the marriage-fetters*: I love my *liberty*. [...]

**TENDERNESS**, In the present system of Love, signifies especially the happy disposition of women to gallantry: [...]

In the final example for this section, Cleland claims to have let a lady take his place as a lexicographer and/or semanticist in order to qualify, by means of 40 different adjectives, the most hated noun in the language of love, that of a HUSBAND:

**HUSBAND**. *What is a Husband?* Hear a lady's definition, who composed a vocabulary to express the character of one, from her own experience, and which proves how copious our language is on that article. He is, said she, a snarling, crusty, sullen, testy, froward, cross, gruff, moody, crabbed, snappish, tart, splenetic, surly, brutish, fierce, dry, morose, waspish, currish, boorish, fretful, peevish, huffish, sulky, touchy, fractious, rugged, blustering, captious, ill-natured, rusty, churlish, growling, maundering, uppish, stern, grating, frumpish, humoursome, envious dog in a manger, who neither eats himself, nor lets others eat. Love has a strange spite at husbands, and is rarely very favourable to the definition of their character.

However Rabelaisian this list is, its hyperbolic nature will be reappraised if one compares this entry with the long chapter on "Husband" in George Savile, the Marquis of Halifax's *The Lady's New-years Gift: or, Advice to a Daughter*, one of the most important educational books addressed to young ladies in early modern England (see section 1.2 above): what Halifax defines as "a hint of the most ordinary Causes of Dissatisfaction between Man and Wife" (Savile 1688: 32–33) includes in turn a husband's infidelity, his excessive love for wine, his being choleric or ill-tempered, covetous, weak-minded and incompetent (see Savile 1688: 33–68). Cleland's substitute lexicographer (if there actually was one) may really have written "from her own experience".

## 5.6. Semantic change

Section 4 above has amply demonstrated how often John Cleland looked back on the past as a time when Britain's social and sexual mores were of a different, better kind. Unsurprisingly, therefore, one finds in *The Dictionary of Love* quite a few entries commenting on words that have undergone semantic change in recent years.<sup>21</sup>

"Formerly" and "at present" are often used to mark the contrast between the original and 'true' meanings of words and the 'polite' ones in the language of love:

**RIGOUR**. This word formerly signified a hardness of heart, and insensibility, on which there was no making any impression. At present, it is the art of irritating the passion of a lover, of preserving the longer one's power, and of raising one's value or price upon him.

**LANGUISH**, Is a term of great significance in heroic love: it is the delicate effect of a pure flame, that consumes one agreeably: it is a dear and tender love-sickness, that makes one hate

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<sup>21</sup> According to Basker (1987: 183), "Cleland may already have begun work on the *Dictionary of Love* while he was still writing *Memoirs of a Coxcomb*, if a passage toward the end of *Coxcomb* is any hint. In it the hero Delamor chides his friend Merville for using such stiff, "antiquated" terms as *assiduity* and *respect* in talking about love. "What solemn terms are these! Have you been pillaging for them the old obsolete dictionary of the love-cant of our ancestors?" (198)." Although Basker may be right and his remark is very interesting, neither the entry ASSIDUITIES nor the entry RESPECT define these words as old-fashioned.

the thought of a cure, and secretly nourishes the disease at the bottom of the heart: and when it ventures a discovery of itself, the eyes, silence, a sigh that escapes one, involuntary tears, express it more pathetically than all the eloquence of words. The reign of these heroic passions is pretty well over. [...] At present it means a state of stupidity, or ignorance of the means of succeeding; as when a money'd cit addresses a fine lady, without bethinking himself of putting his hand to his purse; or a soft fop gives himself the air of languishing metaphorically, and ogles amorously a gay coquette, who laughs at his white hand, and his flimsy figure.

As a historical semanticist and lexicographer, Cleland is shrewd and realistic enough to note that obsolescent words may still be used by the members of the lower classes that want to ape their betters (ADORER)<sup>22</sup> and that even polite speakers may not realize that words have undergone semantic change if the old meaning has a sweet sound to their ears (ATTRACTIONS):

**ADORER.** Is a common term in the love-cant, but begins to be somewhat obsolete, from its being hackneyed out. Chambermaids, milliners and sempstresses are very fond of adorers: and who can resist such an humble, pathetic strain as *See at your feet your poor adorer dies?*

**ATTRACTIONS.** A flattering term, and of great use to advance one's affairs: for, however versed a fine lady may be in the science of the love-language, it is hard for her to conceive, that, when applied to herself, it may not signify, as formerly it did, an assemblage of charms and perfections that constitutes a beauty. [...]

Generally speaking, Cleland highlights that worsening (WIT) and/or weakening of meaning (BURN; see also AMIABLE and DESPAIR) is what usually occurs, even though a word can also euphemistically replace another (AMOROUS):

**WIT.** The wit of these times consists in a defiance of common-sense, a licentious impertinence. Its chief employment is to put off false sentiments for true ones: [...] The primitive acceptation of this term was an honourable one. A wit was formerly a character of worth and solidity. It supposed a refined, shining understanding: one who had the courage to think before he spoke or wrote: who stuck to the standard of reason and propriety. [...]

**BURN.** An obsolete metaphor, formerly used to express the violence of one's desires. *I burn for you*, has now an ill grace even in poetry: and as to any meaning, it is scarce of more significance than talking to a woman of the weather, or the like.

**AMOROUS.** A term which means one constitutionally inclined to gallantry; a character that used formerly to be expressed by a much coarser word, which is now entirely exploded; whilst the character itself subsists in its full force.

### 5.7. Pragmatic features

The final list of examples from *The Dictionary of Love* includes entries where the most interesting descriptive features may come under the heading of pragmatics. What is particularly insisted on in these entries is that words can be more or less semantically void or have a largely irrelevant denotative meaning, but their use in specific ways and contexts and for relevant purposes makes them pragmatically effective and enables speakers to achieve their own peculiar communicative ends.

It is often the way one's voice sounds that is indicative of what one feels and means, rather than words themselves. A sentence, either "severely pronounced" (TO ADDRESS ONE'S SELF) or uttered in an encouraging tone (MAD; see also SHAME), may reveal a lady's true attitude towards her lover; as far as

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<sup>22</sup> On the relationship between speech and social status in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, see McIntosh 1986.

entries in *The Dictionary of Love* are concerned, men seem to need stronger, more emphatic expressions to convey their feelings (TO ABUSE; see also FORSAKE), be they genuine or not:

**TO ADDRESS ONE'S SELF.** *To whom do you think you are addressing yourself?* This phrase severely pronounced, may be employed by a lady to dash, or disconcert her lover, to inspire him with respect, or check his forwardness. It is as much to say, "Let us see whether you are a novice or not? Whether you have duly taken your degrees of assurance? or whether you are not in your horn-book of gallantry?" [...]

**MAD.** *ARE you mad?* is a term often used, with no very forbidding tone, to an enterprising lover [...]

**TO ABUSE, to encroach, to misproceed.** This term is often used in protestations, and generally tacked to a negative. *No! I will never abuse your goodness.* Or *without the negation*, in a more emphatic strain: "I ever abuse your goodness!" *Heavens forbid!* All this signifies, purely and simply, "since you will have promises and protestations, to bring you to my ends, there they are for you." [...]

Pragmatic meaning can also be conveyed by an expert use of facial expressions and body language, that may reverse the literal meaning of words and expressions (TO DECEIVE, NO); SIGHS and TEARS are also common among the female practitioners of the language of love, while their male counterparts seem to favour EXCLAIMS:

**TO DECEIVE.** *You deceive me;* in a lady's mouth, one would imagine, signifies, "I know you deceive me," and only means to exact assurances to the contrary. [...] These words, *You deceive me*, are ever pronounced with an air so tender, with such a look, and a certain faintness and languor, that are evident signs the lover is not the less believed, and but the more sure of his success.

**NO,** Is a term very frequently employed by the fair, when they mean nothing less than a negative. Their *yes* is always *yes*, but their *no* is not always *no*. The air and tone of it determines the signification: Sometimes too the circumstances, a smile, or a look.

**SIGHS,** Are useful interjections in the love-language. They are of special service to save the modest fair-one the pain of pronouncing those dreadful decisive words, *I love you*. They are very tiresome, however, when a languorous lover *Vents only in deep sighs his am'rous flame*. They are a very uncurrent coin, when employed by the men: thus, when a lover whines out, *Cannot my sighs move you to pity me?* he deserves to be pitied indeed!

**TEARS.** *Can you disbelieve my tears?* in the mouth of the Fair, signifies, "Tears are the eloquence of our sex; they move even the most insensible; can you be more obdurate than others?" [...] When men employ tears, they have a great pathos. Some, however, have them at command, in which case they mean, "Since words alone will not do, perhaps tears may take you by the weak side of compassion. No actor could play his part better than I am now doing." [...]

**EXCLAIMS.** These are amorous interjections, designed for marks of a violent desire of persuading what one does not feel. They also serve to fill up, whilst one is recovering breath from a long period; and when a lover has nothing better to say, or is got out of breath. *Oh! how cruel you are! How unjust!* This means, "Why do you not believe me? I have done every thing towards persuading you, that a gentle lover should: I have talked: I have sighed: I have been for this hour heaping lies upon lies, till I am at the end of my part." Besides, these breaks have great power and effect; as they express a disorder that always flatters the woman, who thinks herself the cause of it.

Not only the way of speaking and behaving can determine one's intended meaning; the context and the situation on the one side, and the speakers and hearers involved on the other side, also influence communication. This is explicitly declared by Cleland when introducing his analysis of the entry-word TO GRANT,

**To GRANT.** The signification of this word is restrained, or extended, according to the occasions, and the person who employs it. [...]

and implicitly shown in the lexicographical presentation of the expression "I esteem you", which is said to have four different meanings when uttered by an inexperienced female "young person", "a coquette", a polite lady, and "A young man":

**ESTEEM.** *I esteem you.* This expression in the mouth of a young person only means, that she wants a little boldness, to say in downright terms that she loves you. In the mouth of a coquette it signifies, that she has a mind to play reserve upon you, and impose sentimental delicacy on you. In certain circumstances, *I esteem you*, is a salving phrase, and is as much as to say, "You distress me: I do not know how to come off with you: To tell you plainly, that I hate you, would be too much against all the laws of politeness." A young man, who tells a disagreeable prude, or a woman on the decline, that he *esteems* her, means, that she is a fool to entertain any pretensions to his heart; and that he does *not* esteem her enough to have the complaisance of telling her that he loves her.

A contrast between speakers and hearers who master, or do not master, the language of love is repeatedly mentioned, e.g. in such entries as CONFESSON and RESPECT, where "a coquette" and "a sly prostrate engineer" know all the tricks of the trade, while "a novice" does not:

**CONFESSON.** *How long will you make me languish for a confession that you love me?* This, to a coquette, signifies, "I have, methinks, gone through all the forms which usually bring matters to a conclusion: I have fooled away time enough about you: I begin to be tired, and want to be at a point." To a novice, it means, "I see my happiness hangs but on a thread of modesty, ready to snap: you are reduced; and all I want of you is to tell me so, that we may lose no more time."

**RESPECT.** [...] *I have too much respect for you*, in the mouth of a sly prostrate engineer, signifies, "I know better things than to hazard freedoms, prematurely, before the way is cleared for them." In the mouth of a novice, it means, "I have too much bashfulness." [...]

Luckily enough, as the entry TO JEST makes clear, the double-speak of polite ladies can be properly understood by "Other more learned interpreters"—possibly, the young people made wiser by the perusal of *The Dictionary of Love*:

**TO JEST.** When at a *Tete-a-tete*, a lady says, with a certain air, *I do not like this jesting*; it signifies, "Every thing declares in your favour; even this little coyness is but a signal of your victory." Other more learned interpreters pretend with more boldness and probability, that these words mean, "This is no time for jesting: I should like better you was in earnest." And that it is using a lady very ill not to take it in that sense. [...]

## 6. Concluding remarks

When publishing the second edition of his *Dictionarium Britannicum* in 1736, Nathan Bailey added to it a closely-printed five-page preface on the history and nature of the English language. As it was usual in those days, he compared English to other languages:

As to the Qualities of the present *English* Tongue, it is allow'd to be the closest, clearest, most chaste and reserv'd in its Diction of all the Modern Languages; and also the most just and severe in its Ornaments, and also the honestest, most open and undesigning: it will not bear double Meanings, nor can it palliate or hide Nonsense; bad Sense and good *English* being inconsistent. It is thus characteriz'd; it can be gay and pleasant upon Occasion, notwithstanding all its Sublimity, Nervousness and Majesty, but its Gaiety is moderated and restrain'd by good Sense; it hates excessive Ornaments, seeming rather to chuse to go naked for the greater Simplicity, never using more Ornaments of Dress than Nature requires. (Bailey 1736: Preface)

This eulogistic idealized picture is radically different from the one painted by Cleland in *The Dictionary of Love*. It should however be remembered that the latter lexicographer did not deal with the English language in general, but the specialized language of love and its typical features, as the entries ETERNAL and ELOQUENCE demonstrate once again:

**ETERNAL.** There is no eternity in any sublunary thing, and least of all in love. *I will love you eternally: My flame will be eternal.* Ridiculous phrases! Which signify, "My passion will last as long as it will last." Note, that in the Love-kalendar, as moments are sometimes years, and years ages, it happens too, that ages become years, and years moments: thus, *It is an eternity since I saw you,* sometimes means, "I have not seen you these two days:" and "My love will be eternal," often signifies, "It will last two days." Hyperboles are the familiar language of lovers, who are always in extremes; and too often "*in extremes by change more fierce.*"

**ELOQUENCE.** All the great passions are dumb, and yet most lovers are eloquent; whence it may be concluded, that eloquence is not the art of loving, but of saying moving things. A lover then who says fine things is rarely a true one. A disorder of language is one of its greatest marks. One of our poets justly shews it, in a line often quoted, "*And nonsense shall be eloquence in love.*" In short, lovers really struck, resemble in some sort infants, who are not capable of expressing their wants, but by signs, and inarticulate expressions.

For Cleland the moralist, the rhetoric of love is ridiculous and basically false, and being proficient in the language of love implies by definition not loving at all. Cleland the lexicographer and linguist looked back on those days when English, to repeat Bailey's words, was "chaste and reserv'd in its Diction" and never used "more Ornaments of Dress than Nature" required. If there had ever been such golden age, it was now over, if one is to believe Lord Chesterfield who, while informing the readers of *The World* of the forthcoming publication of Johnson's dictionary, commented on "the genteeler part of our language, which owes both it's rise and progress to my fair countrywomen, whose natural turn is more to the copiousness, than to the correctness of diction" (*The World*, 28.11.1754) and, in the following issue of the same magazine, resumed the topic of "the incontinency of female eloquence" and wrote a few paragraphs that remind one of *The Dictionary of Love*:

LANGUAGE is indisputably the more immediate province of the fair sex: there they shine, there they excel. The torrents of their eloquence, especially in their vituperative way, shun all opposition [...]. If words are wanting (which indeed happens but seldom) indignation instantly makes new ones [...] NOR is the tender part of our language less obliged to that soft and amiable sex; their love being at last as productive as their indignation. [...] Even in common conversation, I never see a pretty mouth opening to speak, but I expect, and am seldom disappointed, some new improvement of our language. (*The World*, 5.12.1754)<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Chesterfield, while being obviously ironic here, refers to the women's keenness on coining neologisms, and comments on *flirtation*, *to fuzz* and the extended use of *vast* and *vastly* (none of which, incidentally, is an entry in *The Dictionary of Love*).

Despite Cleland's moral headshaking, his biting social criticism, and his sometimes cantankerous attitude, then, *The Dictionary of Love* can be said to provide reliable (if not conclusive) evidence of mid-18<sup>th</sup> century sociolinguistic issues.

As far as the dictionary content is concerned, one may conclude that, although Cleland relied, one way or another, on the century-old tradition of the 'advice' as a literary genre for women, his attitude is more sympathetic than paternalistic, and the alphabetical, dictionary-like structure of the work helps him take a fresh, pragmatic approach to the topic; the entries' "cumulative effect is to suggest that one should never take literally a single word spoken in love, at least in the fashionable world" (Lonsdale 1979: 286). What the former author of the *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* writes here shows that the principle of pleasure,<sup>24</sup> the illuministic *primum mobile* of human action (see Wagner 1988 and Davidson 2004: 46–75), was giving way to a different view of human relations (see Todd 1986, Mullan 1988 and Barker-Benfield 1992); it was still true, however, that "women's power and worth lay in their virtue", whereas "men's influence and desirability depended on their monetary assets" (Davis 2007: 29).<sup>25</sup> It was also true that sexual hierarchy was still given precedence over social class differences and economic inequality, even though it was possible for men to feel for women and sympathize with their problems. Finally, to repeat what his biographer wrote while discussing the *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, "Cleland was aware of, and in some way responsive to, certain social and cultural dilemmas. And he seems to have shared this awareness with such influential artists as Defoe, Hogarth, and the writers of whore biography" (Epstein 1974: 99).

Viewed as a dictionary proper, it can be stated that, unlike other dictionaries, Cleland's book is not meant to teach language usage, but to warn against the abuse or misuse of language, against the unreliability of language, against speech as a form of disguise and a way to manipulate people; also, *The Dictionary of Love* does not focus on the general, standard presentation of words but provides interesting insights into peculiar, pragmatic, context-related meanings and word connotations in 18<sup>th</sup> century British society. It might even be argued that, given his interest in the real and fake meaning of words in the language of love, Cleland is to be defined as a semanticist or a lexicologist rather than a lexicographer. As a matter of fact, quite a few of his entries concentrate on what is meant or understood when words are used; in Cleland's opinion, there is no such thing as an 'objective' semantic description, meaning is elusive, inherently ambiguous, and most often dependent on the speakers and their communicative aims. Possibly, the most notable feature of *The Dictionary of Love*, what qualifies it as unique in the wide-ranging tradition of British dictionary-making, is not so much its methodology or ideological construction but, more radically still, Cleland's move away from traditional lexicography as a closed masculine system in which author, reader and subject (or worldview) were male.

For these reasons, *The Dictionary of Love*—as commercially successful at the time as largely neglected, if not completely forgotten, by the historians of lexicography nowadays—may be said to have contributed to the widening of the concept of monolingual dictionary-making itself,<sup>26</sup> a century and a half after its first beginnings in England and on the eve of the publication of Samuel Johnson's epoch-making dictionary.

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<sup>24</sup> Particularly revealing in this context is the criticism implied in the entry

**UNJUSTICE.** To reproaches of unconstancy, the answer often is, *You do me great injustice*. The meaning of which is, "It is true, I saunter, I flutter from beauty to beauty; but why should you find fault with me? it is the way of the world. Would you have me set up for a reformer of it? Pleasure is my property; and I have a right to take my own wherever I find it."

See also the entry **GALLANT**, quoted from in the section 5.5. above.

<sup>25</sup> The latter statement is confirmed by such an entry as

**FORTUNE.** *A man of fortune.* When a wise worldly-minded mother makes use of this expression, in an emphatic tone, to a daughter, whom she is going to sacrifice to a sordid consideration of interest and maintenance, it means, that the man is *worth* nothing but his fortune. [...]

See also the entry **MATRIMONY**.

<sup>26</sup> Mugglestone convincingly argues that, although Johnson's dictionary towers over 18<sup>th</sup> century lexicography, one should be reminded of "a whole range of other works, diversified by size and price, by audience and addressees, by contents and language attitudes, as well as by their differential positioning within a genre which was by no means either monosemic or capable of being reduced to a single representative text" (2010: 309). Cleland's compilation may well be included in this wide range of 18<sup>th</sup> century dictionaries.

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