English Dictionaries as Cultural Mines

English Dictionaries as Cultural Mines

Edited by

Roberta Facchinetti

CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS PUBLISHING

English Dictionaries as Cultural Mines,
Edited by Roberta Facchinetti

This book first published 2012

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2012 by Roberta Facchinetti and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-3647-8, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-3647-0

CONTENTS

Introduction 1
Roberta Facchinetti

"Riches; Money, or Precious Goods": The Lexis of Wealth in Modern English 7
Elisabetta Lonati

Phraseology in Time: Examples of Culture-Bound Expressions from Baretti's *Easy Phraseology* (1775) and from Duverger's Dictionary (1810?) 35
Stefania Nuccorini

Giving Voice to Local Cultures: Reflections on the Notion of 'Dialect' in the *English Dialect Dictionary* 55
Marta Degani and Alexander Onysko

Culture-specific Lexis and Knowledge Sharing in the Global Village 73
Susan Kermas

Brand Culture Mirrored in Dictionaries: Generic Trademarks in English and Italian 95
Cristiano Furiassi

Culture-specific Lexical Items, Concepts and Word-level Communicative Strategies in English-Bulgarian/Bulgarian-English Lexicography 115
Alexandra Bagasheva

Translating the Lexicon of the Law: A Cross-linguistic Study of De Franchis's *Law Dictionary* 147
Elisa Mattiello

Art for Dictionaries' Sake: Comparing Cultural Outlooks through Dictionaries and Corpora 171
Geoffrey Clive Williams

Towards a Corpus-Driven Bilingual Italian-English Dictionary of Collocations..... 201
Barbara Berti and Laura Pinnavaia

An Innovative Tool for an All-inclusive Sports Language Database 223
Alessandra Fazio

Intercultural and Ideological Issues in Lexicography: A Prototype of a Bioethics Dictionary..... 247
Alessandra Vicentini, Kim Grego, Barbara Berti, Paolo Bellini and Grazia Orizio

INTRODUCTION

ROBERTA FACCHINETTI

Dictionaries are mines whose word-gems encapsulate centuries of language history and cultural traditions; they are store-houses of meanings and uses, 'lamp genies' to be set free at the very moment readers set their eyes on their entries.

This book is an attempt to free such lamp genies by focusing on the role of dictionaries in the identification and expression of cultural aspects in language, with special reference to English. As such, its eleven chapters have been arranged so as to deal with dictionary analysis and compilation, both from a diachronic and a synchronic perspective, in terms of general, genre-specific, monolingual and bilingual lexicography.

We start diachronically with Elisabetta LONATI's chapter ("'Riches; money, or precious goods': The lexis of wealth in Modern English"), which focuses on early 18th-century dictionaries, mirroring a time of great change in British society. Much of this change depended on the 'business' challenge characterizing British domestic and foreign affairs, especially with regard to its huge economic enterprise from the East Indies to the American colonies. The need to give a name to new values and realities – that is to new social identities and rituals – triggered off the emergence of terms and concepts as well as the need to popularize them. One of the principal means to achieve this goal – but also the result of this new intra/inter-cultural climate – is the inclusion of the linguistic stock in dictionaries and encyclopaedias, either universal or specialized. The heritage analyzed in this chapter covers such terms as *commerce*, *money*, *manufacture*, and *labour*, which (a) lexicalize the core values of 18th-century British society, and its 'wealthy hue'; (b) entail a re-definition of terms such as *convenience*, *commodity*, *comfort*, *luxury/ies*, *needs*, *wants*, *fashion*, *variety*, and *quality*; (c) point to those 'precious goods' objectifying middle-class everyday life, interests and desires, like *metal works*, *printed cloths*, *ceramics*, *fans*, and *gloves*. The study testifies to the fact that 18th-century dictionaries transform into words, shared knowledge, and collective imagination the rising British 'wealthy'-power, its foundations, values and principles at home and around the world.

The second chapter moves on in time and deals with two dictionaries published respectively in late 18th-century and early 19th-century; specifically, Stefania NUCCORINI ("Phraseology in time: Examples of culture-bound expressions from Baretti's *Easy Phraseology* (1775) and from Duverger's dictionary (1810?)") discusses the word *phraseology* as it is dealt with in Baretti's *Easy Phraseology* and Duverger's *Comparison between the Idioms, Genius and Phraseology of the French and English languages*. These two works differ in many formal and substantial aspects, but they are both bilingual (the former includes Italian and English, the latter English and French) and share similar backgrounds and objectives. Indeed, Duverger's work marked a first significant shift in the use of the word *phraseology* over a relatively short period of time, as illustrated by the analysis of a few phraseological, culture-bound expressions taken from both dictionaries. While contents of Baretti's work represent an obsolete use of *phraseology*, the nature of the expressions included in Duverger's work and the language-specific characteristics they present point to a considerably innovative approach.

One century later, between 1898 and 1905, Joseph Wright published the *English Dialect Dictionary* (*EDD*), which can be considered the first scholarly compendium of English dialects. In their chapter, Marta DEGANI and Alexander ONYSKO ("Giving voice to local cultures: Reflections on the notion of 'dialect' in the *English Dialect Dictionary*") posit that, if dialectal speech is regarded as an expression of local culture, the *EDD* can also be considered a major lexicographic achievement that gives voice to local cultures in the United Kingdom in the late Victorian era. Since the maker of the dictionary did not provide an explicit definition of dialect, it is important to take a closer look at the dictionary and try to reconstruct Wright's notion of dialect. A better understanding of what dialect entails in the *EDD* also provides insights into which aspects of English local cultures are represented. In the study, a close analysis of the different entry sections of the dictionary is complemented by a detailed description of lexicographic labels and semantic domains covered by the many headwords, so as to reveal the silenced and the resounding voices of local cultures represented in Wright's dictionary.

With Chapter four our bird's eye view on English lexicography reaches the present time, since Susan KERMAS ("Culture-specific lexis and knowledge sharing in the global village") examines representation of culture-specific terms in 20th-century English dictionaries and Indian-English glossaries. In particular, her study throws further light on the impact of globalization on lexicography and posits the need to address the expanding cultural dimension of English as a Lingua Franca. The author

remarks that the *Oxford English Dictionary* certainly includes an increasing number of culture-specific lexemes from a broad spectrum of Englishes but its viewpoint is still prevalently native-speaker oriented. Indeed, a search of the Web for Indian botanical terms illustrates not only the possibility to include new items and to update old ones, but also the necessity to enhance its programming if the dictionary is to keep astride the changing needs of the community and retain its role as repository of the English language.

Further developing on the need to 'keep pace with contemporary changes', Cristiano FURIASSI ("Brand culture mirrored in dictionaries: Generic trademarks in English and Italian") sheds light on the relationship between vocabulary and cultural heritage, by focusing on the recording in dictionaries of American and British trademarks, conceived as the embodiment of ideas and cultural models. This has affected not only the English language but also the languages of other countries, including Italy, to which products – often associated with a specific trademark – have been exported. However, what starts out as a trademark, that is a symbol that serves to distinguish one product from similar ones sold by competitors, may eventually be used with a more general reference; when this happens, trademarks are said to be affected by 'genericness'. Bearing this in mind, Furiassi retrieves instances of trademarks in some authoritative dictionaries of the English and the Italian language, so as to assess the influence of generic trademarks on the Italian vocabulary, which are attested in the English language and at the same time used as generics in Italian.

Moving from monolingual to bilingual lexicography, Alexandra BAGASHEVA ("Culture-specific lexical items, concepts and word-level communicative strategies in English-Bulgarian/Bulgarian-English lexicography") remarks that, so far, little attention has been paid to lexical items as sites of cultural investment. By theoretically dissociating lexical concepts from lexical items, it is possible for a model of refined sites of translation equivalence to be used so as to reveal the intricacies of dealing with cultural (non)-correspondences in lexicography. Taking Bulgarian as an example, the author discusses the major areas of lexical divergence between English and Bulgarian and suggests possible solutions for their adequate treatment. In such a framework, compounds in English-Bulgarian dictionaries (more specifically compound verbs) surface as an area requiring careful, linguistically informed treatment. Moreover, Bulgarian diminutives are characterized as a powerful appraisal resource that might require the sacrifice of the ideal translation equivalence in favour of more unappealing lexicographic treatment via the provision of

appendices or supplements presenting sub-word information to encode purposes.

The analysis of bilingual dictionaries leads to the issue of word translatability, particularly with reference to specialized genres. Indeed, Chapter seven, authored by Elisa MATTIELLO ("Translating the lexicon of the law: A cross-linguistic study of De Franchis's *Law Dictionary*"), concentrates on the translation of the lexicon of the law, which is particularly difficult because law terminology is so culture-bound that a satisfactory translation of all the legal terms of a text from one system to another is at times impossible. For instance, unlike the English legal system, the Italian one does not distinguish lawyers between 'barristers' and 'solicitors', for which it has no equivalent terms, nor does it have concepts corresponding to English 'jury' or 'tort', although the terms *giuria* and *torto* do exist in the Italian general lexis. This chapter suggests that translators from legal English should use lexicographical tools that provide information about the etymology of legal terms, their use in actual contexts and their cultural system. To illustrate this tenet, the author discusses data from De Franchis's encyclopaedic *Law Dictionary*, so as to identify the lexical strategies and the semantic processes used by the lexicographer to convey language or culture-specific concepts into a different linguistic and cultural system.

The following four chapters concentrate on methodological aspects of dictionary compilation, particularly bearing in mind, as remarked by Geoffrey Clive WILLIAMS in Chapter eight, that Corpus Linguistics has contributed a lot to modern lexicography. In his "Art for dictionaries' sake: Comparing cultural outlooks through dictionaries and corpora", Williams emphasizes the fact that corpora allow linguistics to explore language in context and study the often surprising data coming out of the text and taking us beyond intuition. Bearing this in mind, the author looks at how dictionaries are generally perceived and tackles the underlying difficulties in handling data. As an example, he discusses how the term *art* is handled in different dictionaries in English and French and what corpora in English and French reveal about the aura of culture surrounding this word in context. Finally he calls for a rethink of dictionaries so as to integrate the wealth of data held in corpora in order to provide a bridge between cultures.

Corpora are a great help in compilation of dictionaries for second language acquisition purposes as well, where mastering the way lexical items combine is of paramount importance, as highlighted by Barbara BERTI and Laura PINNAVAIA ("Towards a corpus-driven bilingual Italian-English dictionary of collocations"). Indeed, corpus linguistic studies have highlighted that the sole knowledge of strictly morpho-

syntactic and semantic rules does not guarantee a natural-sounding production in L2 learners; moreover, 'lexical combination' is an area where Italian students of English show difficulties notwithstanding their level. This can be accounted for by the fact that the two languages are based on different, culture-bound word combinations. Studies on the presence and treatment of collocations in bilingual dictionaries have shown that these lexical chunks are scarcely available in this type of resource. Bearing all this in mind, their chapter illustrates practical motivations and hypotheses for the compilation of a corpus-driven bilingual Italian-English dictionary of collocations for Italian learners of English, accompanied by due thought on the theoretical aspects and problems it might entail.

Finally, Chapters ten and eleven combine issues of corpus-based dictionary compilation with the acquisition of specialized genres. Alessandra FAZIO ("An innovative tool for an all-inclusive sports language database") illustrates the development of a glossary for the language of sport; indeed, sports language reflects complex and different activities concerning the description of specialized factual and theoretical competences that are part of theory of different sports and imply different language topics. Furthermore, it focuses on additional issues related to specific textual genres as well as to cultural themes. In this chapter the author highlights two directions of analysis for the construction of such glossary, starting from a contrastive study of the language of sport in Italian and English. The first of these directions investigates the extension of single language concepts including the relevant references to the related significant terms from general language; the second regards the inter-disciplinary nature of sports language. Data are discussed in order to outline an all-inclusive genre-specific database where automatic extraction of key words in terms of keyness and new exploratory techniques might highlight new professional and socio-cultural issues.

In turn, Alessandra VICENTINI, Kim Serena GREGO, Barbara BERTI, Paolo BELLINI, and Grazia ORIZIO ("Intercultural and ideological issues in lexicography: A prototype of a bioethics dictionary") remark that (a) the emergence of issues related to the biomedical technological development, (b) the presence of new modalities of production, consumption, provision and use connected to globalization, (c) the widening of participation frameworks and (d) the dissemination of medical information to different social actors have resulted in a growing phenomenon of hybridisation at the cultural, linguistic, medical, philosophical, and Information Technology (IT) levels. All this requires a redefinition and update of the lexicographic material available on the

subject. Hence, the authors illustrate their project called *Pro.bio.dic* (*Prototype of a bioethics dictionary*) aimed at building a dictionary prototype collecting the English terms of contemporary bioethics, to be published online on a web platform. Compiled by a joint team of experts in philosophy, medicine, law, linguistics and IT, the database will feature a word list assembled through the analysis of a corpus of real specialized and non-specialized texts on bioethical subjects. Relevant is the employment of a scientific, updated and innovative methodology which, by combining the principles of corpus linguistics and text mining, will account for the new conceptual and terminological developments in bioethics. This will allow for the extraction of specific lemmas, which will then be complemented with a usage label and context, so as to provide a more precise description of their usage. A pilot version will be published online in open modality, to make it available to the public for possible modifications and updates. A final development will evaluate the role and impact of translation to cement the various perspectives brought together by this project into a truly intercultural product.

All the topics of this book – from monolingual dictionary analysis to bilingual dictionary and glossary compilation, tackled in an interdisciplinary and intercultural perspective, with either a descriptive or an applied linguistic aim, in a diachronic or a synchronic perspective – were discussed during the LEXIS conference (*The study of lexicon across cultural identities and textual genres*) held on 11-13 November 2010 at the University of Verona, where the eleven chapters of this book were originally delivered.

Its broad spectrum allows the book to be of use to lexicographers and lexicologists, as well as to corpus linguists, historical and contemporary English linguists, students of English, and anybody interested in the relationship between dictionaries and culture(s), bearing in mind that, as remarked by Alexandra Bagasheva (this book, page 117), the DNA of a culture is to be found within its language and its communicative practices and "the lexicon is a salient core that is transmitted through joint attentional acts in the process of socialization and enculturation ostensibly/inferentially from generation to generation." Dictionaries are indeed cultural mines, from whose words and phrases we can extract the juice of (more than) one culture; being aware of this is a fundamental step forward in the enhancement of fruitful intercultural communication.

Verona, October 2011

"RICHES; MONEY, OR PRECIOUS GOODS":[1] THE LEXIS OF WEALTH IN MODERN ENGLISH

ELISABETTA LONATI
(UNIVERSITY OF MILAN)

1. From the far East to the far West: Defining wealthy Britishness

The Modern Period is one of great change in British society and customs, particularly concerning the way people imagine and categorize themselves and others, according to both new standards of living and "the meanings of the goods that they buy and use" (Hancock 1998: 202). As a matter of fact, much of this socio-cultural transformation depends on the 'business' challenge characterizing 18th-century British domestic and foreign affairs, especially with regard to its huge commercial-economic enterprise, whether East India Trade or trans-Atlantic Commerce. Eastern imported goods such as fashionable textiles, porcelain, lacquerware, toys, food and beverages,[2] etc. carried with them an idealized set of new values in everyday British life, at least for the middle and upper classes. Such goods and the values attributed to them spread from the far East to the Western World – Europe first and then the West Indies-Colonial British America – re-defining their respective social, cultural, national identities in a kind of intra/inter-cultural exchange.[3] The period between the end of the 17th century and 1783 (end of the American War of Independence) was one

[1] Johnson (1755), under WEALTH.

[2] For a detailed discussion on consumption goods and new luxury items spreading from the East, see Sidney W. Mintz (1993: 261-273) and Maxine Berg (2004: 85-142).

[3] "The Empire that England built between 1651 and 1775 was a new kind of empire, significantly larger than the conglomerate that came to be known as Great Britain. It was global, combining territory as far east as India and as far West as America. At the same time, it was commercial, regulated from 1651 onward through a series of mercantile laws, known as the 'Navigation Acts', that sought to reassert control over

> of significant economic and political development in Britain, marked [...] by a rise in personal well-being, [...] the growth of urban communities, [...] and an expansion in consumerism, as well as the spread of beliefs that the country was increasingly acquisitive and materialistic, and the society increasingly commercialized. (Hancock 1994: 679)

The widespread business activity was led by the middling classes who, "based in the expansion of commerce", also "associated commerce with refining the passions and 'civilizing' the people" (Berg 2005: 232) and identified the source of such refinement in ownership and display of possessions.

The need to give a name to new incoming values and new incoming realities, that is to new social identities and new social rituals, triggers off the emergence of new terms and concepts, and the need to popularize them. One of the principal means to achieve this goal – but also the result of this intra/inter-cultural climate – is the inclusion of the linguistic stock in dictionaries and encyclopaedias:

> In the realm of vocabulary and meaning, the influence of social and cultural change is obvious. As society changes, there are new things that need new names; physical objects, institutions, sets of attitudes, values, concepts. (Barber et al. 2009: 46)

Starting from 18th-century encyclopaedic works, either universal dictionaries or universal/specialized encyclopaedias, (and in particular, starting from the definition that Dr. Johnson gives of WEALTH in 1755) this study discusses a sample of lexemes concerning wealth and its multifarious conceptual/lexical representation(s), to identify what this wealth actually is (or is considered to be) in the second half of the 18th-century.

First, the discussion is held at a theoretical level, that is analyzing those key terms which introduce new values or, rather, re-edit and re-contextualize, transform, existing values, thus establishing the conceptual framework for further debate.

Secondly, the discussion considers those new economic values – but even modern social virtues – underpinning deep changes in sociability and taste (in Great Britain and across the Atlantic): That is the interplay of different factors in the construction of an essentially middling and urban reality.

---

trade with English America [...]." (Hancock 2000: 3-34).

Thirdly, an appendix collects a series of encyclopaedic entries which, at a practical level, exemplify-objectify – and lexicalize as well – those general principles discussed in the previous sections, thus exhibiting concrete evidence of such theoretical-ideal-discursive wealth (both 18th-century wealthy Britishness and wealthy American Britishness, later wealthy American socio-cultural identity).

In particular, their cultural hue is emphasized: that is, the way the new socio-economic issues (at different levels) are included in dictionaries and are able to build up a linguistic scaffold that can reflect, represent and satisfy (and, may be, justify) British cultural needs, from eastern countries to western colonies.

2. Discussing wealth: From lexicographic treatment to lexicological evidence

Among the manifold reference works issued around the middle of the century, only two of them stand out as the main source for the present discussion: these are Rolt's *A New Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* (1756, prefaced by Johnson) and Postlethwayt's *The Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* (1757 [1751-55]), which is a translation and adaptation of the French de Bruslons's *Dictionnaire du Commerce* (published posthumously in 1723). However, some others are particularly relevant for this study, such as Chambers's *Cyclopaedia* (1728), Barrow's *A New and Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (1751), along with Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755).

In all of these works, but particularly in Postlethwayt's (1757 [1751-55]), the conceptual-lexical framework for 'wealth' is first provided by a set of all-inclusive terms such as COMMERCE, LABOUR, MANUFACTURE(R), MONEY (under MANURE of land), but also by the entry GREAT BRITAIN. The semantic, pragmatic, intra/inter-cultural load – the ideational load – provided by these lexical items, is extremely interesting because they include a long series of cognate-lexicalized principles, as in a kind of push-pull chain.

Commerce is the business activity *par excellence* in 18th-century England, and British Empire. This economic activity strongly defines both domestic and foreign Britishness. As such, it is also the primary source of both wealth and power and, arguably, it may be considered as wealth itself, a kind of 'industrious plenty'. This is a well established truth – or, rather, common belief – declared by any encyclopaedist. Under COMMERCE, it is stated that

> As the opulence and potency of every state are dependant on the industry of the people, and the extension or compass of their foreign trade by a continual exchange of all kinds of commodities, [...] whereby each individual is enabled to preserve from decay, and increase his own particular share of property and wealth. [...] Commerce is the only thing that can draw gold and silver, the main springs of action, into any state; (Rolt 1756, under COMMERCE)

and, again

> Commerce is the most solid foundation of civil society, and the most necessary principle to unite all men of whatever country or condition. It is the bank of plenty to every part of the world: By it the mercantile people of all nations seem to be one body incorporated; and the riches of every trading town and place circulate into the hands of the poor, industrious, and distant traders. (Barrow 1751, under COMMERCE)

Wealth, which is primarily associated with – and lexicalized as – generic abundance, that is "opulence" (Rolt 1756, under COMMERCE) and "plenty" (Barrow 1751, under COMMERCE), is guaranteed first and foremost by the industrious activities of the British people; of those people involved in the production (manufacturing processes) and circulation (trading activities) of "all kinds of commodities" and of "the riches of every trading town and place" (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], under LABOUR). In other words, the circulation of "all the commodities which depend upon the mechanical and manufactural arts affect[s] trade in general" (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], under LABOUR).[4]

Commerce is the main source of wealth and the main business underpinning any transformation, in any society: it enables "distant traders" (Barrow 1751, under COMMERCE) – and distant peoples – to build up both economic and socio-cultural relationships, that is communicative relationships which stimulate the merging, and differentiation as well, of habits, rituals and customs and, ultimately, words and meanings. By way of commerce, wealth can be considered as the output of this multilayered mechanism of exchange, but also the principle underlying this intra/inter-

[4] "3. Wares; merchandise; goods for traffick. [...] *Commodities* are moveables, valuable by money, the common measure. *Locke*." Under CONVENIENCE/ CONVENIENCY: "2. Commodiousness; ease; freedom from difficulties. [...] every man must want something for the *conveniency* of his life, [...]. *Calamy*." (Johnson 1755, under COMMODITY).

cultural – and linguistic – exchange.[5] Wealth is the way to the construction of powerful social identities, both in Great Britain and in the British colonies across the Atlantic:

> The 'British Identity' acquired by the new products was, to be sure, a part of that wider development of Britishness in the eighteenth century, [...]. The goods taken out to other parts of the world represented the power of the nation; they also provided a defining material identity to those trading, travelling, and living far from their homes. [...] the image of Britannia [...] represented liberty and commerce. (Berg 2005: 7-9)

This means that a commercial unifying principle, that is "the most necessary principle to unite all men of whatever country or condition" (Barrow 1751, under COMMERCE) or, in other words, "a defining material identity" (Berg 2005: 8), acts at different levels: on the one hand, it may be considered as a tool strengthening British identity in the mother country and across the ocean. On the other hand, it acts as a bridge connecting different realities with common interests: that is commercial-(political) transactions. In the course of the 18th century, this systematic network is gradually substituted by a process of identity differentiation through anglicization, in particular concerning the American colonies. As far as this study is concerned, this means that the lexical items analyzed (pointing to rituals, habits, customs, goods, values, etc.) are first (re)-contextualized and lexicalized in Great Britain, then re-contextualized and lexicalized in the American colonies. The main process being represented by the Far East goods/values spreading to Great Britain and being transformed into 'new' goods/values/identity and, from Great Britain to the 'new' American society/cultural identity: that is, the construction of identities through gradual overlapping and differentiation. This phenomenon obviously also acts at a linguistic-lexical level: behind a single lexeme

[5] At this point of the discussion, it is necessary to define the meaning of the expressions *intra-* and *inter-*cultural and the realities they refer to in this context. The relationships established by way of British commerce – and the values entailed by them – may be considered: **1.** intra-cultural (domestic) because they are dealt with by British people/traders **a.** across Great Britain, **b.** across an extended geographical area under the British political power (essentially from Great Britain towards the American colonies, from Europe to the West Indies); **2.** inter-cultural (foreign) because they are dealt with by British people/traders **a.** across Europe **b.** across an extended geographical area from Great Britain towards the far East (essentially India, China, Japan), **c.** towards some African ports (African Trade); however, this branch of British commerce is not the focus of this study.

different values or different shades of the same original cultural value(s) may be represented, or inferred.

Hence, according to what has been exposed so far, wealth may be identified with and lexicalized as

1. individual property, that is private wealth;
2. public wealth/revenue, that is the increase of gold and silver into any state, and as a consequence with its national potency/political power;
3. gold and silver, that is, "the main springs of action" in a state (Rolt, 1756, under COMMERCE);
4. civil advancement, social advancement and socio-cultural identity/-ies ("Commerce is [...] the foundation of civil society", Barrow, 1751, under COMMERCE) and, not least, with;
5. the industry of the people and their working activities, that is with their labour.

Labour – human labour – is, in fact, "the intrinsic value of anything" (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], under LABOUR) and

> Wherefore the more labour there is in a state, the richer it is esteemed; and, if that labour is well applied, the richer is reality, and the more powerful, a state is. [...] rather than have a person idle in the state, we would recommend the working of toys and trinkets, that have a shew of ornament, though little of real use. (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], under LABOUR)

It may be argued that labour itself is an aspect of wealth: the industrious dynamism is the pivotal lexicalized principle able to make practical issues possible, that is to transform everyday reality/life – either public or private – into a richer reality-wealth.[6] Indeed, people "worked harder [...] to gain more cash income so that they could buy these things" (Berg 2005: 11): that is "toys and trinkets" (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], under LABOUR, see above), ornaments and unnecessary items. Consumption changes its essential characteristics, from necessity to desire, a kind of conceptual-lexical extension from the one to the other, and extension towards personal satisfaction and social repute, towards

[6] "What makes a commonwealth healthy? [...] national strength had to be consolidated, through prosperity and populousness. [...] Wealth was the life-blood, the vital spirits, of the incorporated nation. Hence its office was to flow. [...] true wealth sprang from money in motion, stimulating labour, industry and exchange. [...] opulence grew out of the velocity of commercial transactions, providing employment and 'exercise' for the members of the social organism." (Porter 1993: 58

'wealthy consumption' or, rather, 'wealthy consumption as social experience'.

Such new things-riches – whichever their nature, or denomination-lexicalization, that is commodities, desires, ornaments, toys, trinkets, manufacturing processes, exchanging activities, labour, etc. – should primarily be associated to gold and silver: "The quantity of gold and silver seems to determine the comparative wealth and power of states; for those are permanent and lasting riches", (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], under LABOUR), and

> For this purpose, all the civilised nations in the world have agreed to put an estimate on such goods as they have occasion to exchange in trade, equal to some portion of silver or gold [...] which is called the value of a commodity; [...] in money; [...] (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], under COMMERCE)

and, again

> I. Money, i.e. gold and silver, being [...] the means by which commodities of all kind are procured and transferred from one to another, is hence become the sole medium of trade. (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], *Money*, under MANURE OF LAND)

> But as money is the medium, which finds out the proportion of all values, it is also the best medium to fix the proportion of land and labour, in relation to all goods and commodities. [...] Money, for the facility and convenience of commerce, being the medium of all values, the more hard money there is in circulation, the dearer the price of labour, and consequently all commodities in general, will be in a state. See articles BARTER, CASH, CIRCULATION, MONEY. (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], under LABOUR)

In contemporary discourse, money is both identified-lexicalized first and foremost with a measure of value, a durable precious good able to measure other goods, and represented by gold and silver, specifically in reference to coins.[7] It is the preferred medium which comparatively attributes value to anything and, for this reason, it is itself a (concrete) form of wealth and, as a consequence, one of the manifold lexicalization of wealth. In Smith's words, money is considered

[7] For a detailed discussion on money, cash and credit in Early Modern and Modern England, see Muldrew (2001: 78-120).

> first as the measure of value and then as the medium of permutation or exchange [...] a common standard with which they [people] compare all the rest. This will naturally at first be the commodity with which they are best acquainted. [...] / [...] Since, then, there must of necessity be a common standard of which equal quantities should be of equal values, mettals in general seemed best to answer this purpose, and of these the value of gold and silver could best be ascertained. The temper of steel cannot be precisely known, but what degree of alloy is in gold and silver can be exactly found out. (Smith 1982: 499-500)

However, even though mainly associated with coins-cash, money also lexicalizes another important concept: that is credit. This form of exchange, and its complex social load as well, was particularly relevant in the American colonies, where long distances favoured this kind of financial transaction. In this case, the money-credit lexicalization of wealth perform a fundamental social role as one of the key factors at the basis of anglicized-American social economy.[8] It became a unifying socio-economic-political practice among the colonists, based on mutual trust and entailing public respectability. Money, and its multifarious representations and interpretations, acts thus as a kind of intra/inter-"cultural currency" (Muldrew 2001: 83) in the way the complex idea of wealth was differently engendered, contextualized, lexicalized and dealt with.[9]

However, to make money-wealth effective (that is, not a static load of precious "mettals", see above, Smith's *Lectures*) and to make it productive, money must necessarily circulate and be extensive, because "it

---

[8] According to Breen (1986: 495) "The mid-eighteenth century also witnessed a spectacular expansion of credit. Indeed, the entire chain of merchandising from British manufacturers to rural American consumers depended on liberal credit arrangements. Without such a system, the colonists could not have participated in the Atlantic economy."

[9] For this specific concept, that is the way money helps the construction of the clustered idea of wealth, see Muldrew (2001: 79-99). In his work, Muldrew maintains that "Wealth was determined by a large number of factors, which included reputation, status, land and moveable goods, as well as money – all of which were culturally interpreted [...] wealth was not so much a state of ownership or inclusion in a privileged group as a continual *process* of ethical judgment about credit." (2001: 98).

The entry CREDIT in Johnson's dictionary (1755) is also relevant for the discussion. Credit is "1. Belief. [...] 2. Honour; reputation. [...] 3. Esteem: good opinion. [...] 4. Faith; testimony. [...] 5. Trust reposed. *Credit* is nothing but the expectation of money, within some limited time. *Locke*. 6. Promise given. [...] 7. Influence; power not compulsive; interest. [...]"

is of no consequence, whether any nation hath a vast deal of gold and silver, or very little money amongst them, if sufficient care be taken to make the plenty of everything great enough, [...] which must and will make them [people] all happy" (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], MONEY, under MANURE OF LAND).

Circulating money, whether cash-coins, or even credit, is thus the principal lever of relevant changes in 18th-century across-cultural British attitude towards reality and social habits. Wealth reflected – and was conceptualized as – a more complex condition than the mere "possession of large amount of cash or savings" (Muldrew 2001: 98), it was also connected to "other factors, such as the amount of spending on family consumption [...]" but "Because money measured one aspect of wealth it was often taken to *be* wealth" (ibid.). Postlethwayt's consumer/ing happiness thus partly overlaps with circulating money-wealth:

> Plenty of money never fails to make trade flourish; because, where money is plentiful, the people in general are thereby enabled, and will not fail to be as much greater consumers of every thing, [...] and become generally happy, whence such nations ever grow potent and formidable. This hath always been found true in fact, and is almost self-evident. [...] and as the happiness (i.e. the riches) and numbers of the subjects are greater or less, so will the strength, honour, and revenue of every government be. (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], *Money*, under MANURE OF LAND)

That is, money means dynamic wealth and wealth represents the welfare of the nation and of its citizens. Public-*private* welfare and/or private-*public* welfare (would) assure happiness and the possibility to consume more commodities, "since gold and silver are of little use, besides procuring the necessaries and conveniences of life, which alone are real riches, [...] the great plenty of commodities" (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], *Money*, under MANURE OF LAND). The circulation of money and other goods, by way of commerce, and the new attitudes towards consumerism produce more "riches", more "goods" and more "money" (Johnson 1755, under WEALTH).

3. From eastern luxury objects to western valuable needs

The complex network determined by the multifarious commercial relationships between East and West and, in particular, the relationships between "eastern luxury goods" and "western buyers" (Berg 2004: 86), established by Great Britain, contributed to the elaboration of a new idea

of wealth and welfare, that is to the elaboration of new manners of consumption and production.

Wealth is not primarily different from the basic necessaries and conveniencies of life. According to Rolt (1756) and Barrow (1751 under COMMERCE, section 2. of the present study), the fundamental difference is to be found in their amount or, in other words, wealth is primarily conceptualized-lexicalized as abundance, opulence and plenty, that is originally – and generically – measured in terms of quantity. However, intra/inter-commercial connections deeply change the nature of the idea of wealth and the material culture of the western world, the conveniencies of life become a kind of 'polysemic need', that is

> the wants, natural or artificial, real or imaginary, which the people of different countries, or the different classes of inhabitants of the same country, are desirous [...] to supply by mutual intercourse. (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], under COMMERCE)

Even though "western buyers" (Berg 2004: 86) had long been acquainted with goods imported from the East, there was a complete change in the 18th-century outlook on these '*un*real or imaginary wants': they were perceived as "'curiosities', prefabricated images of the East" whose provenance "made them into luxuries in Europe, physical distance from the place of production enhanced their value" (Berg 2004: 96, 99). The term wealth, summarizes thus changeable needs and changeable values, according to social moulding as well as personal dispositions and desires. The semantic-pragmatic load undergoes gradual shifts both because of new physical realities (that is, 'new precious goods'), and continuous adaptations to psychological expectations (imaginary representations or perceptions of wealth). What was a standardized, common, or even widespread habit or commodity in the far East becomes new wealthy-luxury habit-*un*real want in the West and far West, to be re-conceptualized and then re-lexicalized as new commodity-new necessity, according to varying contexts of use. Desirability becomes thus another key point both in the definition of wealth and in the lexicalization of its modern expression(s).

The same quantitative principle, primarily applied to wealth as abundance-opulence-plenty, may be also applied to labour, or "more labour" (see Postlethwayt 1757, under LABOUR, section 2. of the present study), as an index of domestic welfare (and repute abroad). And it is to the entry LABOUR that we need to come back to further refine the multilayered-clustered idea of wealth or, rather, the multilayered-clustered lexeme wealth:

> If the most part of these [...] [i.e. people-labourers] are employed [...] to work fine cloth and fine linnen, and to refine, by greater labour, the houses, the utensils, and other conveniences of life, though they add nothing to the quantity of food of themselves, nor to the quantity and necessary uses of the cloathing; yet the state will be esteemed the richer for their labour: labour adds to the relish of food and drink, and to the ornament and conveniency of cloathing. The more labour is employed in a suit of cloaths, the dearer it sells, and the richer it is esteemed. [...] coarse and fine food and cloathing are equally consumed; but, in the general notion, the state that consumes fine cloathing is esteemed richer than that which consumes coarse, etc. (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], under LABOUR)

18th-century (British) wealthy thought also requires – and embodies – a qualitative principle, a distinctive principle, a principle of refinement underpinning cultural, social and civil advancement: that is, a "superior degree of consumption" which entails a "superior progress" (Postlethwayt 1757b: 394, "Of Arts and Manufactories") and stimulates the emergence of "individuality and self-differentiation through visual diversity. Ornament, colour, and finish were", and became, "the key parts of variety" (Berg 2005: 87). Refining labour makes the difference because it polishes the concept of wealth and opens to taste. Definitely, wealth is also lexicalized as an aesthetic-civilizing principle, a kind of "moral and social reform" (Berg 2005: 41):

> We have likewise endeavoured to animate our artists of every denomination with such a spirit of emulation, not only in relation to each other, but foreigners, as we hope may tend to the advancement of our old, as well as the invention of new arts and manufactures. [...] we may reap [...] reasonable satisfaction from all the variety of employments in human society [...]. (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], under MANUFACTURERS)

> The improvements of practical arts and manufactures does greatly depend on the judgment and ingenuity of artizans and manufacturers themselves; I mean, chiefly upon those who are at the head of any manufacture; for the fancies of mankind are soon tired with the same fashion;[10] artists and manufacturers, therefore, must ever be upon the wing of invention: grand parent of all modes and fashion in dress, furniture, and almost every thing else. [...] The taste of the world must be pleased, and our artists must follow that taste. [...] in order constantly to please the taste of foreign countries in our British manufacturers. (Postlethwayt 1757, under MANUFACTURERS)

[10] For both the definition and the social representation of the 18th-century concept of fashion, see Appendix.

This multifaceted and wealthy aesthetic-civilizing principle, ultimately came from the eastern cultures whose products were imported, and the values they embodied were, consequently, borrowed and transformed according to a changing western world. New contents for old, well known and re-usable, words.[11]

Emulation (and imitation),[12] invention, novelty, advancement, fashion, modes, taste and pleasure, all of them both new added values – or, rather, virtues – and different-positive shades of reality lexicalizing an expanding and a deepening British, and then anglicized-American, conceptual representation(s) of wealth.

Existing words for new ideas: the actual currency of middle class wealthy values and changing habits opened to long lists of fashionable objects and unique collectible items which – answering new needs-wants-desires of the middling and upper classes[13] – seduced gratification and delight (see note 11). Some of the captivating and seducing needs are clearly gathered and exemplified under Rolt's MANUFACTURE, here re-organized and labelled (on the left column):

---

[11] This process is extensively treated by Maxine Berg. The following quotations represent two key points in the present discussion. "Eastern goods retained a sense of luxury and difference. These Eastern commodities, however, 'objectified' oriental discourse. They were a construct of the market, seeming to represent the lives and values of the East, but constructed by their Asian producers to meet Western preconceptions of Eastern art. [...] / [...] China, Japan and India were long-standing models of highly urbanized commercial societies making for a flowering of consumer culture." (Berg 2005: 50-60). "Manufacturing consumer goods in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe was perceived to be about learning from Asia. Admiration for Asian craftmanship was followed, however, not by a direct process of copying, but by the more subtle process of 'imitation'. [...] / This process of 'making the East in the West' generated a whole range of different consumer products: British new consumer goods." (Berg 2004: 126-141)

[12] "It certainly cannot be assumed that all consumption is *ipso facto* emulative in character as some commentators appear to do. Indeed, it is important to stress that many goods are likely to be desired for their own sake rather than for any prestige which may be attached to them [...]." (Colin 1993: 40)

[13] "'by creating new wants provoking new needs', those orchestrators of desire [that is, producers and traders] were able 'to create new demand which would not have become economically operational without the requisite entrepreneurial skills to conjure it into existence.'" (Agnew 1993: 24). For a detailed discussion of this topic see McKendrick et al. (1982).

Metal work:	points, pins, scissars, andirons, tongs, fire forks, gridirons, keys, hinges, hanging candlesticks, holy water stops, buckles for shoes, bells, buckles, iron candlesticks, grates, horns for lanthern,
Cutlery:	knives, tin and leaden spoons,
Jewellery:	beaten gold, silver wrought [...], bits (coins), broches, bells
Leather work:	leather, purses, pouches, boots,
Horse-harness:	spurs, saddles, stirrups, buckles
Furniture:	cupboard, curtain-rings
Fabric/Cloth:	gloves, taylors sheers, painted cloths, laces, sheers,
Tableware:	chasing-dishes,
Paper work:	painted paper [ex. wallpaper], cards for wool, Roan cards,
Glass:	painted glass
Illustrations:	painted images
Painting:	silver wrought in paper for painters[14]

All of them expanding fashionable categories for a great amount of comfortable everyday objects. Most of these domestic possessions "became consumer goods" and were regarded as "precious goods" (Johnson 1755, under WEALTH), "the superfluous commodities beyond basic needs", in other words "luxuries [...] consumer goods conveying national identity" (Berg 2005: 19). In Ephraim Chambers's words:

[14] Here, the original entry is partially transcribed: "MANUFACTURE [...] the term also signifies stuffs, clo[ths] and such like. As this cloth is of a good manufacture, it is well wrought, or well made. [...] points, le[ather], laces, purses, pouches, pins, gloves, knives [...], taylors sheers, scissars, andirons, cupboards, tongs, f[ire] forks, gridirons, stock locks, keys, hinges, and [garments], spurs, painted glass, painted papers [...], painted images, painted cloths, beaten gold, or silver wrought in paper for painters, saddles [...], horse-harness, boots, bits, stirrups, buckles, chains [...], latten nails with iron shanks, turnets, hanging candlesticks, holy water stops, chasing-dishes, [...] curtain-rings, cards for wool, Roan cards, except [...] for garnets, sheers, buckles for shoes, broches or [...] bells, hawk-bells, tin, and leaden spoons, wire of latten and iron, iron candlesticks, grates, horns for lanthern or any of the said waresmade and wrought pertaining to the crafts of girdlers, point-makers, pinners, pur[sers], glovers, joiners, painters, card-makers, wire-[mongrels], weavers, horners, bottle-makers, or copper-smiths, [and] not to be imported by strangers to be sold, upon forfeiture or the value." (Rolt 1756, under MANUFACTURE, or MANUFACTORY)

> *Trade*, the Exchange of Commodities; [...] There is no doubt but *Commerce* is nearly as antient as the World itself: Necessity set it on foot, the Desire of Conveniency improv'd it, and Vanity, Luxury, and Avarice, have brought it to the present Pitch. At first it only consisted in the Exchange of Things necessary for Life: [...]. (Chambers's *Cyclopaedia*, 1728, under COMMERCE) [15]

From a negative connotation which associated luxury – and luxury items – to excess and corruption, to "the cultural significance of commodities" (Berg 2005: 37). The fact is that, according to 18th-century political economists, "luxury in one context could be necessity in another. Standards of living could improve. The term 'comfort' [was] increasingly applied to those standards" (Crowley 1999: 751). Luxury items summed up and displayed quality, invention and novelty, along with comfort and convenience. Indeed, it is the invention of comfort which played a key role in lexicalizing wealth, a 'valu*e*able' aspect of wealth, as typically re-shaped in anglicized-America.

This innovative and intriguing consumer attitude ultimately conveyed the perception of a national community, both in Great Britain and in anglicized-America, and gave rise to different socio-cultural identities.

3.1. Comfortable Anglicization (of America)

In the present section the discussion focuses on those aspects characterizing the conceptualization of wealth in the American colonies: in other words, the lexicalization of wealth in anglicized-America.

Initially, a 'sense of belonging' to the mother country – whether emulation and/or imitation of habits, rituals, values, and consumption of "precious goods" (Johnson 1755, under WEALTH) – is the main feature: anglicization means linguistic-cultural overlapping, intra-cultural extension; whereas later, a sense of belonging or, rather, membership to a new community strongly emerges – previous emulation opens to the awareness of common needs and, thence to the awareness of a common cultural identity different from the original one though apparently expressed with the same lexical outlook or, rather, the same lexical items.

[15] The negative connotation is still present in Chambers and in other lexicographic works belonging to the first half of the 18th-century. The shift from 'excess' to 'neutral representation' (if not 'positive value') occurs towards the middle of the century, at least among the upper and middling classes.

The source of this transformation goes back to a set of shared values and attitudes which were transplanted in the West Indies from Great Britain; all of them express the underlying principles of 18th-century 'wealthy thought', ultimately affected by eastern values. The starting point is the physical displacement of people – particularly merchants – and goods as a consequence of that intense commercial activity across a vast geographical area.

For Great Britain, the American colonies represent a huge safebox, source of wealth-riches and wealth-riches themselves. Indeed, colonies means "the riches of Great Britain":

> A great revenue is raised to the British government by returns made in the produce of the plantations; [...] Never any people were possessed of so fine a country, and so happily situated, as that which is subject to the crown of Great Britain on the other side of the Atlantic ocean; [...]. It should also be considered, that the riches of the British plantations are the riches of Great Britain; their forces her forces, and their shipping their shipping; as these proper, so will their mother country prosper of course; for hither all their wealth flows in the end. (Rolt 1756, under BRITAIN-GREAT, or *Great Britain*)

As a matter of fact, Great Britain is the place "where the superfluous cash, and other riches, acquired in America, must center; which is not one of the least securities that Great Britain has to keep the colonies always in due subjection. [...] and furnish them with every thing that contributes to the support or conveniencies of life" (Rolt 1756, under BRITAIN-GREAT, or *Great Britain*). Actually, this systematic subjection (which is here primarily commercial subjection) promotes a re-lexicalization of wealth-riches-money-precious goods on the other side of the Atlantic. At first, the relationship with the mother country is based on material experience-imports, namely precious goods consumption, on those "trinkets of all sorts" (Rolt 1756, under BRITAIN-GREAT) coming from 'abroad':

> The luxury of the colonies, which increases daily, consumes great quantities of English manufactured silk, haberdashery, houshold-furniture, and trinkets of all sorts; as also a very considerable value in East India goods. (Rolt 1756, under BRITAIN-GREAT, or *Great Britain*)

> The exportation from England to her American colonies, consist of almost all the necessaries and conveniences of life, provisions chiefly excepted; […] colonies are furnished from England, with materials from wearing apparel, houshold furniture, silk, woollen, and linnen manufactures, iron, cordage, and sails [...]; in a word, England furnishes them almost with every thing needful for the luxuries, as well as conveniences, of life, except

> of provisions, as before observed. (Postlethwayt 1757, BRITAIN, or GREAT BRITAIN, or the BRITISH EMPIRE)

Later, this material experience – whether "necessaries and conveniencies of life" or "luxuries" (Postlethwayt 1757 [1751-55], under GREAT BRITAIN) – takes on its own American identity: common consumption joins together those settlers scattered in a vast area, thus creating an ideal, as well as a real, cultural community. Wealth, those "riches" and "precious goods" (Johnson 1755, under WEALTH), money (especially in the sense of credit), sociability and rituals (such as tea drinking), display of possessions, the material as well as the spiritual delight for luxury items – whose moral ambiguity, transform them into conveniencies, desirable wants, from a semantic, pragmatic and lexical point of view[16] – are (re-) lexicalized as comfort. Comfort means physical satisfaction, ease, something in-between human basic needs and excessive superfluity (that troublesome luxury of the past). Comfort partially substitutes the idea of luxury, as well as the word luxury to represent a new community of consumers,[17] a new idea of wealth as "pleasure" and "enjoyment" (Martin 1749, under COMFORT), ultimately as civil advancement (see Barrow 1751, under COMMERCE).

---

[16] "I. Voluptously; addictedness to pleasure. [...] 4. Delicious fare. [...]" (Johnson 1755, under LUXURY). The 'neutral' connotation of the term 'luxury' is seldom found in 18th-century British dictionaries which usually morally condemn it as a kind of vicious excess. However, it seems relevant here to put forward the definition documented in Dyche-Pardon's dictionary of English (1737 [1735]): in this case, the target readership was not the highly educated one of traditional dictionaries, but those who were not learned in the classical languages. Maybe, the need to popularize concepts and 'bridge' in an easier way words and things, made the compilers careful to those significant meaning variations pointing to everyday life and concepts, both definitely established or *in progress*. (Dyche-Pardon 1737, under LUXURY: "or LUXURIOUSNESS (S.) living in all Manner of Splendor and Superfluity of Buildings, Servants, Cloaths, Food, etc.")

[17] On this topic, see Crowley (1999: 749-782). In particular, "Early eighteenth-century English writers primarily used 'convenience' to describe physical satisfaction with their immediate material culture." (Crowley 1999: 761). And "As a predecessor for what would eventually be known as 'comfort' regarding possessions in a consumer society, 'convenience' had two advanages: it measured usefulness according to 'any purpose', and it left the purposes themselves morally neutral and open-ended." (Crowley 1999: 762). Also relevant is Crowley (2001: 141-170): "It made no difference whether a material item was considered a luxury or a necessity, since the distinction between them broke down when applied to specific item in specific societies. [...]." (2001: 153)

The common consumer experience triggers off the new American cultural identity as well as its political liberty: wealth also means – and is conceptualized-lexicalized as – both cultural and political independence. If the original overlapping with the mother country, the original American emulative attitude towards British custums and rituals, along with a direct and quite obvious involvement in the production of British wealth (whether material, civil, social, political, etc.) means that "The colonists either bring their estates over to England, if they meet with success; or they live in an elegant manner there [i.e. emulation of the mother country], and import British manufactures" (Rolt 1756, under BRITAIN-GREAT, or *Great Britain*), later 'they *just* live in an elegant-*comfortable* manner there'.

In Great Britain the middling and upper classes – already established with their set of accepted values – had been acquiring new riches and displaying new rituals, whereas in anglicized-America, these new habits, social rituals and wealthy possessions are the lever to the constitution of a new community with its own shared values and beliefs. This reversal of the cause-effect relationship is at the basis of a new outlook on wealth, of its function, conceptualization and, consequently, its lexicalization. In Great Britain wealth defines (that is, consolidates) the upper and middling classes, in anglicized-America wealth constitutes (that is, sets up) new well-off social groups.

On either side of the Atlantic, a shared vocabulary for wealth – more and more descriptive, pointing to better quality and wider variety – including goods, principles and tastes complies with multifarious contexts and situations. The semantic-pragmatic load of 'wealthy' terminology – and the term wealth itself – gradually changes its possible reference and connotation: from intra-cultural emulation to cultural differentiation, from a shared linguistic experience to conceptual/ized and/or lexical/ized independence.[18]

[18] "Americans began to define social status in relation to commodities. This was, of course, an expression of a much larger, long-term transformation of the Atlantic world. And though this process differentiated men and women in new ways, it also provided them with a common framework of experience, a shared language of consumption." (Breen 1988: 76). "The language of consumption became increasingly complex, forcing everyone to distinguish with ever greater precision exactly what they wanted. [...] / Real experiences as consumers sparked the production of meanings. These meanings were, of course, highly charged with political implications, for it was through the contest over the meanings of consumption that colonists challenged or defended the traditional social order." (Breen 1993: 252-254)

4. Concluding remarks

In the second half of the 18th-century, the term wealth expresses a multifaceted semantic-pragmatic concept represented by multifarious and multifaceted worldly riches: that is physical objects, processes and, not least new/re-newed (re-conceptualized and re-lexicalized) virtues and values. However, what counts more is both the dynamic principle underlying the general concept expressed by the term wealth as well as the dynamic outlook on external social reality/ies, in Great Britain and across the Atlantic.

The meta-concept wealth is variously lexicalized according to different levels of analysis. On the one hand, it partially overlaps with commerce, labour, manufacture and money and, consequently, it may be lexicalized as such. On the other hand, the activities, the processes and the realities expressed by these 'business words' also entails two distinctive aspects of wealth: quantity and quality, which themselves open to countless possible lexicalizations. If wealth is primarily abundance-plenty of anything, later, the industrious labour tranforms abundance into a visible 'refined plenty', an 'aesthetic plenty', to be displayed for social/national repute, for private/public self-differentiation: variety and invention play a key role. Hence, wealth can be variously lexicalized or, rather, parcelled out in a great amount of lexical items not completely disentangled the one from the other:

1. private property (necessaries, conveniences, commodities, circulating money-credit, display, etc.) and public revenue (gold and silver, cash and credit, repute, etc.), both of them from a quantitative and qualitative point of view;
2. private/public and intra/inter-cultural self-differentiation:
   a. British identity (and power), either cultural, social, political, etc.;
   b. American identity (that is independence-liberty from the mother country; comfortable consumption);
3. private/public virtues and values, such as refinement, ornament, relish, taste, emulation, imitation, invention, novelty, advancement, fashion, modes: that is re-newed luxury/ies, but also pleasure, delight, comfort-satisfaction-enjoyment (particularly in Anglicized-America and, later, in American consumer society);
4. private happiness which depends on the amount of spending on family consumption, and entails public welfare.

Wealth is definitely usage and delight of those "riches, money, or precious goods" put forward by Johnson 1755 under WEALTH.