

Eric Partridge's *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*:

A Work in Progress

Partridge's *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* was published in seven editions between 1937 and 1970. A further two editions have appeared since his death. Partridge's name continues to dominate slang lexicography, particularly in Britain. In the updated edition of Wentworth and Flexner's *Dictionary of American Slang*, Chapman described Partridge as 'the lofty star at whose work and book all other slang lexicographers must hopelessly aim' (1986: ix). However, in a lengthy criticism of Partridge's work, inserted rather gratuitously into his introduction to the revised first edition of Farmer and Henley's *Slang and its Analogues*, Legman, wrote that 'compiling from other dictionaries is the largest part of what [Partridge] has done' (1966: lxxxv). In this paper I will explore differences between Partridge's various editions, thus revealing his working methods, in order to determine which of these two views is the more accurate.

References

- Chapman, R. (1986). *New Dictionary of American Slang*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Farmer, J. S. and W. E. Henley (1903, 1909). *Slang and its Analogues Past and Present*. Vol. I: Revised edition, issued in two parts. Introductions by Lee Revens and G. Legman. New York: University Books, 1966.
- Partridge, E. (1937). *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*. London: Routledge.