Don't make yourself or me a proverb. —Johnson to Boswell
# Table of Contents

**From the Editor** .................................................. 4

**Letter to the Editor**
Anthony Chamier .................................................. 6

**Features**
Teaching Samuel Johnson
Too Personal? Teaching the Preface to the *Dictionary*
  *Ruth Mack* ...................................................... 9

Johnsoniana
From the Hyde Collection Catablog
  *John Overholt* .................................................. 14

Ian Rankin, *Fleshmarket Alley*
  *Ed Schaeffer* ................................................... 16

Carrie Shanafelt
  *Jerry Morris* .................................................. 16

  *Robert DeMaria, Jr.* .......................................... 16

  *Robert DeMaria, Jr.* .......................................... 17

Derek (Teddy) Wayne, “Johnson’s Life of Boswell”
  *Matthew Davis* ................................................ 17

A Johnsonian Quiz—The Answers
  *Ed Schaeffer* .................................................. 20

**Reports**
Yale Boswell Editions Notes
  *Gordon Turnbull* ............................................... 21

Samuel Johnson Society of Southern California
  *O M Brack, Jr.* ................................................ 23

Samuel Johnson Club of Japan
  *Shigeru Shibagaki* .............................................. 23

Two *Dictionary* Conferences
  *Jack Lynch* .................................................... 25

The Johnsonians (USA) Dinner 2005
  *Peter Kanter* .................................................. 27
Notes and Queries

Fructus Sanctorum: A Newly Identified Title from Johnson’s Library
    Matthew Davis ........................................... 29
On The Trail of Early Rambler and Idler Translations in France and Spain
    John Stone .................................................. 34
Johnson on Smoking
    Barry Baldwin .............................................. 42
Classical Comments
    Barry Baldwin .............................................. 45
Boswell to his Brother, November 1776
    Gerald M. Goldberg ....................................... 47

Book Reviews

Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity
    Richard Wendorf ........................................... 49
    Elizabeth Hedrick .......................................... 51
Jonathan Schneer: The Thames
    Nancy Johnson ............................................... 55
Henry Hitchings: Defining the World: The Extraordinary Story of Dr. Johnson’s Dictionary
    Peter Kanter ................................................ 57
In Brief ..................................................... 60
Allen Reddick, ed.: Samuel Johnson’s Unpublished Revisions to the Dictionary of the English Language
Anthony W. Lee: Mentoring Relationships in the Life and Writings of Samuel Johnson
Timothy Wilson Smith: Samuel Johnson
    Robert DeMaria, Jr. ....................................... 64
n the last issue of the Johnsonian News Letter I said that, with luck, the present issue would include a review of volume XVIII of the Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson. The book has seen the light of day, but there is no review as of yet in these pages, partly because of the difficulty your editor has had in asking someone to review his own book. Of course, the book is only partly mine; part of course is Gwin Kolb's, and many parts comprise the contributions of Ruth Kolb and many other friends and colleagues. Gwin and I acknowledge many of our debts in our preface, though we surely have not remembered them all. Reading acknowledgments is good sport for academics. It is, perhaps, the intellectual equivalent of reading the sports pages for us, and no part of a scholarly book is more often read. There is a satisfaction in finding one's own name in another's book and in seeing who makes up the author's intellectual circle as well as his or her domestic circle. For the author himself, however, there is some pain in reviewing the acknowledgments because inevitably someone has been left out. For example, I now wish I had remembered to include the name of Deanna Knickerbocker, a graphics specialist recently retired from the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, who helped me get the basic material for the volume into digital form back in 1992. Another source of disappointment for me is that I could not in the acknowledgments thank Gwin Kolb for inviting me into the project to begin with. We use mainly the first person plural in our book (and very occasionally the third person singular).

I first met Gwin in 1979 on the steps of the old British Library. When I arrived he was waiting there with his wife Ruth, his son Jack, and an old friend whose name I do not recall. He bought me lunch and we sat at one end of the table talking about Johnson's Dictionary, while other members of the party conversed at the other end. Gwin assured me that this was all right because his family was used to his ways. Gwin encouraged me to write my book on Johnson's Dictionary and assured me that no one else was doing the same thing. The amazing part of the story, however, is that after that meeting Gwin stayed in touch regularly, writing cordial notes of encouragement and sending greetings even when I did not hold up my end of the correspondence. Around 1990 he asked me to join him as co-editor of Johnson on the English Language, and he started
sending me materials that he had collected over the years. He and Ruth had already done the basic, backbreaking work of collating the texts, patiently reading through the first ten proprietors’ editions of the Dictionary at their home on Blackstone Avenue in Chicago. We would review the work many times over the next fifteen years, right down to the reading of proofs, and there were changes as we added introductions and commentary. However, on the whole, it is remarkable how much of the Kolbs’ original work is intact in the final production, certainly upwards of ninety-nine percent. (A really attentive reader may find the two or three places in which changes had to be made in proof by noticing anomalies in the textual apparatus.)

Much as I admire it, Gwin’s and Ruth’s accuracy is not the main pleasure I have had in this collaboration. The main pleasure has been the friendship of these wonderful people. Johnson would surely have admired them more for their generosity than for their accuracy, but he would not have undervalued the latter. Like Gwin, Johnson was perpetually an editor and he compulsively corrected as he read over his own works, but, unlike Gwin, he did not do so methodically. Gwin and I found, for example, that Johnson made corrections to the preliminary matter of the third edition of the Dictionary (1765), which no one heretofore has imagined him touching in any way. On the other hand, there are mistakes that escaped him throughout the editions published in his lifetime. Given enough time, I think, Gwin would have found every mistake in our edition. Working with him on a text was a lesson in slowing down the process of reading and the process of seeing. To a great hitter in baseball, they say, the ball looks larger than it does to the rest of us; the same, I imagine, is true for Gwin and the printed word. In addition, he seemed to create enough space in his reading to make comments on what he saw; when we worked together he vocalized all of his perceptions, rather than, as many of us would, just marking the text with a pencil and moving on. He was surely an instinctive editor, but he had trained himself not to act that way. Johnson, on the other hand, twitched in front of a text, I think, and jotted corrections, murmuring, I imagine, rather than articulating his reasons for doing so. This is the feeling one gets looking at the few extant manuscripts that he marked up. Yet Johnson has been blessed by having many great, systematic, and patient editors of his work. Gwin Kolb belongs in the august company of such editors as G. B. Hill, R. W. Chapman, and Allen Hazen. It was my privilege and a pleasure to work beside him.

Robert L. Mair, Jr.
November 27, 2005

Dear Professor DeMaria,

Your readers may find the name Anthony Chamier familiar, but few will be able to place him exactly. That is because, although he was an original member of the Club, he gets only brief mentions in Boswell's Life [see Hill's edition, I.378n]. I am writing to the Johnsonian News Letter in the hope that there is a scholar out there who can rescue Chamier, my namesake and forebear, from the oblivion to which he has since been consigned.

Anthony Chamier was born on 6 October 1725, the son of a French Huguenot couple living off Coleman Street in the City of London. His father Daniel was the son of a refugee pastor from Dauphiné and had been trained for the church, but rebelled and went into business. He was a "broker" who dealt in Government stock and acted as middleman in trade with Continental Europe. Chamier's mother, Suzanne de la Méjanelle, came from a Huguenot family whose origins are obscure but which had good connections in the financial and commercial world.

Chamier was only sixteen when his father died after—according to family tradition—an unsuccessful and therefore unprofitable career. There would have been immediate pressure on him and his two elder brothers to earn money to support the widowed mother and four unmarried sisters. Of the three brothers, only Anthony became a wealthy man. The eldest, another Daniel, went as a merchant to Baltimore but his life was torn apart by the War of Independence (he married into a Maryland Patriot family, but took the job of Commissary General to Howe's army). The other, John, was also in business but seems to have drifted, ending his life in India as a gem dealer and leaving a trail of illegitimate children.

What then enabled this impoverished young man, born more French than English, without obvious important patrons, to make a fortune by the age of thirty-five, to obtain high office in the British Government, to become the intimate of distinguished men and women in London, and not least to be one of Dr. Johnson's circle of friends and a member of the Club? It seems to have been mainly a question of a natural financial talent—at speculation, not to put
Letter to the Editor

too fine a point on it—and an ability for friendship. Even with these assets, however, he could not have risen as he did without connections to help him start. He had an advantage, through his mother's family, of being on the fringe of that French Huguenot and Dutch nexus of financiers who played an important part in the commercial and political life of eighteenth-century England. His own godfather was the banker Antoine Loubier, while two of the Van Neck family (underwriters of British Government Stock) were godparents of his siblings. With contacts like these, a young man with aptitude could go far. Later on in 1753 a careful marriage helped: this marriage was not to a society lady but to plain Dorothy Wilson, the co-heir to a London merchant and, more importantly, the future sister-in-law of Thomas Bradshaw, a clerk in the war office and Treasury.

It is not clear why Chamier moved from stock-broking, to use a less pejorative term than “speculating,” to government. His jobs as an official were well paid and attracted fees, but the sums were paltry compared to the prizes available in his first career. He seems not to have been interested in Party politics. It may be that he was attracted by power and flattered by approaches from politicians who valued his financial acumen. And he clearly had a taste for the kind of intellectual and fashionable company that would have been in short supply among his banking colleagues.

Be that as it may, his career in government began in the early 1760s, initially under the patronage of the 2nd Viscount Barrington whose family were dissenting and ardent Protestants and therefore sympathetic to Huguenot refugee families with a theological background like the Chamiers. By 1772 he was deputy secretary at war, in 1775 under secretary of state in the Southern Department, and in 1778 MP for Tamworth. His official positions were ones of trust, and it says much about the self-confidence and openness of British politics that one whose origins and connections were French should have been admitted in this way to the inner circle.

Despite his money-making and then his heavy official duties, he clearly found time to be a “man about town.” To take just two examples: when Count Orlov arrived at a party given by Fanny Burney, he “bowed to Mr. Chamier who he had already met.” He was one of the “Gang,” an informal and boisterous set of smart friends including Henry Drummond, the banker, who was later Chamier’s executor. Yet he was clearly not just a social butterfly, or else how could he have been admitted to the Club or have been Dr. Johnson’s host at his house in Streatham (where the great man stayed up past midnight on his birthday).

There is, however, an unanswered question about Chamier and
the Club. Was he admitted as a "good fellow," as an influential
contact in the world of officialdom, or for his personality and con-
versation? He is said to have been introduced by Topham Beauclerk,
and he was certainly a friend of Joshua Reynolds. Whether he knew
the Doctor before he became a member seems uncertain. Perhaps a
mixture of reasons led to his admission. My own feeling is that it
had much to do with his personality. He was bitterly attacked in the
Letters of Junius, but there is little doubt that this was due to the
jealousy of colleagues at his promotion in the war office. Otherwise,
the scattered recollections of the man are favourable. One of his
three portraits by Reynolds, the one to my mind solely from the
master's hand, shows him as a relaxed and humourous man, the
sort one would want to spend an evening with.

Chamier must have been disappointed not to have had children
of his own to inherit the position he had built up for himself. The
country house and property at Epsom, for which the architect
Robert Adams had done designs, were sold at his death in 1780, and,
after providing generously for his widow and his sisters, he left the
residue of his estate to a nephew from whom I am descended.

Would someone care to put flesh on these bones of Chamier's
life? He surely deserves better than to be remembered just as the
man attacked by Junius. A fuller account of his life would help in a
small way to illuminate eighteenth-century society and politics
and, not least, throw fresh light on the origins and activities of the
Club. There is much material to be researched and I should be glad
to make available what I have gathered so far.

Yours sincerely,

ANTHONY CHAMIER

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Too Personal?  
Teaching the Preface

Last year, in my undergraduate survey course on eighteenth-century British literature, a student pointed out that Johnson’s Preface to the Dictionary violates the rule that requires one to keep the personal out of academic writing. The comment (conveyed in an assigned e-mail response prior to our discussion) was a little transparent in its simultaneous identification with and criticism of Johnson. It did, however, manage to get at something strange in the way the Preface records Johnson’s suffering—“much of my life has been lost under the pressures of disease; much has been trifled away; and much has always been spent in provision for the day that was passing over me”—alongside the technical aspects of lexicography.  

The student’s comment allowed us to begin our discussion with a question that involved a rather unlikely characterization of this particular lexicographer: Is Samuel Johnson a bad writer for mixing modes, for combining a description of his feelings with an account of the English language?  

The materials that produced this harsh criticism of Johnson and that would be our initial tools for discussing it were two prefaces, one old and one new: Johnson’s Preface (1755) and the Preface to the New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1993). These two essays depict feats of lexicography performed by two radically different kinds of authors. Whereas Johnson’s Preface highlights his own singularity and the difficulties it entails, the Preface to the New SOED stresses repeatedly technology’s success in exceeding human limitations. Johnson acknowledges, for instance, that the lone lexicographer is bound to produce a selective account of the language and that its parts will not be evenly refined: “where there are many things to be done, each must be allowed its share of time and labour, in the proportion only which it bears to the whole” (Yale 18:104). The editors of the New SOED do not need to resort, defen-
sively, to justifying the whole over the part; they can have both. They make a point of saying that in this new edition, "Every headword is traced back to the time of its first known use, however early. . . . Every entry has been written afresh, taking into account the linguistic evidence of the Dictionary Department's extensive quotation files and computer databases." Here is the account of how some of the materials make their way into the dictionary's final form:

Editorial work on this completely new edition of the SOED began in 1980, with a build-up of staff from late 1983. Until well into the letter I, entries were handwritten on 6-by-4-inch paper slips. Then in 1987 the availability of the second edition of the OED in electronic form prompted a radical revision of editorial procedures. A complex specification was drawn up for the automatic modification of the OED text: certain categories of entry and types of information were omitted, senses and structural units were reordered, old-fashioned modes of expression were modified, and many other changes were made to bring it closer to the spirit and style of the New SOED. . . . Meanwhile International Computaprint Corporation (ICC) in Pennsylvania, who had undertaken data-capture of the second edition of the OED, keyed the handwritten slips for A to interwreathe, converting their conventional typographical mark-up into a generic form. . . . Soon the sections of dictionary text produced by such contrasting means were formally indistinguishable. (SOED vii-viii)

The data processing available for the New SOED reorders and modifies entries. Gone are worries about individual judgment—"care" and "negligence," "ignorance" and "confidence" (Yale 18:103)—because "style" and "spirit" now seem quantifiable. Gone too, of course, is the sense of the human author behind the text. Thanks to computers, "handwritten slips" become "formally indistinguishable" definitions. More than a hundred people are thanked by the editors (whose own names, unlike Johnson's, do not appear on the title page), and the duties of individual persons are so precise—from "checking phonetic transcriptions" to "on-line regularization of stylistic inconsistencies" (SOED viii)—as often to seem more prominent than the names themselves.

The students were not, however, willing to sign on to an opposition of individual author to more modern technology. Fresh from earlier discussions of the impact of the print market on conceptions of authorship, they were quick to point out that even if computers eventually did solve some of Johnson’s problems, Johnson might have viewed the printed word as an earlier version of the “formally indistinguishable” entries; printed text too enforces a distance between the lexicographer and the final text. We were dealing, they suggested, not with an opposition of individual author to technology, but with two different responses to technology, one a kind of ambivalence (Johnson’s) and the other a kind of embrace (the New SOED’s). In this case, Johnson’s emphasis on the mind of the lexicographer—and indeed, on his suffering—would look like a kind of reminder that there was an individual mind and person at work at all.

This seemed to me a decent first conclusion about the Preface, and I suggested that we turn it back to the original question about Johnson’s bad writing. What is the point of the rule that insists on the separation of the personal and the academic? What does one hope to gain by making separate those two kinds of writing? The students’ responses offered quite a coherent explanation of what the elimination of the authorial “I” entails: clearer argument, greater objectivity, the possibility of saying something about the book that isn’t just limited to your own reading of it. Once these possibilities were specified, however, it became clear that they did not seem to everyone an appropriate description of Johnson’s essay. Indeed, this was the occasion for several students to jump to Johnson’s defense. Perhaps he had not meant to be objective. Perhaps, as one student put it, the Preface is more like a short story or a poem than like a scientific account.

While I was keen on the students seeing that the lexicographer’s presence in the Preface might have something in common with the poet’s in the poem, for our next discussion I provided what I hoped would be a way out of the opposition that had been created between “objectivity” and “poetry”: the word “objective” as it appears in Johnson's Dictionary and in the OED. Johnson’s definitions of “objective” are brief: “1. Belonging to the object; contained in the object. [Isaac] Watts. 2. Made an object; proposed as an object. [Mathew] Hale.” Within the OED definition of “objective” is a short clarifying paragraph from the editors, explaining the odd reversal in the history of philosophy of the terms “objective” and “subjective,” a shift that is located “in writers of the later 17th and early 18th c.” before being solidified, finally, in Kant’s philosophy. What I was interested in bringing to the discussion
was the changing sense of "objective," from its original meaning as "considered only as presented to the mind" to its later meaning as "the object of perception and thought, as distinct from the perceiving or thinking subject." This difference—between Johnson's definitions "belonging to the object" and "made an object"—allows us to see that the word that used to signal the binding up of perception with the object came to stand for the object's separateness, for its existence outside consciousness.

My point in bringing up this problem implicit in the term "objective" was twofold: first, to point to "objective" as a historical and philosophical idea; and, second, to suggest the sense in which all claims to objectivity might in fact be related to the subject position that the students were marking as that of the poet, the perceiving subject who makes meaning through examining the relation between his own consciousness and the world. Of course for Johnson that world is literature and language, and as I recall the students interjected—before I could say as much—that this might be related to the idea that one thinks not prior to language but through it.

Hoping that I hadn't put myself in too thorny a position with regard to the student essays that would arrive in my box the next week, I pointed us back toward the New SOED, which seems to have no such concern about the relation between mind and object, with the computer standing between individual consciousness and language. In the first class on the prefaces, a student had asked a question that puzzled me then, but to which I thought that we might now return, about the size of the paper slips. At first I had written off the "6-by-4-inch paper slips" as the same kind of detailed accounting one finds in the list of contributing help to the dictionary, where there is a point made to distinguish between the people who did "cross-reference checking" and those "checking final page-proofs" (SOED viii). But the "6-by-4-inch paper slips" do have a strange tangibility in a world focused on a virtual mass of data. The slips are the things discarded, but also the things that in some way linger and seem most real. They are, to speak in the terms of Bill Brown's recent account (drawing on Heidegger), "things," which call attention to their materiality, their inaccessibility, and their anachronism. Any lexicographer must face the odd process that involves finding words and making them into objects. In Johnson's Preface, words are things that are "found" or that one may "glean up"; they are "rare and remote things," whether they lie in

"caverns" or in books (Yale 18:102). The "durable materials of a language"—not "fugitive cant"—are what support the dictionary (Yale 18:103). As much as he is invested in these "durable materials," however, Johnson cannot quite set aside the fact that language is always also "living" (Yale 18:89). Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that the makers of dictionaries comment on the strangeness of this object-making by calling our attention to what it entails: the fashioning of a relationship between person and thing. That the stress might be at one moment on the feelings of the individual lexicographer and at another on the thingness of the word-slip itself, does not so much signal that a concern with subjectivity has disappeared by 1993; rather, it suggests instead that lexicography continues to reframe Johnson’s original concerns about subjectivity in a differently modern time.

—RUTH MACK

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Johnsoniana

From the Hyde Collection Catablog

John Overholt has the enviable task of cataloguing the books given to the Houghton Library, Harvard, by the late Mary Hyde Eccles. As nearly all of our readers know, the Hyde Collection was the greatest assemblage of Johnsonian materials in private hands and the worthy rival of any institutional collection. The work of cataloguing it is delightful but not without its dull duties and drudgery. To mark the days of his labors, John Overholt runs a blog located at http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/hydeblog/. Herewith are a few recent postings.

11/1/05; 4:10:35 PM
A Select View of Johnson’s Dictionary

Today, I’m cataloging the first edition of the Dictionary, and part of my job is to make sure that our copies aren’t missing any leaves. This requires collating them, which means going through and counting the signatures (sequential marks which tell a binder the correct order of the leaves) in each copy. A copy of the Dictionary has 580 leaves in each of its two volumes, and we have five copies of the first edition in the Hyde Collection. Do the math, and you can see that it’s fairly labor-intensive. Since the signature appears on every other leaf, in the lower right corner, that’s pretty much all of the book I get to look at. Therefore, I’d like to present you with John’s Favorite Words Appearing in the Lower Right Corner of Every Fourth Page in Johnson’s Dictionary. Use one in conversation today!

*Arbuscule.* n.s. [arbuscula, Lat.] Any little shrub.
*Catter-cousin.* n.s. A corruption of quatre-cousin, from the ridiculousness of calling cousin or relation to so remote a degree.
*Curdy.* adj. [from curd.] Coagulated; concreted; full of curds; curdled.
*To Embale.* v.a. [emballer, Fr.] To make up into a bundle.
Evulgation. n.s. [evulgo, Lat.] The act of divulging; publication.
*Flagitious.* adj. [from flagitus, Latin.] Wicked; villainous; atrocious.
To Gloze. v.n. [Saxon.] To flatter; to wheedle; to insinuate; to fawn.

Kicksy-wicksey. n.s. [from kick and wince.] A made word in ridicule and disdain of a wife.

To Knubble. v.a. [knippler, Danish.] To beat.

Yux. n.s. [yeox, Saxon.] The hiccough.

9/7/05

James Boswell’s copy of The Government of the Tongue [by Richard Allestree] has a note from him about its acquisition:

“Presented to me by my worthy friend Bennet Langton, Esq. of Langton, as a book by which I might be much improved... He gave me the book and hoped I would read that treatise, but said no more. I have expressed in words what I believe was his meaning. It was a delicate admonition.”

What would have been a less delicate admonition—a gag?

6/1/05

Crime of the (18th) Century

The Case and Memoirs of the late Mr. James Hackman and of his Acquaintance with the late Miss Martha Ray: with a commentary on his conviction... and also some thoughts on lunacy and suicide. London: G. Kearsley, 1779.

In 1779, London was abuzz with the sensational murder of Martha Ray by the Rev. James Hackman, outside Covent Garden Theatre. Ray first met Hackman while she was mistress to the Earl of Sandwich (for whom she bore nine children), and their affair was apparently intense but brief, ending when Hackman, then in the army, was reassigned to Ireland. Hackman later resigned his commission to join the church, and shortly after being ordained in 1779, went to London to find Ray. Certain that she had taken up with a new lover, he waited outside the theater with two pistols, shooting her in the head when she emerged. He then shot at himself, but only grazed his forehead, whereupon he unsuccessfully attempted to club himself to death with the now useless pistols, before being arrested. The defense pled temporary insanity, noting that Hackman had brought a love letter to Ray with him that night, and Hackman claimed, in a speech that may have been written by Boswell, to have planned to kill only himself. Johnson felt, however, that the fact that Hackman carried two pistols proved premeditation. The jury apparently agreed, finding him guilty, and Hackman was hanged on 19 April 1779, less than two weeks after the murder.
Londoners seeking the juicy details of the sensational trial snapped up ten editions of this work, this copy belonging to the first. Sadly, the Hyde copy is missing the engraved portrait of Hackman which originally accompanied it, depicting a large black spot on his forehead, presumably the result of the unsuccessful suicide attempt.

—JOHN OVERHOLT

Ian Rankin

I was reading Ian Rankin’s current crime novel, Fleshmarket Alley, a series of detective fiction in which the protagonist is an Edinburgh detective and found that there was an epigraph attributed to Samuel Johnson.

Mr. Rankin’s quotation of SJ is, “The climate of Edinburgh is such that the weak succumb young . . . and the strong envy them.” I was unable to find the source for this quotation and decided to write to Mr. Rankin, making a polite inquiry. He was good enough to send me this reply: “Sorry—I’ve been through my notes to my novel Fleshmarket Alley, and though the quote from Doctor Johnson is there, I can find no source. Nor can I find it marked in my many reference books. Maybe I invented it! Best wishes — Ian Rankin.”

I have come to the conclusion that many individuals quote Dr. Johnson because they believe it adds a degree of intellectualism to their writings.

—ED SCHAFFFER

Carrie Shanafelt

Once, when I lived in Cleveland, I went to my favorite diner in the middle of the night to read Boswell and drink coffee. A woman at a nearby table yelled, “Miss! What the hell you readin’? That thing’s bigger than the goddamn Bible!” I said it was the Life of Samuel Johnson. She nodded knowingly, smiled, and said, “I loved him in Pulp Fiction.”

—JERRY MORRIS

James Atlas, “My Subject, Myself”  

[In this essay Atlas reflects on the differences between the American and British traditions of biography. At one point he contrasts the “big” biographies in the American tradition (Ellmann’s Joyce, Bate’s Johnson) to the equally large nineteenth-century British biographies.]

. . . there was a crucial difference between those elephantine
volumes and the massive American biographies of today: they pos-
sessed a deep familiarity with the world they wrote about, an easy
intimacy of tone. . . . The greatest exemplar of this tradition is, of
course, Boswell's "Life of Samuel Johnson" . . . . If Boswell's
"Johnson" has a precursor—if any work so strikingly original can
be said to have a precursor—it's Johnson's own masterpiece, "Lives
of the English Poets." Every page resonates with his brisk, confid-
ing tone. . . .

—ROBERT DEMARIA, JR.

Lizette Alvarez, "A Scotsman with the Gifts of Gab and
Jab"
(New York Times, 2 July 2005)

Incorrigible to the core, George Galloway is used to being threat-
ened, ousted, libeled, filleted in the press and just plain reviled.
Over the years, the grand-père terrible of British politics has
been called corrupt and treacherous; labeled an apologist for
Saddam Hussein, a claim he forcefully rejects; portrayed as a Louis
Vuitton-toting Socialist; and dismissed as a self-aggrandizing
Labor Party turncoat.

"I could show you my scars," Mr. Galloway, 50, said from inside
the ramshackle room where he sat, the stubby end of his Monte-
cristo cigar a reassuring arm's length away. "I am swimming against
the stream. As Dr. Johnson once said, 'The grimmest dictatorship is
the dictatorship of the prevailing orthodoxy,' and I am fighting that
orthodoxy. It's not that I relish it. It's that I am not afraid of it. . . ."

—ROBERT DEMARIA, JR.

Derek (Teddy) Wayne, "Johnson's Life of Boswell"
(from McSweeney's Website)

Nov. 17, 1764.

Boswell persists in tracking my every Movement. I have not yet
detected his Motive, but he often beseeches me to "say something
memorably wise and pithy," or "discourse on the Immorality
of your fellow Man." When I do, or even refrain and tell him I'm too
fatigued, he scratches down notes on a Parchment. To-day I looked
up from my Broadsheet whilst sipping a Mug of Ale in the Spotted
Pig to find him at the End of the Table, observing me as a Scien-
tist does his Microscopic Specimen. We made Contact of the Eyes
and he furiously scribbled something before departing with
Alacrity. Can you pronounce the Adjective "bizarre"?
Dec. 2, 1764.
At first the Attention was flattering, but now it is verging on pathetick; *Boswell* seems to have no Life other than documenting mine. The other Day I asked him if he would not prefer to follow around some attractive aristocratick Lady closer to his own Age, and he replied, with an Expression of utter Sobriety, "Why pursue the Capricious Follies of our Age when I have an Eternal Soul in you?" Then he asked for my Thoughts on Petticoats as a Symbol of engulfing Vanity.

Dec. 19, 1764.
We were picking Names out of a tri-cornered Hat at the *Spotted Pig* for the traditional Clandestine Gift-Exchange. Unfortunate Event, Number the First: I picked *Boswell*. Unfortunate Event, Number the Second: *Boswell* frowned when he read the Name he had picked, then entreated *Oliver Goldsmith* to switch Names with him, and once the Transaction was completed, skipped away whilst giggling to himself.

Dec. 24, 1764.
*Christmas Eve* at the *Spotted Pig*, and *Boswell* presents me with a Fountain-Pen carved of *African* Ivory that definitely cost more than the maximum Allowance of 10 Pence. "Happy Clandestine Gift-Exchange!" he beamed. "Now your Pen shall be as liquid and infinite as your Mind as you complete *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets!*" I had to thank him in front of everyone, then hand over my Gift. "Oh, Dr. Johnson, how fortuitous that we are each other’s Clandestine Gift-Exchangers!" he shouted so everyone could hear. "It is as if Destiny itself had a Hand in the Selection!" When he opened his Present—a Parchment requesting he physically restrain himself from drawing within two Furlongs of me—he howled, "I love Gifts that play Gags on the Recipient!" and slapped me much too hard on the Back.

Dec. 25, 1764.
A quiet *Christmas* at Home, savouring *Virgil* in front of my Hearth, when I heard a Knock at my Door. I wish there were some Way of identifying who was calling before I opened the Door, because there stood *Boswell*, with a Pot of Stew and a Smile across his Face as if he were consuming Excrement and thoroughly enjoying it. We have absolutely *nothing* to talk about, but we did so nonetheless for five interminable Hours.

Jan. 1, 1765.
Here is a Riddle: what is prying, parasitick, and makes a Perfect Ass of himself at your *New Year’s* Party? The Answer on all three
Accounts is, irrefutably, *Boswell!* After he arrived uninvited (under the Pretense that his Friend “John, whose family Name I cannot recall,” told him to come) and had a few Goblets, he paraded around with a Candelabrum atop his Head whilst singing bawdy Songs from *The Beggar’s Opera*. I saw him buttonholing Edmund Burke at the End of the Night, poor Man. When he asked me if he could “partake of my Sofa for the Remainder of the Evening and Morn” and I replied that “a Man of Prudence takes neither Compliments nor House-Guests without Suspicion,” he seemed just as happy as if I’d let him stay.

Jan. 7, 1765.

To-night at the *Spotted Pig* I was eating my customary *Sunday* Supper when I espied *Boswell* entering. I groaned, thinking my Meal ruined, but he merely extended his Greetings to me and went off to converse with *Burke* at his Table. Have I finally rid myself of this noxious Pest?

Feb. 10, 1765.

It has been two Fortnights since *Boswell* last talked to me. I saw him at the *Spotted Pig* last Week with *Burke*, and I am fairly assured he noticed me before they rapidly exited. In his Haste, he left behind a Scrap of Parchment; it read “Notes for Life of *Burke*.”
To-night I shall immolate it in my Hearth.

Feb. 14, 1765.

*Valentine’s Day.* Alone. I sent him a Parchment with several new Witticisms and Axioms of mine two Days ago, but have received no Reply. Here is one I came up with to-day: *One is not aware of what one possessed until the Moment that which was formerly possessed has become absent.* Oh, but when did my treasured Fountain-Pen start inking such stilted Prose? I need to forget about him. Perhaps find another Biographer. But where—the *Spotted Pig*? No Biographers of his Calibre spend their Time there. Stop—this is Weakness and Fear speaking; first I must be contented with myself, in Solitude, before I meet another Biographer. I must acclimate to my Life without *Boswell*.

—Matthew Davis
A Johnsonian Quiz — The Answers

1. Charles Bird, Johnson's servant at Edial; or Mrs. White, left £100 in Johnson's will as his "female servant."

2. a. Mrs. Careless: Edmund Hector's sister, a clergyman's widow, the first woman with whom Johnson was in love.
   
b. Mrs. Emmet: actress, appeared in Lichfield as Flora in Hob in the Well, with whom Johnson was in love c. 1736.
   
c. Miss Morris: daughter of Valentine Morris, sister to Miss Morris the actress, received Johnson's blessing the day he died.
   
d. Mrs. Gardiner: wife of Snow Hill tallow chandler, not in the learned way, but a worthy good woman, celebrated Johnson's birthday with him in 1781, was bequeathed a book in his will.
   
e. Miss Harry: convert to Quakerism, called by Johnson an odious wench, subject of his dispute with Mrs. Knowles.


5. a) wit, sweet; b) bear, skin; c) best, ceases; d) fat oxen, fat; e) jack, spit.

6. a) Johnson; b) Edward Cave; c) Johnson; d) Boswell; e) Johnson.

7. Lord Chesterfield.

8. a) False, he revised the 2nd edition; b) False, it is on the title of the first American edition, 1768; c) True, he proposed it in a letter to Strahan; d) False, there have been over 500; e) False, he read the Life of Savage thus.

9. Prologues to Irene; Milton's Comus; Garrick's Lethe; Goldsmith's Good-Natured Man; Kelly's Word to the Wise; and for the opening of the Drury-Lane Theater.


—Ed Schaeffer
Reports

Yale Boswell Editions Notes

The newest volume in the Yale Boswell Editions research series is in press, and is slated for publication in February 2006. *The General Correspondence of James Boswell, 1757-1763*, edited by David Hankins and James J. Caudle, is ninth in the series devoted to letters to and from Boswell. It can be ordered in North America from Yale University Press, and in the U.K. from Edinburgh University Press.

The next volume planned for publication, *James Boswell: The Journal of his German and Swiss Travels, 1764*, edited by Marlies K. Danziger, will be the first to appear in the parallel Research Series of Boswell’s journals. The “trade” version of this portion of the diary appeared as *Boswell on the Grand Tour: Germany and Switzerland, 1764*, ed. Frederick A. Pottle, in 1953. The probable publication date is 2007, and the exact date will be announced when known.

On the salon.com website, the film director Whit Stillman (*Metropolitan, The Last Days of Disco, Barcelona*) includes *The Life of Johnson* among his selections of “Five Essential Books for the Bass Weejuns Set,” and refers to Boswell as “the George Plimpton of his day.” The Montana Green Party *Weekly Bulletin* for 14 September 2004, admiringly reviewing Boswell’s career as a criminal lawyer in the Scottish courts, refers to him as “a veritable Clarence Darrow.”

Recognition of the young Boswell’s work in Corsica increases. A film by the Corsican-born director, Marie-Jeanne Tomasi, about Boswell and Paoli in Corsica, *L’ami anglais*, screened on Corsican television in November 2005. Boswell was played by the Corsican-born French actor, Nathanaël Maini.

The story of Mary Bryant and her fellow escapers from the penal colony in New South Wales, whose cause Boswell successfully took up in London in the 1790s, has been made the subject of what is
described as the most expensive Australian television series ever filmed. It screened in a two-part mini-series on Australian television in October 2005. The title character was played by the British actress Romola Garai (Daniel Deronda, Nicholas Nickleby, Vanity Fair).

A recent novelization of this story is The Sarsaparilla Souvenir; by Jo Anne Rey. The title refers to the Botany Bay “tea leaves” presented by Mary Bryant to Boswell, and now preserved among the Boswell Papers in Yale’s Beinecke Library.

The entry by Judith Cook on Mary Bryant in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography says that she “possibly became Boswell’s mistress.” She did not.

Boswell’s journals continue to be thought “racy.” A review in The Washington Post Book World, 13-19 November 2005, of the fictional “papers” that serve as the basis for George MacDonald Fraser’s Flashman series (Flashman on the March, 12th in the series), observes: “No doubt their author’s vigorous style and forthrightness, like that of Boswell in his “racy” journals (discovered under comparably romantic circumstances at Malahide Castle), contribute to the papers’ popularity outside the academy” (Michael Dirda, “In the 12th installment of the Flashman novels, Sir Henry sails off to Africa to rescue British captives”). A review in Time magazine (22 September 2003) of the Autobiography of the fashion/fetish photographer Helmut Newton, notes: “Behind this book stand three centuries of the libertine memoir, including Casanova’s Journal and the ribald passages of Boswell’s” (Richard Lacayo, “The Man Who Gave Us Dirty Swank.”)

The proceedings of an international conference held at Yale University in April 2002 on the life and writings of Isabelle de Charrière have been published in The Yale University Library Gazette (series editor Stephen Parks), Occasional Supplement 6, December 2004, edited by Vincent Giroud and Janet Whatley. It includes Gordon Turnbull’s “Boswell and Belle de Zuylen: Language and Legislation.”

Kevin D. Repp, formerly of the Yale Department of History, has been appointed Curator of Modern European Books and Manuscripts at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, succeeding Vincent Giroud. We take this occasion to thank Vincent Giroud for his assistance over many years to the Yale Boswell Editions, in his roles as Curator, as a member of the Editorial Committee, and as a Committee Chair pro tem.
Memorial events for the journalist, publisher, and philanthropist Henry Luce III, who died on 8 September 2005, at the age of 80, were held in New York on 17 and 19 November last year. The Yale Boswell Editions are proud to have been among Mr. Luce's many benefactions. A major grant to the Editions from the Henry Luce Foundation in 1999, when Mr. Luce was Foundation chairman, sustained the project for some years, and allowed editorial work to advance on several of the projected volumes in the Research Series. We remain profoundly grateful.

—GORDON TURNBULL

Samuel Johnson Society of Southern California

The twenty-third annual dinner of the Samuel Johnson Society of Southern California will be held on Sunday, 19 November 2006 at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. The Daniel Blum Memorial Lecture, "Boswell's Dorando," will be delivered by Paul Ruxin. SJSSC is open to all persons interested in conversation and discourse about the life and writings of Samuel Johnson, his circle, and the history and culture of his century. The annual dinner is the convivial focus for these activities. Further information can be obtained from Myron Yeager, Secretary to the society at yeager@chapman.edu.

—O M BRACK, JR.

Samuel Johnson Club of Japan

From Newsletter No. 17

Sixteen years have already passed since the establishment of the SJCJ. We would firstly like to inform you that Shigeru Shibagaki has become the new editor to replace Hitoshi Suwabe from this May. The eighteenth annual
meeting was held at Hoshin-Tel in the basement of Sanseido Bookstore of Tokyo, on Sunday, 22 May 2005, with Hitoshi Suwabe in charge of the proceedings. Ten members, a small number compared to the previous meeting, were present. Each of the others made a short speech before Mami Sano delivered his lecture, “Issues concerning Dictionaries: Electronic and Paper Dictionaries.” We enjoyed talking and exchanging information on Johnson while drinking wine together.

This past summer Hitoshi Suwabe, Hideichi Eto, Professor Yasuo Ichikawa, and Shigeru Shibagaki went around Scotland in the footsteps of Johnson and Boswell, visiting Coll, Mull, Ulva, Inchkenneth, and Skye, in order to confirm the Japanese translation of the final stage of Johnson’s Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland.

The Samuel Johnson Club of Japan regrets to announce to readers that Professor Yutaka Izumitani, who retired from Hiroshima International University last March, passed away this March, rather abruptly. At this sad news we, members of the Club, would like to express our deepest sympathy.

Professor Izumitani, born in 1937 in Manchuria (now China), was educated at Waseda University (Tokyo) and then at Okayama University (near Hiroshima). It was there in 1975 that he published his first paper on Samuel Johnson, “Johnson’s Pessimism in the Choice of Life and Eternity,” in which he examined Johnson’s fear of death. He continuously studied Johnson from that time until his death.

Among the readers of this newsletter there must be some who got to know Professor Izumitani in 1984-85 while he was doing research as a visiting scholar at Georgetown and Yale universities. Some Johnsonians will also have noticed his name in J. D. Fleeman’s Bibliography of the Works of Samuel Johnson under section 59.4R/TJ: Japanese Translations of Rasselas. The last of Professor Izumitani’s many books on Johnson was his Reception History of Rasselas (2001). It describes the history of how Rasselas was received in Japan from 1868-1912.

Readers of the previous issue of our newsletter will remember the title of the paper mentioned in it. Its title was “Jiro Suzuki: The Authentic Johnsonian in Japan” (written in Japanese), the offprints of which Professor Izumitani delivered to members of the Club. According to him, the Reverend Suzuki had built the same personality as Johnson and had lived a real Johnsonian life until his death in 1955. Alas! This paper became Professor Izumitani’s last one, where he showed so much respect to the subject of Suzuki that, it seems, he followed the Johnsonian Suzuki to heaven exactly.
half a century later. We had the good fortune to meet another “Authentic Johnsonian in Japan,” whose name was Yutaka Izumitani.

We are pleased to inform you that two new members, Shinpei Saito and Hiroaki Hoshikawa have joined our Club, and they will attend our annual meeting this year, which will be held at Yagoto Mulberry Hotel near the Yagoto Campus of Chukyo University in Nagoya on Sunday, 21 May 2006.

—SHIGERU SHIBAGAKI

Two Dictionary Conferences

The 250th anniversary of the Dictionary was the occasion of a number of scholarly publications on Johnson the lexicographer: *Johnson on the English Language* in the Yale Works; Allen Reddick’s facsimile of Johnson’s unpublished revisions for the fourth edition; and a collection of essays by various hands. The sestercentenary also prompted a pair of Dictionary-related conferences in England that, with their many approaches to the book, reveal just how much remains to be said about Johnson’s longest work.

The first conference, hosted by Anne McDermott at the University of Birmingham on 25 August, drew around two dozen people to hear eight speakers. Jack Lynch opened the conference by placing Johnson’s Dictionary in the context of other early English dictionaries. Anne McDermott offered some new speculations on the chronology of Johnson’s work, suggesting that most of the Dictionary was done in a mere two and a half years. Chris Pearce related Johnson’s lexicography to eighteenth-century British linguistic theories. John Stone talked about Johnson’s reception in eighteenth-century Spain, and Catherine Dille described the Dictionary’s use in U.S. Supreme Court opinions. Noel Osselton addressed Johnson’s treatment of hyphenated words and related it to modern lexicographical notions of what constitutes a word. Penny Silva, the Director of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and Charlotte Brewer, who has studied the *OED* extensively, talked about the relationship between the greatest dictionary of the eighteenth century and the greatest dictionary of the twentieth.
The second conference, following immediately on the first, was a three-day meeting, "Celebrating Johnson’s Dictionary," hosted by Pembroke College, Oxford, 26-28 August. More than forty people attended, including both professional and amateur Johnsonians. Jack Lynch and Anne McDermott developed some of the themes they had discussed in Birmingham. Natasha McEnroe, the Curator of Dr. Johnson’s House in London, told the story of the famous Gough Square garret where Johnson wrote the Dictionary. Freya Johnston explored Johnson’s ideas of “youth,” and Robert Folkenflik reconsidered the politics implicit in the book. The man behind the famous Preface was Kate Chisolm’s subject, while Michael Bundock related the history of the biographical readings of the Dictionary. Lynda Mugglestone recounted Johnson’s thirteen months at Pembroke College and Jim Basker described Johnson’s many visits to Oxford over the course of his life. Sir Roger Bannister likewise turned his attention from the book to the author, using his experience as a neurologist to describe Johnson’s many illnesses. Andrew Ball of the Oxford English Dictionary explained Johnson’s influence on the OED.

The more academic sessions were complemented by a tour of the offices of the Oxford English Dictionary and a walking tour of Johnson’s Oxford. Johnson’s room in the College was open to visitors, and Pembroke’s library put some of their Johnsoniana on display. Less high-minded entertainment came in the form of the “Ink and Incapability” episode of the sitcom Blackadder, featuring Johnson’s quarrel with the crafty servant who inadvertently destroyed the only manuscript copy of the Dictionary and worked to recreate the whole from scratch overnight. The conference was rounded out by a gala dinner in the Pembroke College Hall and an outdoor brunch in the Chapel Quadrangle the next morning.

The presentations—so varied both in subject and in tone—reveal how the Dictionary bears exploration from many points of view and for many audiences. For some, the Dictionary is interesting because it is Johnson’s—the product of a great literary intellect or a tormented soul. For others, it is a chapter in the history of lexicography, whether the successor to the Dictionnaire de l'Académie française or the precursor to the Oxford English Dictionary. For others still, it raises questions that are relevant in linguistics and lexicography today. A Dictionary of the English Language shows no signs of being exhausted, even after a quarter millennium.

—JACK LYNCH
The Johnsonians (USA) Dinner 2005

The Johnsonians held their annual black tie dinner on Friday, 16 September 2005, at Vassar College's Alumnae House in Poughkeepsie, New York. We celebrated SJ's birthday with cocktails at 6 pm, dinner at 7:30 and an after-dinner performance of the one-man play, Johnson Is Leaving, in which Bruce Purchase played the great man at the end of his life. Post performance drinks and conversation lasted well into the night.

In reviewing the high points of the evening, one might start with our splendid dinner. At least one of the hors d'oeuvres, a crispy oyster beignet with horseradish remoulade, would have made Hodge purr. Entrees included tournedos of grass-fed beef with wild mushroom sauce and cedar-planked wild king salmon. Dessert was fresh local raspberry tart with sauce Anglaise.

The toast to SJ's immortal memory was given by David Vander Meulen. The toast from the members was given by John Richetti. The toast from the guests was given by Frances Fergusson, president of Vassar College.

After dinner, we shifted from the Alumnae House dining room to the nearby living room for Bruce Purchase's remarkable performance of Johnson Is Leaving. The late John Wain wrote the eighty-minute play specifically for Mr. Purchase in 1993. When Mr. Wain was first asked to write it, he reportedly eyed Mr. Purchase for a few long moments before giving his gruff assent. What Mr. Wain must have seen was a large, powerfully built actor who would be able to fill Johnson's bulky cloak and conjure up his power, restlessness and, in this play especially, vulnerability.

The most moving part of the play, to this critic, was Johnson's rumination on his younger brother, Natty, who glides by in most accounts of Johnson as a silent, confused soul who died young. The playwright has Johnson admit to shunning his younger brother:

"I was ashamed of you, Natty, because you weren’t clever. And back in those days I thought it was the most important thing in the world to be clever... And my heart sank [when Natty joined SJ with the Fords at Stourbridge] because I knew that if they saw us sitting side by side they would simply lump us together as the two Johnson boys — they’d have seen me in the
same light as you and we'd both have gone down together. That was why I behaved so wickedly, Natty, why instead of helping you I pushed you into the shadows. . . .

We are reminded by these quiet lines of yet another way that SJ's family relations must have caused him guilt and grief.

A guest reported of the evening (in which tables were named after SJ's works), "It was wonderful to find oneself sitting at a table called the Idler, rather than Table 3. This little touch made it possible to feel, what so many there wanted to feel anyway, that we were dwelling among beloved texts. And the play, in its impact, took me by surprise: the actor's version of Johnson was gentle, too—sad, searching, deeply sweet. Wain's script works well: written by a skilled biographer who knew Johnson deeply, and cherished him much, and who towards the end of his own life found this way to fuse with Johnson once again." (Johnson is Leaving was John Wain's last literary work.)

A number of guests remarked on how comfortable and convenient the evening was, with drinks, dinner, and the play all held in one building, which also offered tidy lodging a floor above.

The evening was co-hosted by Bob DeMaria, chairman of Vassar College's English Department (and editor of this newsletter), and by this reporter (who now abandons all claims of impartiality).

Vassar's hospitality to the Johnsonians continued into the next day. About thirty of us enjoyed a Saturday morning tour of intriguing eighteenth-century books at Vassar's Thompson library, capped by an exhibition entitled, "Samuel Johnson's Dictionary: Sources and Editions," which displayed a rich selection of just that. From the library we went to the college's Loeb Art Center where we viewed an impressive collection of Hogarth prints and other eighteenth-century works. Our weekend concluded with a Saturday lunch on campus, at which we munched on Tapas made of fresh Hudson Valley produce, and bid good-bye to old and new friends.

—Peter Kanter

A Call For Contributions

The editors of the JNL invite contributions of notes, queries, Johnsoniana, and short articles on any and all matters regarding Johnson and his circle (social, political, and intellectual). Contributions to the March issue are due 22 November; those for the September issue are due 22 May.
Fructus Sanctorum:
A Newly Identified Title from
Johnson's Library

In Samuel Johnson’s Library: An Annotated Guide
(Victoria: University of Victoria, 1975), Donald Greene attempted to identify titles in Johnson’s library based on the sometimes cryptic entries in the sale catalogue prepared after Johnson’s death. Greene was able to make convincing identifications for the great majority of the entries in the catalog. However, Parcel #545—“3. Fructus sanctorum, 1604, &c.”—stumped him. Greene wrote:

This has so far proved to be the most baffling item in the catalog. The title “fruits of the saints” sounds as though it were a book of hagiography or devotion. But I and other searchers have found no trace of it. (60)

Greene then offered what he himself called “a wild surmise” that this might be a faulty entry for a 1604 book on the nomenclature of fruits.

It turns out Greene’s first guess was closer to the mark. The title alluded to in the entry can now be identified, with much confidence, as Fructus Sanctorum Y Quinta Parte De Flos Sanctorum (Cuenca: Luis Cano, 1604). The Fructus Sanctorum was the fifth part of a larger, six-part publishing enterprise, known as the Flos Sanctorum, undertaken by the Spanish Dominican Alonso de Villegas of Toledo (1533-1603?). The Flos Sanctorum consisted chiefly of several volumes of lives of the saints, translated and adapted by Villegas from an earlier Latin edition. The Fructus Sanctorum, however, was an example of a slightly different genre: it was a collection of brief exempla, or pointed stories, drawn from a wide variety of sources and arranged according to subject.
The first edition of the *Fructus Sanctorum* appeared in 1594. However, the entry in the sale catalogue suggests that Johnson owned the 1604 edition printed in Cuenca. The ‘3’ at the beginning of the sale catalogue entry probably indicates that this lot contained the *Fructus Sanctorum* plus two additional volumes. We cannot be sure what the additional two volumes were. However, it is possible that they were volumes from the *Flos Sanctorum*, or other, similar volumes of Spanish devotional literature. This, at least, would explain the grouping.

An exemplum is a brief story told to make a point. In the *Fructus Sanctorum*, Villegas compiled the most extensive collection of exempla in Spanish—about 3,500 of them. He grouped these exempla under more than seventy subject headings, including “Of Abstinence,” “Of Love of God,” “Of Faith,” “Of Cruelty,” “Of Constancy,” “Of Silence,” “Of Sacerdotal Dignity,” “Of Purgatory,” and “Of the Eucharist.” Within each subject heading, the exempla are further subdivided into three subsections: 1. exempla from the Bible, 2. exempla concerning Christians, and 3. exempla concerning others (e.g. pagans).

The following examples, translated from the Spanish and excerpted from the 1594 edition, give a sense of the style of Villegas and the contents of the *Fructus Sanctorum*.

*From “Of the Love of Children for Parents and Parents for Children” comes the following anecdote, reminiscent of the story of King Solomon and the baby:*

A married woman, being about to die, with many tears and much begging of forgiveness, declared to her husband that only one of his three sons was actually his, the other two being the fruits of adultery. She could not say which one because death cut her off. The father was confused, not knowing what to decide about his estate, which was very large. When his own death drew near, he stated in his will what his wife had told him at the hour of her death, and indicated that he left his estate to the one of the three who was his actual son. The father died, and the three youths went before the king and showed the will, each one alleging that he was the true son. The king, advised by some wise men, ordered that the youths disinter the body of the father and tie it to a stake and shoot arrows at the corpse; the one who could shoot an arrow closest to the father’s heart would have the inheritance. Two of the youths shot their arrows into the father’s body, but the third
said, "God does not want me to wound the body of my father for worldly interest. Let the inheritance be lost: I will not be so disrespectful as to lay hands on the one who begot me, even though he be dead." Having heard this, the king declared him to be the true and only son... and so gave him the inheritance. This is related in the *Suma de virtudes y vicios de Gullelmo de Peraldo*.

**From "Of Abstinence":**

Saint Jerome... says about Saint Hilarion in his *Vida* that from the age of fifteen to twenty years old he ate five *caricas*, or figs, at sunset. Afterwards, he sustained himself for three years with a bowl of cooked lentils, another three with bread and water, and another three with the uncooked roots of wild herbs. Then, for nine years he lived off six ounces of barley bread and vegetables cooked without oil. Later, compelled by the frailty of his body, he added oil, until he reached the age of seventy-three. Up to the age of eighty he ate liquid food, made of flour and vegetables, eating six ounces a day. And always the sun would set before he ate. Neither because of its being a holiday nor because of his being seriously ill did he break this fast.

**Also from "Of Abstinence":**

Filetes was so abstinent that his body was nothing but skin over the bones, and if he went out of the house when it was windy he would put on shoes with soles made of iron, in order that the wind would not carry him off. So says Eliano in the ninth book [of his *De Varia Historia*], and he puts the question, how, if Filetes was so weak, he could lift shoes of iron, and he answers that he relates that which he found written by reliable authorities.

**From "Of Patience":**

Five robbers arrived at the cell of a holy hermit and told him, "We've come to take everything you have here." He answered them: "Whatever you would like to take, my sons, you may take." They loaded up everything and went off. They left only one sack that was hidden. The good old man followed after them with it and, drawing near, called to them, "Sons, take this sack you left behind." Having witnessed his patience, the robbers restored everything to him they had taken, saying: "Truly, this is a servant of God." From *De Vitis Patrum*.
From “Of Silence”:

Three philosophers having been asked why they spoke little, one replied that Socrates had said, “I have had regrets because of talking on several occasions, because of keeping silent, never”; the second one said: “No fool can keep quiet”; and the third: “Know,” he says, “that we receive from nature one mouth and two ears for hearing, because we ought to hear much and speak little.”

From “Of Clothing”:

Of [Louis XII of France] Bishop Garimberto in his Libros de varios sucessos says that, on account of having ugly legs, he wore his clothes to the heel. And although this was ugly, he was imitated by everyone in the kingdom. King Francis I succeeded him, and being of graceful figure, wore his clothing at half-thigh, and all the kingdom dressed in that manner, with part of the back and chest uncovered. At times he cut his beard and hair and, in everything, everyone imitated him. The king took a ride on several occasions on a nag with a bobbed tail, and all the nobles were then seen on nags with tails cut short.

The discovery of this curious Catholic devotional title offers additional evidence of Johnson’s wide-ranging literary interests.

NOTE:
I am grateful to Elizabeth Brickhouse for the translations from Spanish cited in this piece.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:
Villegas is depicted in the lower right of The Holy Family with Saints and the Master Alonso de Villegas, 1589, an oil painting by the Spanish painter Blas del Prado, held by the Prado Museum in Madrid.

— MATTHEW DAVIS
Aspects of Samuel Johnson collects earlier and new essays on Johnson’s varied achievements in lexicography, poetry, narrative, and prose style. It considers Johnson’s uses of the general and the particular as they relate to the reader’s role in the creative process, his complex approach to the concept of literary genre, and his resolutely un-Humean view of skepticism. It examines the ways in which Johnson’s reputation as a critic and biographer was challenged and affirmed after his death, and it demonstrates that Johnson was known and admired in eighteenth-century France until Boswell’s portrait of Mr. Oddity replaced Dictionary Johnson. The book concludes with four essays concerning the vexed controversy regarding Johnson and Jacobitism and Johnson’s political affiliation in Hanoverian Britain. Aspects of Samuel Johnson consolidates old ground and breaks new ground during the 250th anniversary of the appearance of his Dictionary of the English Language.

About the Author: Howard D. Weinbrot is Ricardo Quintana Professor of English and William Freeman Vilas Research Professor in the College of Letters and Science, the University of Wisconsin, Madison.
On The Trail of Early Rambler and Idler Translations in France and Spain

How many readers did Johnson reach via translation in the 1750s and 1760s? Fleeman’s Bibliography of Samuel Johnson documents translations of complete series or selections of Rambler and Idler for publication in French, German, and Dutch books, but does not—with one exception—record essays appearing in Continental periodicals. The exception is known to have existed because it gave rise to a retranslation back into English: the 15 June 1754 number of the Gray’s Inn Journal, edited by Arthur Murphy, featured a rendering into English of a rendering into French of Rambler 190.¹ The intermediate source, which has never been identified, was in all likelihood an anonymous fifteen-page fiction entitled “Morad et Abouzaid, ou la vanité des grandeurs humaines. Histoire Indienne” published in the Journal Étranger’s April 1754 debut number (97-111), edited by Grimm with Rousseau’s assistance.² The French text seems to have been based on either the Folio or James Elphinston’s edition rather than the corrected London duodecimo of 1752,³ though it is considerably embellished⁴ and occasionally departs from the source text. Of these departures the most curious is the replacement of Abouzaid’s pious conclusion to his experiments in making the “choice of life” in accord with his father’s last wishes—“I am con-

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² As I have not been able to compare the Journal Étranger text to Murphy’s, my attribution is based on the first sentence of the retranslation as reported by Piozzi [Anecdotes (1786), 306 n. 1].
³ Where these two editions read “he saw the sun rise with regret, because it forced a new day upon him” and the 1752 duodecimo “he saw with regret the sun rise to force a new day on his eye” (Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vols. 3-5, The Rambler, ed. Walter J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss [1969], 5, 230), the Journal Étranger text has “Avec quel regret ne voyait-il pas le soleil se lever, pour lui donner une journée vide d’occupations?” (101). Further references to the Yale edition are parenthetical.
⁴ Consider the source text’s “As the sons of art departed, muttering threats of perpetual infamy ...” (Yale 5, 233), expanded in the target text to “Les enfants des arts partirent, la honte dans le cœur & les plaintes à la bouche. Le vertueux Abouzaid fut bien-tôt l’objet de leur plus cruelle satire; plus ils avaient de tort avec un bien fauteur respectable, plus ils se hâteraient de le diffamer, pour affoiblir le poids de témoignage qu’il pouvoit porter contre eux. Ils ne voyoient pas qu’en outrageant celui qu’ils venaient d’en- censer; ils ne rendoient méprisables qu’eux- mêmes; & qu’écrire contre son bienfaiteur, c’est faire une profession publique d’ingratitude, qui deshonneur cent fois plus l’auteur que l’accusé” (“Morad & Abouzaid, ou la vanité des grandeurs humaines, histoire Indienne,” Journal Étranger 1 (1754), 110-111).
vinced at last, that there is only one being whom we are sure to please by endeavouring to please him” (Yale 5. 233, n. p)—with “je ferais le bien ... pour me rendre heureux par moi-même: & je ne chercherai plus qu’au fond de mon cœur le bonheur que j’ai vainement cherché parmi tes semblables.”

Appearing in the same number of the same journal is an “Extrait de quelques pièces du Rambler” (183-194), to whose existence I was alerted by Professor Howard Weinbrot, who has been kind enough to share with me his work on Johnson in France. The pièces from Ramblers 1-3, with commentary, were followed in the June 1754 number of the Journal by further “morceaux choisis de l’original avec impartialité” from Ramblers 4-6 (227-235). The Journal version of Rambler 4, on the novel, was in turn the basis of a Spanish translation published in the sixth number of the short-lived Madrid periodical El Noveler0 de los estrados, y tertulias, y diario universal de las bagatelas in 1764. Its first number identifies the author-editor as Don Antonio Ruiz y Minondo, widely taken to be one of the many pseudonyms used by Francisco Nipho, then the most prolific journalist and publisher in Madrid and the first to make his living entirely from his writing. To those working on the Spanish eighteenth century, and on the first great flowering of the periodical press in the 1760s in particular, the Rambler 4 retranslation will fit neatly into literary histories stressing the scope and importance of French mediation in the reception of English writing. There is, however, what appears to be an unmediated translation from the English in the fourth number of El Noveler0, of Idler 102, first published in March 1760, on writers’ unwillingness to engage in autobiography. If the translation is direct—and I would welcome help from News Letter readers in identifying an intermediate source—it changes the history of Spanish periodicals, and pre-dates other direct translations of English literary texts by over twenty years. The coincidence of an Idler and a Rambler appearing in the same journal within two weeks of one another may be accidental, but it is tempting to think that the Noveler0 translator was drawn to one work by Johnson after having read the other. Without knowledge that the Idler and Rambler had been written by the same man, the connection could not have been made; and such knowledge was not facilitated by the

5 “Morad & Abouzaid” (1754), 111.
6 “Aviso importante para la gente, que anda en la Maroma de la Poesía de última Fabriza,” El noveler0 de los estrados, y tertulias, y diario univerusal de las bagatelas 6 (1764), 227-231.
7 “Aviso sobre un asunto de particular importancia para la Literatura,” El novelero de los estrados, y tertulias, y diario universal de las bagatelas 4 (1764), 164-171.
Journal, which antedates the Idler and never gives Johnson’s name.

In attempting to trace intermediate sources for the Novelero translations I came across further examples of French-language translations of Ramblers. Numbers 15 and 18 were selected for translation early in 1751, one full year before Johnson composed the two-hundred-and-eighth and final essay, in the Petit Réservoir, contenant un variété de faits historiques et critiques, le Littérature, de Morale et de la Poésie, published at the Hague. The Réservoir promised its readers letters “dans le génie du Spectateur Anglois,”8 though it chiefly comprised extracts of works by Montesquieu, Voltaire (then Potsdam based), and Fontenelle. Sgard reports that the Rambler was the foremost source of translated materials. The tables of contents for all five volumes, published on-line by a research group at the Université de Poitiers, confirm this: the two Ramblers, indexed under the titles “Le Rambler, ou le Furet, sur la passion du Jeu” (Vol. 4, 225-234) and “Le Rambler, ou le Furet sur les causes du Bonheur ou du Malheur dans les Mariages” (Vol. 4, 273-282) form the only series (albeit a very short one) of writings by a non-French-language author; and Johnson was, with Hume, the only English source.9 Appearing in translation in Petit Réservoir No. 75 (225-234), under the heading “Réflexions et Lettres Traduites de l'Anglois du Rambler,” without its original motto (by Juvenal), Rambler 15 comprises a brief introduction to the “fatal passion for cards and dice” (Yale 3: 80), considered psychologically, and two letters from fictional correspondents, one from a young woman obliged to gamble, to her disadvantage, by an older relative, and the other by an anonymous compulsive gambler. The latter has sometimes been attributed to David Garrick (Yale 3: xxi n. 1), though it does not conform to the usual pattern of revising texts he did not write very lightly. The Petit Réservoir translator removes some of Johnson’s or Garrick’s roughness, omitting, for example, the reference to two little brats, and smooths out the irony implicit in the correspondent’s calling herself a scholar, which is rendered as merely “écolière.”

The early French Rambler 18, “Du Bonheur ou du Malheur dans les Mariages”10 complements a disquisition on gendered viewpoints with a series of short fictional character portraits of married men and women. Mr. Rambler’s second appearance on the Conti-

10 Petit Réservoir 78 (1751), 273-282.
Notes and Queries

nent, then, is an interesting self-authorization (interesting because, like nearly everyone and everything in Johnson, it later mines its own foundations) whose rendering in French exactly captures the Addisonian genealogy of Johnson's editorial persona:

\[\ldots j'ai essayé de me mettre au fait de ces Griéfs dont tout le monde se plaint; je me suis imposé la loi de me dépouiller de tout l'esprit de parti, de me placer entre les deux Sexes comme n'appartient ni à l'un ni à l'autre, \& comme ayant embrassé une neutralité parfaite.\]

Neutrality, if only a pretence and so fraught with self-deception, allows a discussion of sexual politics to take a new course and elicit a series of challenges from fictional correspondents, some of them deliberately androgynous. That this inscribes these translated *Ramblers* in the greater European *querelle des femmes* is self-evident.

At some point in 1752, a Frankfurt-based translator and publisher, James de la Cour, issued *The Rambler ou Le Rôdeur*, a hitherto unnoticed French translation of selected essays of which a single copy has survived in the University of Halle Library near Leipzig. As the last number of *The Rambler* was issued on 16 March 1752, there is a reasonable chance that this second French translation of material from the original series was issued before the *Rambler* had reached its final number. The selection of eight *Ramblers*—Nos. 17, 19, 21, 24, 28, 29, 32, and 44—was issued as a weekly single-essay eight-page periodical, on consecutive Saturdays, under the initial title *The Rambler ou continuation du Spectateur anglais*. Unknown to De la Cour (as it was to nearly everyone until 1762), the last of these papers, an elaborate dream-allegory, was penned by another hand, Johnson's friend the poet and translator Elizabeth Carter. A title page affixed to the series reads *The Rambler ou Le Rôdeur; Traduit de l'anglois par James de la Cour*. A six-month run was foreseen, which would have entailed some twenty-four to twenty-six papers; notices printed at the end of No. 4 (Johnson's No. 24) and No. 6 (No. 29) suggest that the publisher

11 *Petit Réserveur* 78 (1751), 274.

12 The only indication of provenance is a book stamp reading "Bibliotheca Ponickaviana." The Ponickaviana collection was begun by Johann August von Ponickau (1718-1802), open to the public in Dresden from the 1760s to 1789, in Wittenberg (as part of the university) from 1789, and in Halle (again, as part of the university) from April 1823. Beginning in 1835 the Ponickaviana collection benefited from funds earmarked for further acquisitions, which were in the main antiquarian. The absence of an entry for this copy in the resulting nineteenth-century records suggests that von Ponickau owned it and that it was part of the donation he made in 1789. I am grateful to Conny Hödt of the Halle University Library information service for information concerning von Ponickau and his books.
hoped to ensure a profit by soliciting advance sales by post. The former notice, which promises that “Ces feuilles … vont devenir plus curieuses,” might be read as a response to an initially lukewarm reception. Oddities in content and form in the last three of the eleven issues of de la Cour’s Rambler bear the hallmarks of a publisher attempting to shore up a lagging enterprise. Though the English title was retained (in an abbreviated form), the series grew increasingly miscellaneous, taking in “Reflexions, & Maximes sur la Bienséances des Dames” (65-74, comprising No. 9 and two pages of No. 10), a “Discours sur l’Architecture Civile” (75-81, spread across Nos. 10 and 11), “Pensées diverses” (81-83), and two poems (rounding out the six-page final issue), none of which is a translation or adaptation of a Rambler. For three issues, then, this Rambler was not the Rambler.

The preceding eight numbers—that is, the translations themselves—are extracted from but four months of the paper’s two-year run, from May to August 1750. The translator’s copy-text may be identified from an important correction Johnson made to Rambler 24 when editing the collection for publication in six duodecimo volumes in 1752. In this instance, as in others, the translator follows the text as originally published in the London semweekly folio, as the following table suggests:

\[\text{Fleeman 50.3R/1a:} \ldots \text{when [a man] bewilders his understanding in uncertain hypotheses and harrasses his faculties with needless subtilities, when he spends his life in calculating the weight of the terraqueous globe} \ldots \text{(Yale 3: 131 n. f)}\]

\[\text{Fleeman 50.3R/4a:} \ldots \text{when [a man] bewilders his understanding in uncertain hypotheses, and harrasses his faculties with needless subtilities; when he lavishes his hours on the weight of the terraqueous globe} \ldots \text{(Yale 3: 131 n. f)}\]

\[1752 \text{De la Cour translation:} \ldots \text{lorsqu’il égare son esprit dans les Hypotheses, ou suppositions incertaines, & tourmente ses facultés dans les subtilités inutiles, lorsqu’il passe sa vie dans le calcul de la pesanteur du Globe terrestre.}^{13}\]

This circumstance allows for an account of the venture (albeit a speculative one) to be constructed. De la Cour, an exact contemporary of Johnson’s, was an Irish-born literary journeyman who had published in the Gentleman’s Magazine in the mid-1730s. By 1742 he seems to have been in Switzerland, where he published a comparative French-English grammar for learners, as well as works of

\[13 [\text{Samuel Johnson}, \text{The Rambler ou Le Rôdeur}, \text{trans. James de la Cour (1752), 26-27}. \text{Further references to this text are parenthetical.}]\]
popular scientific, medical, and conduct literature, among them translations from the English. Beginning in 1744 his works were issued from Frankfurt, where he apparently posed as a Huguenot Breton. One of his first ventures there, in 1744, was a miscellany of French translations from the London press, including the Craftsman, the Gentleman’s Magazine, Common Sense, the Westminster Journal, and the London Magazine. In print it is not known to have seen more than two issues, but in the same year De la Cour first undertook the publication of periodical manuscript miscellanies or nouvelles à la main, which also drew on English sources. Designed, as were all such periodicals, to flout the French press censorship system, they survived in various forms until 1757, attained considerable circulation, and were even advertised in one of De la Cour’s print publications. The printed French Rambler may very well have grown out of these “English Papers,” for the working up of which De la Cour, in clearinghouse fashion, kept himself abreast of the English, French, German, and Dutch press, in search of the sort of novel items he felt his readers craved:

Vous êtes ennuyé de ces faits ordinaires que vous racontent deux fois par semaine ces petits ministres que vous entretenez en Europe; il vous faut du singulier et des nouvelles suprenantes.

If the English sources for the surviving manuscript journals in the De la Cour archival collection at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek were to be identified, our knowledge of the diffusion of English journalism—including Johnson’s—on the continent at mid-century would benefit incalculably.

As De la Cour maintained the English title Rambler, it is reasonable to imagine that the Rambler’s notoriety in England had spread to the Continent through the very media De la Cour personified. It may be that he could not trust that the Rambler would sell itself and, to make his own venture attractive to such Francophone readers as had heard little more than the title Rambler, he added a subtitle (“continuation du Spectateur anglais”) associating the text with the prestige of an English original which had

17 Quoted in François Moureau, “Les Nouvelles à la main dans le système d’information de l’ancien régime,” 130 n. 83.
spawned an eponymous genre all over Europe. He must have possessed or believed he could obtain enough *Ramblers* for a six-month run, but the periodical petered out in its third month. Four reasons for its demise suggest themselves. Firstly, the edition was marred by inconsistencies of presentation and content. Things began to go awry in No. 3 (Johnson’s No. 21), which could not be squeezed into eight pages without an unsightly change to a smaller typeface midway down the last page (*The Rambler ou Le Rôdeur, traduit de l’anglois*, 24). No. 5 (Johnson’s No. 28) spilled over into No. 6; lack of space, no doubt, compelled De la Cour to omit the concluding paragraph. Then again, the failure to garner enough subscribers might be put down to readers’ distaste for De la Cour’s product. Alternately, it might reflect trouble distributing the French-language *Ramblers* to the appropriate markets. Finally, the shift to extraneous materials in No. 9 may be indicative of a failure to obtain further numbers of the English source text. Whatever the case, the speed with which the *Rambler* crossed over into French is only comparable, in its period, to works by Richardson and Sterne.

If anything, De la Cour’s selection of *Ramblers* emphasizes the quality of secular sermons for which the series has, rightly or wrongly, always been famous. Fully one half of the chosen source texts are discourses on psychological mechanisms, ranging from a writer’s hopes for or responses to fame (*The Rambler ou Le Rôdeur, traduit de l’anglois* 3, 17-24; Johnson’s No. 21) to the risk of self-delusion inherent in stoicism (*The Rambler ou Le Rôdeur, traduit de l’anglois* 7, 49-56; Johnson’s No. 17); less numerous are the short, fictional portraits featuring narrative; and literary criticism is absent, despite the considerations of theory, rather than specific works, in some of the essays, of which *Rambler* 4 is the best known example. Paraphrasing, insertions, modifications, and deletions are surprisingly infrequent in the target texts. Indeed, De la Cour is nearly consistent in following Johnson’s paragraphing. Such changes as there are generally favor a less formal tone. Accordingly, Johnson’s Latin commonplaces are dropped, their English glosses being rendered into French instead; and Johnson’s

> It is recorded of some eastern monarch, that he kept an officer in his house, whose employment it was to remind him of his mortality, by calling out every morning, at a stated hour: “Remember, prince, that thou shalt die.” (Yale 3: 92)

is translated as

> On dit qu’un certain monarque d’Afrique gardoit chés lui un officier, donc l’emploi étoit de le faire ressouvenir qu’il n’étoit
pas immortel, en l’èveillant tous les matins à une certaine heure, il lui disoit: Souviens toi, Prince, que tu dois mourir. (The Rambler ou Le Rôdeur, traduit de l’anglois, 1)

Additions to the text, such as “& nous engager à mener une vie heureuse” (The Rambler ou Le Rôdeur, traduit de l’anglois, 2), added to Johnson’s “the utmost efficacy to the just and rational regulation of our lives” (Yale 3: 92), similarly familiarize the sometimes scholastic tone of the early Ramblers.

Taken together, these discoveries raise the question of Johnson’s and Mr. Rambler’s fame on the Continent in the 1750s and 1760s, where they came together, and where they diverged. Johnson’s reception history, precisely because it has been so minimally researched, falls outside the literary historical employments lately and impressively challenged by Philip Smallwood; and no doubt it would not surprise Smallwood to learn that a leading dieciochista has singled out the translated Rambler 4 for its “ideas altamente renovadoras de la concepción de los géneros y del concepto de imitación.” Whether or not similar judgments will apply in other cases and in other languages, I suspect that patient page-turning, especially of periodicals, will turn up a great deal more translated Johnson.

—JOHN STONE

Johnson on Smoking

The Dutch are fond of draughts, as they are of smoking, of the sedative influence of which, though he himself never smoked, he had a high opinion (Boswell, Life 1: 317). Burke agreed that “Tobacco is the delight of Dutchmen, as it diffuses a torpor and pleasing stupefaction” (Sublime and Beautiful, 2nd edn, 1759, introduction, p. 13).

On 19 August 1773, Johnson asserted, “Smoking has gone out,” adding this anticipation of the passive smoking lobby: “It is a shocking thing, blowing smoke out of our mouths into other people’s mouths, eyes, and noses, and having the same thing done to us.” However, he concluded, “I cannot account, why a thing which requires so little exertion, and yet preserves the mind from total vacuity, should have gone out” (Life 5: 60). Johnson’s animadversions nicely prefigure those passed by Auric Goldfinger in Ian Fleming’s novel: “Smoking I find the most ridiculous of all the varieties of human behaviour and practically the only one that is against nature. Can you imagine a cow or any animal taking a mouthful of smouldering straw then breathing in the smoke and blowing it out through its nostrils? Pah! It is a vile practice.” I fancy that Fleming himself (a chain-smoker, like his James Bond) actually preferred the rhapsodies of Compton Mackenzie’s Sublime Tobacco (1957).

Boswell’s own catalogue of carnal pleasures in his London Journal seems to exclude the weed. And, after meeting Johnson, one might expect him to abstain in imitation of his hero, as neo-Nazis tend not to smoke because Hitler did not. He does, though, remark of his attendance (21 September 1769) at a London club that “Some of us smoak a pipe,” but whether this includes himself is not absolutely clear. Johnson did not write about smoking in his periodical essays, unlike Addison (Spectator 72, 23 May 1711) on the heroic puffing at the Everlasting Club with some members managing “100 pipes at a sitting,” or Goldsmith joking in his Clubman essay (Lloyd’s Evening Post, 25-27 January 1762) on smoking-mania with his invention of such characters as Mr. Smokeum. Had smoking (not even in the index of Lisa Picard’s Dr. Johnson’s London, 2000) gone out? When for that matter did it come in? Pipes were first manufactured in London around 1570, an innovation obviously responding to Raleigh’s importation of
tobacco. John Aubrey says that when Sir Walter lit up, “the ladies would retire.” Another quick consequence was its literary debut as “Divine Tobacco” in Spenser’s Faerie Queene (3.5.32 f.).

Johnson’s “smoked in kitchens, or in auctions sold” (Vanity of Human Wishes, line 82) may say something. His “Life” of Philips (d. 1701) claims that poet was addicted to tobacco and always “found an opportunity of celebrating the fragrant fume.” Another bard, Thomas Warton (1728-1790), recalled in his “Progress of Discontent” that at Oxford, “When calm around the common-room,/ I puff’d my daily pipe’s perfume.” Elizabeth Teft (1747; reprinted in Roger Lonsdale’s Eighteenth-Century Women Poets, 1988) poetically charts the smoker’s common progress from nauseated experiment to happy addiction. Tennyson in his day would take at least twenty pipes a day, whilst Charles Lamb’s answer to Samuel Parr’s query as to how he contrived to smoke so much deserves commemoration: “I toiled after it, Sir, as some men toil after virtue.”

One of Thomas Gray’s earliest letters (no. 3, to Horace Walpole, 17 November 1734), admitting he was odd man out, exorciated the fog in Cambridge common-rooms: “I labour thro’ clouds of smoke, with as much pains as Milton’s poorer Devil took, when he travel’d through Chaos.” He prefaced this epistle with a single Greek hexameter, Panta konis kai panta pios kai panta tobakko (All is dust and all is pie and all is tobacco), a parody of Glycon in the Greek Anthology (10.124), fully discussed in my essay “On Some Greek and Latin Poems by Thomas Gray” (International Journal of the Classical Tradition 1 [1994], pp. 71-88). His ending is a pun on Bacchus, playing with the popular etymology (developed in the Latin epic Hymnus Tabaci by Raphael Thorius, d. 1625) which made that god the discoverer of tobacco. He featured prominently in advertisements for it in Gray’s time; Mackenzie (Sublime Tobacco, p. 186) furnishes detailed examples. The witty classicist Richard Porson suggested that a communal tobacco box in Trinity College be Greekly inscribed To Bacchus (cf. Mackenzie, p. 198). Furthermore, if the Cambridge puffers were using such stuff as Latakia dust, attested for various periods (Mackenzie, pp. 49, 67, 240), not forgetting the normal residue of pipes, Gray’s konis (dust) gains extra points.

Richard Graves (Senilities [1801], p. 291) harks back to a fumitory paradise: “On a publick day, 1743, on my scrupling to take a pipe, his Grace (the Duke of Devonshire) observed, ‘They were good times, when the Clergy smoked tobacco.’” Hill-Powell (Boswell, Life 5: 478) adduce a reference which I cannot check to A. Clark’s edition (1891-1900) of Anthony à Wood’s Oxford chronicles (1: 632) to the obsolescence of smoking at Oxford in 1773, the
year of Johnson’s pronouncement. H.D. Best (Literary Memorials [1829], p. 279) laments, “Our smoking rooms were turned into powdering closets. A coat tainted with the fumes of tobacco was a title of exclusion from good company. Nobody smokes now.”

This same Best, though, attests to its recovery during the Napoleonic Wars: “Military glory and smoking became the fashions of the days; and the tobacco-pipe is re-established in all its glory” (p. 280). This French note is suggestive, the first English mention of “Cigarette” being in L.S. Costello’s Pilgrimage to the Auvergne (1842), where this new smoking pleasure is said to be fashionable amongst French ladies.

Two factors in the periodic declines of smoking will have been Walpole’s stiff increase in the excise duty (1734), described by Kipling as resulting in “Brandy for the Parson, ‘Baccy for the Clerk,” and the health issue. In smoking’s early days, it was vigorously promoted as a panacea for all ailments by such medics as Leonardo Fioravanti (1517-1588) and Niccolo Monardes, the former averring, “Everybody should make use of tobacco, the plant revealed this century for human health through the goodness of God.” On the other side, Dr. Thomas Trotter (1760-1832) worried over its effects, whilst the non-medical Sir John Hill (1716-1775) connected snuff-taking with nasal cancer (for these and other pertinent sentiments, see J. Goodman, Tobacco in History: The Cultures of Dependence [1993], also R. Harris & J. Hatton, Murder a Cigarette: The Smoking Debate [1999].

The most powerful twentieth-century anti-smoking lobby was Hitler’s, the first one to denounce the effects of passive smoking (see R.N. Proctor, The Nazi War on Cancer [1999]). In that same era, I remember my British doctor encouraging smoking because “It blows the germs out of your system.” It is amusing at worst, salutary at best, during the current anti-tobacco climate, to recall these historical ebbs and flows in smoking theory. To end on an impeccably fair-minded note, I offer this ditty from 1597 quoted in Francis Grose’s Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue (3rd ed., 1796): “Tobacco hic will make you well if you be sick. Tobacco hic if you be well will make you sick.”

—BARRY BALDWIN
Classic-al Comments

Nowhere does Johnson’s classicism shine through more brightly than in some of his most celebrated bons mots. This is not to cry plagiarism, against which Boswell (Life I.334) vehemently defends him, but rather what the Scot himself calls “a casual coincidence with other writers, or an adoption of a sentiment or image which has been found in the writings of another, and afterwards appears in the mind as one’s own.” Boswell, of course, was writing in blissful ignorance of 20th-century notions of intellectual property. He is himself here an example of this very thing, since Johnson on the subject of Roman literature, especially Horace and Virgil, had decreed in his Rambler (No. 143), “The Criterions of Plagiarism,” that “Not every instance of similitude can be considered as a proof of imitation, so not every imitation ought to be stigmatised as plagiarism.”

Thus, his definition of a second marriage as the triumph of hope over experience (Life II.128) is directly inspired by Greek Anthology IX.133, Latinised by himself. The observation at the Oxford Street Pantheon (Life II.169) that “There are many people here who are watching hundreds, and who think hundreds are watching them” is surely owed to Ovid’s “spectatum veniunt, veniunt spectentur ut ipsae” (Ars Amatoria I.99). His advice to a would-be stylist to give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison (Life I. 225, from his “Life” of that poet) is redolent of Horace (Ars Poetica 268-269) “vos exemplaria Graeca, nocturna versate manu, versate diurna”; Callimachus voices a similar sentiment in Greek Anthology IX.507, also known to Johnson. In what Boswell (Life III.341-342) dubs the only discussion he ever had with his hero about sex, he was told, “Were it not for imagination, Sir, a man would be as happy in the arms of a chambermaid as of a Duchess.” More Horace here, the aphorism being inspired by Satires I.2.116-119: “tument tibi cum inguina, num, si/ ancilla aut verna est praesto puer, impetus in quem/ continuo fiat, malis tentigine rumpi ?/ non ego.” His remarks in a letter (21 September 1773) to Mrs. Thrale on the imminence of his sixty-fourth birthday are markedly similar to those of the emperor Augustus in a letter on reaching the climacteric sixty-third year (too long to quote) reproduced by Aulus Gellius, Noctes Atticae XV.7.3—not forgetting the Beatles’ “When I’m 64.” For final example, that necrological jewel about Garrick’s death eclipsing the
gaiety of nations (Life I.87; cf. III.387) originates with Martial’s epigram (XI.13) on the death of the mime Paris, with whose corpse is buried “The delight of the city, the wit of the Nile, the fame of Rome’s theatre, and all the Venuses and Cupids,” this last phrase echoing Catullus III.1. One wonders, indeed, if Boswell caught this allusion when he twitted Johnson, “But why nations? Did his gaiety extend further than his own nation?” This evoked an uncharacteristically lame response: “Why, Sir, some exaggeration must be allowed.”

Others did the same sort of thing. Upon Johnson’s notorious outburst (Life III.290) “I am willing to love all mankind, except an American,” Anna Seward retorted, “Sir, this is an instance that we are always most violent against those whom we have injured,” an emotion appropriated from Tacitus, Agricola 42.3: “proprium humani ingenii est odiose quem laeseris.”

Such subtle classicism might be seen as one way round Lord Chesterfield’s advice (Letters II.4—1751) to his son: “Carefully avoid all Greek or Latin quotations, and bring no precedents from the virtuous Spartans, the polite Athenians, and the brave Romans”; cf. Sir Thomas More, Epigram 220, “Ad Gallum SublegentemVeterum Carmina,” on undue ancient importations.

Quotation works in various ways. I recently saw in one of Britain’s so-called quality newspapers the following piece of wisdom attributed to E.M. Forster: “Read over your compositions, and wherever you meet with a passage which you think is particularly fine, strike it out.” Where, when, and if Forster penned this, I do not know. It is, of course, from Boswell (Life II.237), adduced by Johnson from an old college tutor.

For tasty conclusion, Johnson was especially adroit in his deploying of overt classical tags to comic gastronomic effect, greeting, e.g., the offer of Mrs. Boswell’s marmalade (Life III.108) with “timeo Danaos et dona ferentes,” and refusing (Life V.279) more tea in Scotland with the last verse of Virgil’s third Eclogue, “claudite iam rivos, pueri, sat prata biberunt.” Which prompts me to end this wee offering of food for thought and thought for food before readers echo Johnson’s devastating adieu to Milton’s Paradise Lost—“None ever wished it longer than it is.”

—BARRY BALDWIN
Collectors Corner: Boswell to His Brother

In an item in “Yale Boswell Edition Notes” (JNL, March 2005), Gordon Turnbull discusses Boswell’s letter to his youngest brother David in Spain, written in Edinburgh, November 1776. As yet unpublished, it will make its appearance in the forthcoming Yale Boswell Editions Research Series volume devoted to Boswell’s Family Correspondence.

I was intrigued by this remarkable letter when I first read its description in a Sotheby auction catalogue in 1999. The signal attraction was Boswell’s reiteration, with variations, of his rationale for journal keeping: “I sometimes think one should not live more than he can record, as a merchant should not have more transactions than he can mark in his books.”

I commissioned Christopher Edwards to bid for me but was not surprised that I lost the letter to Quaritch. Underbidder is the predictable fate of those whose pockets lack inordinate depths. I consoled myself with the possibility of examining the letter eventually at what I surmised would be its permanent home—most likely Yale, I thought.

A year later during my annual foraging expedition in London, I walked into Quaritch, where to my amazement a junior associate of the absent Ted Hofmann produced the selfsame letter for my examination. I couldn’t believe that Quaritch had bought it for stock; on second thought, I couldn’t believe that Yale hadn’t snatched it up. In any event, there it was, inviting and available and inevitably bound for my library in Chappaqua where it now resides.

The letter is notable for its length—Boswell fills up every inch of a full folio sheet, recto and verso, 18½ by 15½ inches, folded to four pages. Originally it was folded further to form a self-envelope, the address panel measuring 3½s by 4½s inches, the red wax seal intact, approximately 1½ inches in diameter.

At the outset, after the obligatory apology for not writing sooner, Boswell writes that he has an hour before dinner to complete the letter but predicts that “the greatest part of it shall be done before the broth comes up.” When he signs off, more than 2000 words later, one assumes that the soup was cold.

The thrust of the letter is Boswell’s affectionate entreaty to his brother to come home from Valencia and renew his familial ties. Many subjects are covered running the gamut from highly personal to neighborhood gossip. A sampling follows:
Johnsonian News Letter

...my wife was on the 15th current safely delivered of a son who is named David after her Father Lainshaw, and you may believe that the name is still more valuable that it has been borne by so many Lairds of Auchinleck; and by you, my dearest brother.

My father has been sadly offended at my going to London without consulting him; and was at first quite black towards me. But by degrees he grew pretty well. I was wrong in writing to you that he grows more morose by age. It is only more callous.

To tell you the truth I am not prudent as I ought to be. I do not sufficiently curb my vivacity and humour; and therefore though I have advanced high in the line of company, I fear I might have been more solidly benefited, had I had more restraint. Do you know I dread my becoming the Head of the Family as too much for me. I believe I must force a habit of reserve, without which there cannot be respect.

I saw poor John in May. I walked with him in the garden belonging to the house where he is lodged. He never opened his mouth to say one word though I tried him with many topicks. He was as if he had been walking in his sleep. I sometimes fear being in the same way, though I am now quite well.

David Hume Esq. died last autumn. I saw him not long before he died, and was shocked with his persisting or appearing to persist in infidelity. What a poor thing is our existence and what pitiful creatures are we if there be no other state than this! I hope my dear David your piety is never impaired.

A unique attribute of the letter is Boswell's use of musical notation to provide his brother with the melody of a song, "Apples and Oranges." I shared this with Morris Brownell in 2003, who replied that up to then he had "not a clue about the tune until we received your letter."

I have several other Boswell letters, each special in its own way, but this one is Boswellissimus. When I put my collection up for sale in 2006, I know that it will be one of the most desirable items. (Institutions and affluent individuals may request a list by email—billaandjerry@optonline.net).

I am already several hundred books and manuscripts into my new collection of the poets around Auden, a field, unlike Johnson and his circle, in which material is actually available on the open market. Onward and... whatever.

—GERALD M. GOLDBERG
Joshua Reynolds: 
The Creation of Celebrity

Palazzo dei Diamanti, Ferrara, 12 February—1 May 2005; Tate Britain, 26 May—18 September 2005.\(^1\)

Sir Joshua returned to London this past summer, and to my eyes, at least, he never looked better. Handsomely ensconced in the exhibition rooms of Tate Britain—which also, to my eyes, never looked better—were seventy of his paintings, supplemented by a selection of mezzotints after his pictures, statues of the artist by Ceracchi, Flaxman, and Foley, and a lavishly illustrated catalogue. The exhibition was curated by the Tate’s Martin Postle, who wrote most of the catalogue entries and one of the four introductory essays (the others are by Tim Clayton, Stella Tillyard, and Mark Hallett, who also wrote several of the entries).

Reynolds never looked better largely because there was less of him to look at than in the grand, retrospective exhibition staged at the Royal Academy in 1986. I mean this both as a compliment and as a critical judgment. A critical judgment because the smaller selection of his portraits—and only his portraits were on view—meant that his viewers missed much of the repetitiveness of his work as a portraitist, most of the fading that has afflicted his pigments, and all of his work as a history-painter, a genre in which few would argue his success. A compliment, on the other hand, because this more intimate exhibition included paintings that were almost uniformly of high quality, hung only seven to thirteen in any given room, and mounted on walls that had been painted in a succession of vibrant Georgian colors that showed both the pictures and their frames off to great advantage. The tighter focus also produced greater drama, and it led—at least in my mind—to a renewed admiration for Reynolds as a painter, even though the exhibition’s focus on “celebrity” was intended (in the words of the museum’s press release) to reveal Reynolds as “an impresario, a skilled networker, and a master of spin.”

\(^1\) Richard Wendorf’s full review-essay on the exhibition and catalogue will appear in the next issue of The Age of Johnson.
I should be the last to object to these characterizations of Reynolds, for I actually wrote an entire monograph on this subject, but I'm not convinced that this is the "key aspect" of his achievement. I would put the argument rather differently, beginning with Edmund Burke's famous judgment that Sir Joshua was the first Englishman to add "the praise of the elegant Arts to the other Glories of his Country." This he achieved, in large measure, through his presidency of the Royal Academy and the fifteen discourses he delivered to the institution's students, associates, and academicians. But just as important, of course, was his own work as an artist, particularly his ability to raise the genre of portraiture by fusing it to the ambition and iconography of history-painting. The result could occasionally be obscure or inept—and sometimes both, as in his unfortunate portrayal of Dr. James Beattie: The Triumph of Truth—but more often than not his ability to choose the most appropriate pose and attributes for his sitter enabled him both to elevate his subject (within appropriate limits) and to reveal the most important aspects of his sitter's accomplishments and character. He painted a succession of beauties, for example (so did everyone else), but his portraits are rarely skin-deep. Nelly O'Brien with a dog in her lap (or Kitty Fisher about to dissolve Cleopatra's pearl in a cup of wine) is at once a living, breathing specimen of female beauty, an archetype of intelligent sensuality, and someone whose playfulness and company the painter himself obviously enjoyed. Reynolds was, in short, the greatest conceptual artist of the eighteenth century.

But was he also more (or less) than that? More (or less) in the sense that Reynolds was able to blend the work of the hand with that of the mind—that he was as adept, in other words, in applying paint to canvas as he was in envisioning Mrs. Hale as Euphrosyne or in wrapping Giuseppe Baretti around his book? The evidence marshaled in this exhibition proves—to my eyes, at least—that this was usually the case. From the self-portraits hanging in the first gallery to the theatrical depictions of Mrs. Siddons, Omai, and Master Crewe in the final room of the exhibition, one witnessed an extraordinary display of manual dexterity (sometimes subtle, sometimes forceful) ranging from the Rembrandt-esque chiaroscuro of so many of the early pictures to the kinetic energy of The Archers and the baroque transfiguration of Mrs. Billington. The placement of an oil sketch of Omai next to Reynolds's famous portrait of the aristocratic Polynesian provides a rare glimpse, moreover, of how the painter built up the contours and expression of the face, features that would be more politely molded in the final portrait.

Many of Reynolds's best-known images of Johnson and his circle
were enhanced by Postle's felicitous decision to bring them back together again in two of the exhibition's eight galleries. One, devoted to "The Streatham Worthies," included Goldsmith, Baretti, Johnson, Burke, Charles Burney, Hester Thrale and Queeney, and Reynolds himself; the other, with a nod to Pope's "Temple of Fame," presented Walpole, Boswell, Garrick, Selwyn, Gibbon, Ferguson, Sheridan, Sterne, Messrs. Huddesford and Bampfylde, and the irrepressible Mary Monckton. It was, as Boswell once exclaimed, "mighty good stuff," and our hats should be off to Martin Postle and his designers, Liza Fior and Carolina Thorbert, for recapturing much of the magic that Reynolds's contemporaries surely experienced when they visited his gallery in Leicester Fields, the Thrales at Streatham, or the Royal Academy's new quarters in Somerset House.

—RICHARD WENDORF

Jack Lynch and Anne McDermott, eds.: 
Anniversary Essays on Johnson's Dictionary


The year 2005 marks the 250th anniversary of the publication of Johnson's Dictionary. To celebrate the event, Jack Lynch and Anne McDermott have edited a collection of essays on the Dictionary with the primary aim of encouraging further research on Johnson's work. Their methods for achieving this aim are twofold. First, they have included articles in their collection that are models of scholarly argument in themselves and that are sure to promote further inquiry into the specific topics addressed. Second, they have solicited essays from scholars from a wider range of disciplines than have ever before been represented under the cover of a single volume on the Dictionary. The result is a wholehearted success. No matter how future students of Johnson respond to the arguments made in the individual essays, the essays themselves, as well as the conversations they inspire collectively, represent advancements of erudition about the Dictionary by which Johnson himself would have been impressed—and, undoubtedly, gratified.

While the fourteen essays in this edition address a wide range of topics, those topics cohere loosely around three larger, omnibus issues relating to Johnson's work. The essays that address related
issues are grouped together to foreground their shared interests, even though the groups are not formally identified as such in the table of contents. The first four essays, by Ian Lancashire, Howard Weinbrot, Nicholas Hudson, and the late Paul Korshin, revolve either narrowly or widely around the question of how and in what sense the Dictionary is a political text. The essays by Weinbrot and Hudson center most explicitly on this question, with Weinbrot and Hudson substantially in agreement that the partisan politics to be found in the body of Johnson’s work are confirmedly moderate. Weinbrot’s argument centers on his common-sensical observation that any increase in the numbers of quotations from the works of High Churchmen such as Robert South between the first edition and the fourth, of 1773, would hardly have been noticed by readers except through what Johnson himself called “nice collation”; and he notes that in any case, Johnson’s use of such quotations, in both the first edition and the fourth, were generally modified to emphasize “broadly acceptable Christian commonplaces” (55). Hudson’s argument centers on his claim that common portrayals of Johnson as either a rabid Tory or a liberty-loving man of the people have oversimplified the political context in which Johnson produced his work. This context, Hudson argues, is distinguished by the rise of the “Broad-bottom” coalition of “previously proscribed Tories... devoted to the promotion of national interest over party interest,” and to the promotion of men of merit over political favorites (62). The politics underpinning the other two essays in the first group, by Ian Lancashire and Paul Korshin, might be more properly described as the eighteenth-century politics of class and nation, and the twenty-first century politics of reading, rather than the partisan politics of Johnson’s time. But they are every bit as important to the long-term history of the Dictionary. Lancashire presents Johnson’s rejection of Chesterfield’s patronage as overturning the relationship between patron, printer, and lexicographer—and the patron-supported preference for calques, or imported foreign terms—that had marked the production of English dictionaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Korshin dismantles some of the myths that have allowed Johnson to be portrayed insistently, even since the rise of serious Johnsonian scholarship in the twentieth century, as a “procrastinating genius,” a bigoted bully, or a “humble, impoverished scholar” (14). Korshin shares with Hudson an acute sense of the ways in which the various myths that have grown up around Johnson have allowed him and his dictionary (as Hudson puts it) to “take on a different ideological hue as illuminated by political lights of different colors” (61).

The six essays in the middle of the collection focus, loosely
speaking, on the internal structure and components of the Dictionary, including its relation to law books (in Ian Stone’s “The Law, the Alphabet, and Samuel Johnson”) and encyclopedias (in Jack Lynch’s “Johnson’s Encyclopedia”). These contributions are notable partly for their thoughtful attention to underexplored topics pertaining to the Dictionary, including its treatment of hyphenated compounds (in Noel E. Osselton’s “Hyphenated Compounds in Johnson’s Dictionary”) and its History and Grammar of the English Language (in Robert DeMaria’s “Johnson’s Extempore History and Grammar of the English Language”). But the articles in this group are perhaps even more notable for their marked multi-disciplinarity: four of them are by literary scholars (Stone, Lynch, DeMaria, and McDermott); one is by a linguist (Geoff Barnbrook); and another is by a working lexicographer (Osselton).

The editors highlight one important point on which the disciplinary orientations of individual scholars can produce radically opposed views of the Dictionary, in fact, by including back-to-back essays on Johnson’s prescriptivism from different sides of the disciplinary aisle: one by Barnbrook (the linguist), entitled “Johnson the Prescriptivist? The Case for the Prosecution,” followed by one by Anne McDermott (a more traditional literary scholar, despite her expansive linguistic and lexicographic expertise), entitled “Johnson the Prescriptivist? The Case for the Defense.” Both writers are well attuned to the nuances of Johnson’s position on this vexed issue. Both realize that at some level, all discussions about Johnson’s prescriptivism entail an assessment of the degree of his commitment to the idea rather than a mere noting of its presence in his work. But Barnbrook finds evidence of Johnson’s prescriptivism in both the intentions stated in the Preface and in Johnson’s lexicographic practice—in the fact that “more than ten percent of the headwords in both [the first and fourth] editions ... contain usage notes of one sort or another” (99). McDermott, on the other hand, presents a Johnson whose commitment to usage shaped his attitude toward etymology and his selection of quotations and that represented, even as Johnson was beginning his work, an effort to back away from the “cloud of prescriptive expectation” that marked his age (114).

Barnbrook’s essay is more direct than McDermott’s, however, in revealing what’s at stake intellectually in framing an assessment of Johnson’s prescriptivism as a legal melodrama, in which Johnson is charged with a “crime” from which he might or might not be exonerated. Barnbrook’s comments indicate that linguists find it harder than literary critics to distance themselves from prescriptivism on historical grounds, even though they recognize the
logic of such a move, because anti-prescriptivism is a moral and methodological imperative of their discipline, even now, in a way that it isn’t for that of the literary critic. While Johnson may not have created the environment in which prescriptivism became both natural and positive among later lexicographers, says Barnbrook, “he colluded with it and, in so doing, helped to change the attitudes of lexicographers and dictionary users, as well as the nature of lexicography, in ways which can only be seen as negative” (110). The desire to “save” Johnson from such denigrations by linguists perhaps underwrites the recurrent efforts of literary Johnsonians to present their hero as ultimately more descriptivist than not. But only a fuller examination of the assumption dear to modern linguists and lexicographers themselves—that dictionaries are authoritative only as registers of language and not as shapers of it—could move the debate staged so dramatically (if genially) in these pages to a more fully trans-disciplinary level. Perhaps this discussion will be advanced by some future study of the ways in which many dictionary users continue to treat dictionaries: as guides to usage on a par with books of manners and other forms of self-help literature, and as authoritative guides to standard speech and writing—whether linguists and lexicographers like it or not. In any case, this may be exactly the kind of inquiry the editors of the Anniversary Essays hoped to inspire with their collection.

The final group of essays in the volume are devoted to the physical nature of the Dictionary itself, both in its first edition folio and in its later editions and formats. Even more than the second group of essays, the third contains examinations of largely under-explored topics, and for this reason alone it contains some of the most exciting work in the collection. In his study, “The Typographic Design of Johnson’s Dictionary,” Paul Luna argues that Johnson’s work “brought together for the first time key conventions for future dictionary presentation” in its treatment of sense divisions and illustrative quotations (193). In “The Dictionary in Abstract,” Catherine Dille examines the two-volume octavo version of the Dictionary that Johnson abridged from the first edition folio—with, Dille argues, the common reader very much in mind. In “Revision and the Limits of Collaboration,” Allen Reddick analyzes annotated, interleaved first edition sheets now housed in the British Library as a way of assessing just how much Johnson’s amanuenses contributed to the Dictionary; he concludes that Johnson’s usual practice was to reject his amanuenses’ suggestions. And in “Hidden Quarto Editions of Johnson’s Dictionary,” R. Carter Hailey describes the textual detective work that led him to unearth the existence of previously unknown printings of the sixth edition of
the Dictionary, unacknowledged and therefore “hidden” editions that were actually improved by a conscientious editor (probably George Steevens). Hailey’s essay is perhaps the most explicit of all these essays in describing the thrill produced by the successful hunt for scholarly enlightenment. But all of them show in fine detail how study of the physical aspects of Johnson’s book can shed a bright and focused light on it. (Their findings beg to be applied to the “prescriptivism” issue.) They also remind the student of the Dictionary that assessing Johnson’s perspective on any of a host of lexicographic matters is inevitably a many-layered process. We are fortunate to have the scholars who have contributed to this part of the collection lead the way in such an effort. Their contributions help make the Anniversary Essays the path-breaking tribute to Johnson that it will no doubt remain for many years.

—ELIZABETH HEDRICK

Jonathan Schneer:
The Thames


Anyone who has traveled to London in recent years has probably noticed that the heart of London seems to have shifted to the Thames River. With the opening of the Shakespearean Globe Theatre and the National Theatre complex, the construction of the Millennium Bridge that delivers one to the splendid Tate Modern, and the presence of the London Eye that circles above Westminster Bridge, the river has donned a new vibrancy. The South Bank teems with strollers on a Sunday afternoon and the river glistens in the evening as if it were staged for a celebration every night.

Jonathan Schneer’s book The Thames is indeed a celebration—not one merely set on the river, but of the river itself. Quoting Dwight D. Eisenhower at the funeral procession of Winston Churchill, Schneer honors the Thames as “a great avenue of history” (291) that one can trace from the time when “Druids prayed to river gods and goddesses” to the construction of the Millennium Dome in 1999. Schneer opens with a discussion of the archaeological findings along the river that point to a hominid presence in the figure of the “Swanscombe woman,” dating back approximately 250,000 years. But the thread of his extensive nar-
rative begins in earnest with the Roman era when the river provided access to a series of invaders: the Romans, the Saxons, the Vikings, and the Normans. Schnee follows the military significance of the Thames through to the Second World War, as the river was transformed from a series of vulnerable docks to a crucial site of defense and a gateway to attacks on Germany and occupied France. Chapters tend to be organized chronologically; however, they are also arranged conceptually. The river is presented as a stage upon which royals played out their magisterial dramas—the grand spectacles of a royal procession or the clandestine intrigues of a royal affair. Schnee interweaves verse that portrays the “frost fairs,” winter festivals held on the frozen Thames, and he describes the first full performance of Handel’s Water Music, which took place on a barge drifting down the river on a July evening in 1717. There are chapters that honor the beauty of the river, such as those on painters who were inspired by the Thames: J.M.W. Turner and his glorious landscapes; Stanley Spencer and his Cookham pastorals. Particularly moving is Schnee’s discussion of Spencer’s painting after he returns from the horrors of World War I; his gentle idealism is transformed to a haunting, agitated modernism. There are also chapters on the darkness of the river: the pollution (particularly fetid during the nineteenth century), the floating prisons of unbearable conditions, and the tragic collision in 1878 of the Princess Alice, a passenger boat, and the Bywell Castle, a large commercial steamer, in which hundreds died. For readers interested in the eighteenth century, Schnee provides a detailed discussion of Richard Parker’s mutinous attempt to establish a republic on the Sandwich, thereby representing the revolutionary impulses of the 1790s. Schnee’s book is at its best in the latter part, when he is telling a story of the river itself and when he draws clear connections between the river and social developments. His description of the devastating floods of 1236, 1663, 1894, and 1953 is riveting, and his explanation of various attempts to tame the river, culminating with the Thames Barrier of the 1970s, is a fascinating story of engineering and politics. The history of the Thames docks, as they change from a site of workers’ unionization and eventual job loss to a “Wall Street on water” with the construction of Canary Wharf, is, finally, one of the most coherent examples of the social, economic, and political impact of the river and its environs.

The span of history that Schnee undertakes is undoubtedly ambitious. One of the consequences of his wide-reaching scope is that some sections of the book (those chapters dealing with the earliest history) seem rather light. One has the sense that a great deal of complicated history lies behind the minimalized picture he has
drawn for us. Additionally, the thread of the narrative seems to meander, dwelling sometimes at length on a particular story, and moving quite quickly over others. Nonetheless, the book is well researched and engagingly written. Vivid historical images resonate throughout, and Schneer is judicious in his historical representations. The book is also beautifully produced. Especially impressive is the quality of reproductions: photographs of London and the plates of paintings by Turner and Spencer. Schneer’s *The Thames* is a pleasure to read, and it leaves one with an appropriate sense of awe for Winston Churchill’s “‘golden thread in the national tapestry’.”

—NANCY JOHNSON

Henry Hitchings:
*Defining the World: The Extraordinary Story of Dr. Johnson’s Dictionary*


Henry Hitchings, in his account of Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary*, tells three stories in roughly equal parts: the story of Johnson’s life leading up to the *Dictionary*; the story of the *Dictionary* itself (which was published in 1755); and the story of a vigorous, vital and self-confident England that is reflected in its pages.

Hitchings tells these stories in thirty-five short chapters, named and arranged in alphabetical order (from “Adventurous” to “Zootomy”). Because each chapter covers a distinct and mostly self-contained story or subject—such as the fashions and pleasures of Johnson’s England (in “Opulence”)—Hitchings tells his bigger story by relating a series of overlapping smaller ones. In doing so, he gives us a rich, full and very satisfying account, and his book has the shimmering, shifting quality of a kaleidoscope.

Hitchings likes to convey atmosphere. He shows us Johnson’s London as a city of literal darkness, of “narrow streets and dark corners, grey fogs and sunless days.” Candles caused fires and smell; houses were heated by burning coal; “soot got everywhere,” and “the proximity of glue-makers, blacksmiths and paintworkshops thickened the air with noxious odours.” He gives us pictures through lists. His list of London streets and neighborhoods is poignant: Cutthroat Lane, Labour in Vain Yard, and Melancholy
Walk. Not all, of course, was darkness. The area around Johnson’s Gough Square house was “densely populated by booksellers, along with a motley assortment of other tradesmen—wig makers, watch makers, mercers and chandlers. . . . The quick pulse of commercialism was matched by a brisk conviviality. There were taverns and coffee houses, chop houses and pie shops. . . .” Although it is no surprise that England’s capital provided plenty of bustle, it is helpful of Hitchings to remind us that the hero of his story, so prone to brooding and depression, had distraction right at his door.

The Dictionary is often thought of as a book of wisdom, primarily because of the 114,000 illustrative quotations that Johnson took from the English authors he thought most exemplary. Hitchings’s focus, however, is not so much on the Dictionary’s timeless wisdom as on the day-to-day experiences (both of Johnson and his countrymen) that shaped and informed it. We see, for example, that Johnson, who contracted scrofula from his wet-nurse, defines “nurse” as “a woman that has the care of another’s child,” and gives this illustrative quotation from Sir Walter Raleigh: “Unnatural curiosity has taught all women, but the beggar, to find out nurses, which necessity only ought to commend.”

Hitchings, who has a lot of ground to cover in relating the circumstances of Johnson’s life, makes at least one disconcerting omission. He tells us that Johnson and his wife Tetty kept a maid at their London home, and to demonstrate the couple’s insularity he writes, “On one occasion, when Tetty’s son Jervis turned up unannounced after a spell at sea, the maid was so unused to dealing with visitors that she neglected to ask him in; when she returned from telling her mistress that Jervis was at the door, he had gone.” And that’s that. But what a stingy way of relating the incident! By contrast, James Clifford, in his Dictionary Johnson, relates a contemporary account: Tetty was “enraptured to hear her son was below, [and] desired the maid to tell him she longed to embrace him. When the maid descended, the gentleman was gone, and poor Mrs. Johnson was much agitated by the adventure: it was the only time he ever made the effort to see her.” Tetty, who died in 1752, had few pleasures in her later years. She sought solace from her lonely existence by reading romances and taking opium. The day that she almost saw her son, and didn’t, must have been terrible for her.

I’d have liked more information, too, on the false starts Johnson made in his work. All we really learn from Hitchings on this point is that Johnson had to scrap eighty notebooks when they became overrun with material. (He had failed to anticipate the many different senses he would find of words, and consequently had not allowed enough space in his notebooks for them.) Greater detail about
Johnson’s early missteps would have been welcome—beneficial, really—as it is valuable to be reminded that the path to success is seldom perfectly straight or uninterrupted. Even if Hitchings had only told us that Johnson wasted £20 worth of paper by writing on both sides of it (rendering it unusable to the printer), we would have had a clearer picture of a stumble, not to mention a valuable reminder that our hero, who was paid a healthy advance by his booksellers (“publishers” to us), but who continually struggled with his household finances, was not immune to the pinch of paper costs.

Johnson had to pay for other things besides paper. For one thing, he had to pay his amanuenses. “It is clear that all six [of them] were accustomed to poverty,” Hitchings writes, “and that Johnson’s decision to employ these particular men was partly motivated by charity.” But poverty did not crush their spirits. The helpers slipped bits of their own poetry into Johnson’s work and added quotations from writers whom Johnson had barred. And in one case they engaged in minor fraud. When Johnson’s productivity lagged and the booksellers threatened to cut off his supplies, he threatened to strike, which led the booksellers to agree to pay him a guinea for each sheet of copy he produced. At this point “one of the amanuenses—most likely the financially desperate Peyton—attempted the feeble trick of slipping extra sheets into the parcels of manuscript that were sent to Strahan’s printing house. Strahan’s workers were not impressed. . . .”

And I ask: When have blank pages given us such a touching picture of human hope?

We eventually meet, of course, the Earl of Chesterfield, the man who Johnson and the booksellers had hoped would furnish their enterprise with money and prestige. Usually the story of Chesterfield and Johnson is a fairly simple one: it is a story of a neglectful patron, a smarting author, and a stunning letter. But Hitchings digs a little deeper. He shows that their conflict was not simply a matter of people not talking to each other (and here I am being metaphorical) but of people who talked past each other. The earl had thought that a proper dictionary should fix and correct the language. Indeed, Hitchings suggests that Johnson announced in his Plan for the dictionary (1747) that he would attempt to correct the language because he wanted to impress his patron. But as Johnson got on with his work, he discovered that he could not fix the language, but only present it as it was, with all of its imperfections. When Chesterfield (who had given Johnson a meager £10) reviewed the Dictionary on the eve of its publication, he focused on its corrective nature, demon-
strating to Johnson, who already felt slighted, that the earl had not carefully read the work he was puffing.

Hitchings’s book is especially entertaining when it relates some of Johnson’s miscues. “Lunch” Johnson defines as “as much food as one’s hand can hold.” A tarantula is “an insect whose bite is only cured by music.” “Defluxion” is a “defluxion.” And (a gem, because of its funny mixture of earnestness and nonchalance) “to swelt” is “to puff in sweat, if that be the meaning.” Also enchanting is Johnson’s treatment of small creatures. A puppet is “a wooden tragedian.” A cat is “a domestic animal that catches mice, commonly reckoned by naturalists the lowest order of the leonine species.” (Johnson’s cat got me to turn to his Dictionary in search of his mouse, which is “the smallest of all beasts; a little animal haunting houses and corn fields, destroyed by cats.”) I do enjoy watching Johnson turn little things over in his big hands. (Boswell felt the same way; see him on Dr. Taylor’s bulldog.)

Johnson’s great Dictionary, Hitchings tells us, “abounds with stories, arcane information, home truths, snippets of trivia, and lost myths. It is, in short, a treasure house.” This statement applies very well to Hitchings’s own book. For those who don’t have the time or energy to wade through Johnson’s sea of words, Hitchings offers us many of its beauties, while enabling us to gaze on the great work from the outside in. We see the Dictionary as the product of an astonishing personality and also of a fascinating set of experiences—of a man and of a people. As I read Hitchings’s book I remembered something that I had only vaguely known before: that I had been waiting to read this story for a long time.

---Peter Kanter

In Brief

Allen Reddick, ed.:  
Samuel Johnson’s Unpublished Revisions to the Dictionary of the English Language


The making of Johnson’s Dictionary of the English Language is one of the great stories in the annals of English literary history. Doubts were raised about Boswell’s fallacious account not long after the publication of his
Life of Johnson, but much of the real story did not come together until it was assembled by Gwin Kolb and James Sledd in Dr. Johnson's Dictionary: Essays in the Biography of a Book (1955). Sledd and Kolb knew of but were not permitted to examine the so-called Sneyd-Gimbel volumes of the Dictionary, the interleaved sheets of a copy of the first edition that Johnson used in making his one major revision of the book in 1773. After years of work by Herman (Fritz) Liebert these volumes finally arrived at the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscript Library at Yale University in 1973. Sledd and Kolb wrote a short addendum concerning them, but the task of examining them minutely and integrating what they tell us into the story of Johnson's Dictionary fell to Allen Reddick. The result was The Making of Johnson's Dictionary, 1746-1773 (1990; rev. ed., 1996). Now, Reddick has turned his attention to another unexamined piece of the puzzle, the so-called "B materials" in a copy of Johnson's Dictionary in the British Library. Sledd and Kolb knew about these 122 pages of the first edition, and they knew that they contained quotations and definitions that never made their way into print. But, here again, it has fallen to Reddick to examine the materials thoroughly and, in this case, to get them into print, rather than just describing them.

The bulk of this volume comprises the 122 pages from Axl—Bys that are filled with Johnson's annotations, including his annotations on material added to the pages by an amanuensis. These are very high quality photographic facsimiles and a pleasure to read, but Johnson's handwriting and the state of the manuscript are such that the equally long and glossy transcription is needed. The transcription also includes notes on the sources of Johnson's illustrative quotations, a feature which brings this volume into concert with the electronic edition of the Dictionary long under preparation at the University of Birmingham. Indeed, as Reddick graciously acknowledges, much of the work was done in collaboration with the Birmingham team, particularly with Catherine Dille, Anne MacDermott, and Graham Nicholls. Reddick's preface and introductory material also puts the B materials in place in the story of Johnson's Dictionary and offers some interesting comments on particular entries. If there is an interpretive lesson to be taken from his findings, it is that, although Johnson had his amanuenses do a great deal of work in locating illustrative quotations and even in augmenting the word list, he nevertheless exercised stringent control over the final form of his book. As a monitor of linguistic usage, Johnson is restrictive, even authoritarian, much as we modern liberals might like to find more liberal tendencies in his life and work. Reddick's account also implicitly
limits the sense in which it is possible to argue that Johnson's work was a cooperative enterprise. Even if one is inclined to disagree with Reddick on these points, the evidence here must be taken into account. Here are 122 more pages of Johnson, beautifully presented, intelligently introduced, and painstakingly annotated. All future studies of the Dictionary will be indebted to this work.

—ROBERT DEMARIA, JR.

Anthony W. Lee:
Mentoring Relationships in the Life and Writings of Samuel Johnson: A Study in the Dynamics of Eighteenth-Century Literary Mentoring


Many biographers have tried in various ways to understand Johnson's psychology. Indeed, the history of Johnsonian biography contains a partial history of psychological explanation. The investigation of Johnson's "melancholy" in the earliest biographies eventually turned into Walter Jackson Bate's Freudian explanations, and in John Wiltshire's works we see, perhaps, the displacement of Freudian ideas by more strictly neurological or chemical explanations of behavior. In Anthony Lee's study of Johnson we see the application of a theory of developmental psychology. The difference of Lee's study is not only in the sort of psychological theory he applies but also in his concern not with Johnson's maladies but with his healthy as well as unhealthy intellectual and personal relationships. To make sense of Johnson's intimate social life Lee uses Daniel Levinson's general psychological study The Seasons of a Man's Life. After describing his method and the concept of mentoring, Lee examines Johnson's key relationships at early, middle, and late stages of his life. His work on the early relationship with Cornelius Ford is particularly interesting because it discusses a formative period in Johnson's life that is little known. Lee also provides engaging chapters on Johnson's better known relationships with Savage, Goldsmith, Thrale, Boswell and Burney. Lee mainly uses biographical information to
put Johnson's life together in Levinsonian terms, but he is also deeply conversant with the works. One chapter is devoted, in fact, to the mentoring relationship that Johnson creates between Imlac and Rasselas. Seeing Johnson's works as containing hidden autobiography is nothing new, but Lee works from a new vantage point and sheds new light on the greatest biographical subject that English literature has ever known.

—Robert DeMaria, Jr.

Richard Wendorf: 
The Scholar-Librarian: Books, Libraries and the Visual Arts


Even Johnsonians who restrict their scholarly reading to works about their hero will find much of interest in this collection of ten essays by Richard Wendorf. Well established as an editor, librarian, and art historian, Wendorf appears herein as an elegant essayist and almost a memoirist. He draws on his intimate experiences with books and works of graphic art and with books as graphic works of art. These intimacies are inextricable from his life, so the term "memoir" fits, though not perhaps in its most fashionable current sense.

William Collins, whom he edited, Piranesi, whom he collects, and Alexander Pope loom large in Wendorf's essays, but Johnson makes frequent appearances, as does Pope's publisher, the man Johnson called his "patron," Robert Dodsley. The essays are delightful and instructive, and the volume would be well worth the purchase if it contained only the final piece, "Abandoning the Capital in Eighteenth-Century London." Continuing the themes of the penultimate essay, "The Secret Life of Type," Wendorf discusses the gradual transition in typographic style from the heavily "marked" page of the seventeenth century, in which nouns are capitalized and proper names often italicized, to the more modern, "decapitated," consistently roman page of the late eighteenth century. Bertrand Bronson posited 1750 as the watershed between the old and the new style of typog-
Johnsonian News Letter

raphy, but Wendorf shows that the landscape of print is littered with exceptions on either side of that date. Further, he suggests that compilations of poetry and collections of knowledge were far more likely to use the new style than independent new publications, particularly those intended for the “trade.” Pope, for example, used the new style in editions for his friends and for afficionados, while at the same time producing trade editions in the old style, with plenty of typographical markings to instruct readers in hearing the poetry with the proper emphases. Dodsley’s Collection of Poems, The Gentleman’s Magazine, and Johnson’s Dictionary are examples of compilations and collections that use the new style. This typographical decision indicates, according to Wendorf, a willingness on the publishers’ parts to rely more confidently on the individual reader’s ability to discern the meaning of a text, and it suggests a wish to convey the sense of a certain uniformity and regularity in the field of knowledge represented at once graphically and verbally on the printed page. This is fascinating reading for lovers of Johnson and lovers of books.

—ROBERT DeMARIA, JR.

Timothy Wilson Smith: Samuel Johnson


This glossy little book contains a nicely written, generally quite accurate life of Johnson and numerous illustrations—photographic color reproductions of the famous portraits of Johnson, of his intimates (including a fine one of Topham Beauclerc) and great figures of the time who influenced literature (including Queen Caroline and George III). Smith gives adequate attention to Johnson’s works while telling the story of his life, and although there is nothing new here for the scholar, there is nothing misleading for the neophyte. This is not quite a sterling example of the short biography extolled by James Atlas as an achievement of British writers that Americans shun (see an excerpt from Atlas’s article, pp. 16-17 above). The book is a bit too much a pastiche of received information and interpretation for that. On the other hand, it is an elegantly written and beautifully illustrated introduction to our hero and his works.

—ROBERT DeMARIA, JR.
"No man can, at the same time, fill his cup from the source and from the mouth of the Nile." — Rasselas
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# Table of Contents

**From the Editor** ......................................................... 4  
**Letter to the Editor**  
  *Albrecht Strauss* .................................................. 6  
**Features**  
  Teaching Samuel Johnson  
    Teaching Johnson to Teach Shakespeare  
    *Aaron Santesso* ............................................. 9  
  Johnsoniana  
    From the Hyde Collection Catalogue  
    *John Overholt* ............................................. 12  
    *New York Times, 28 May 2006*  
    *Adam Potkay* ................................................ 14  
    *New York Times, 30 May 2006*  
    *Ed Schaefer* ................................................ 14  
    *A Tenured Professor*  
    *Joanne Long* ................................................ 15  
    *Passionate Letters of Great Lovers*  
    *Robert DeMaria, Jr.* .................................... 15  
**Reports**  
  Yale Boswell Editions Notes  
    *Gordon Turnbull* ........................................ 17  
  Samuel Johnson Tercentenary (UK)  
    *Nicholas Cambridge* .................................... 22  
  Samuel Johnson Tercentenary (USA)  
    *John Overholt* ............................................ 23  
  The Rothstein Symposium  
    *Anthony W. Lee* ......................................... 24  
  Johnson Society of Australia 13th Annual Seminar ............ 27  
**Notes and Queries**  
  A Proverbial Candle and Johnson's Candlestick  
    *James Battersby* ........................................ 29  
  Why Dr. Johnson was the First Mr. Everyman  
    *Terry I. Seymour* .................................... 40  
  Heritage Book Shop Dictionary  
    *Michael Garabedian* ................................... 44
Book Reviews

Howard D. Weinbrot: Aspects of Samuel Johnson: Essays on His Arts, Mind, Afterlife, and Politics
F. P. Lock .................................................. 46

Freya Johnston: Samuel Johnson and the Art of Sinking, 1709-1791
David F. Venturo ........................................ 50

Tita Chico: Designing Women: The Dressing Room in Eighteenth-Century English Literature and Culture
Chloe Wigston Smith .................................. 52

Arthur H. Cash: John Wilkes: The Scandalous Father of Civil Liberty
John Richetti .............................................. 56

Gwin J. Kolb and Robert DeMaria, Jr.: Johnson on the English Language
OM Brack, Jr. ................................................ 59

Remembrances

Gwin J. Kolb

Robert DeMaria, Jr. ....................................... 61

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A Call For Contributions

The editors of the JNL invite contributions of notes, queries, Johnsoniana, and short articles on any and all matters regarding Johnson and his circle (social, political, and intellectual). Contributions to the March issue are due 22 November; those for the September issue are due 22 May.
From the Editor

"We all live on this condition: that the ties of endearment must at last be broken." This is the philosophical condolence that Johnson offered Mary Cholmondeley on 6 May 1777 on the loss of her son. The reminder is stern but true. We mourn the loss of Gwin Kolb this past spring, and it has been very painful for so many "ties of endearment" to be broken by his departure. He was the best of friends, the best of fathers, and the best of husbands. He was also the best of Johnsonians, and we must take Johnson's philosophy to heart to try and temper our grief. We celebrate Gwin's life in a remembrance (p. 61 below) and in an appreciative book review by OM Brack. On one day between 22 and 25 March 2007 at the annual meeting of the American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies, there will be a special session to honor Gwin. His many generations of students will be there to offer anecdotes and praise and to show how fully Gwin's spirit survives.

We wish to thank Priscilla Gilman for her contributions to the News Letter; she is leaving academic work and her role as associate editor to pursue a career in New York as a literary agent in the firm of Janklow and Nesbit. Priscilla was instrumental in helping the JNL get back on its feet three years ago. We wish her every success as she ventures out into the real world of contemporary Grub Street.

Finally, it is appropriate now to renew our appeal for contributions to the News Letter. This is a cooperative effort, like so many of Johnson’s own productions, and it depends for its success on the contributions of fellow Johnsonians. Contributions can be e-mailed to me at demaria@vassar.edu or mailed to Box 140 Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY 12604. Among the Reports in this issue are announcements of two separate forthcoming celebrations of the 300th anniversary of Johnson’s birth on 18 September 1709. We are eager to hear from others around the world who are planning to mark the occasion. Those who were at the 200th anniversary of Johnson’s death celebrated at Pembroke College in 1984 will remember David Fleeman’s stirring valedictory address. He asked us repeatedly where we hoped to be in Johnsonian studies by the year 2009. It was a call to action—to complete editions and commentaries, to improve our knowledge, to extend accessibility to
the works, and to expand our circles of collegial communication about Johnson. What account shall we give of ourselves? We offer the pages of this journal as a forum where the reckoning can be made and the “ties of affection” strengthened.

Robert D. Maria, Jr.

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JNLJAD
27 February 2006

Dear Bob,

Sharon Gilbert, one of my all-time favorite graduate students, died suddenly and unexpectedly a few weeks ago in Los Angeles, where she had gone after taking her Ph.D. orals in English at Chapel Hill. Her hope was to set out on a career in "writing" (preferably, I believe in Hollywood) while, more or less at the same time, completing her dissertation on James Boswell's journals. Well, I don't really know how successful she was with the first; but there can be no question that eventually she did an outstanding job with the second. Her dissertation was superb—not only extremely perceptive but also (which is even more unusual!) extraordinarily well-written. All this happened a good many years ago. . . .

The enclosed epistle may convey some of that excellence. Short though it may be, would it be of interest, do you think, to the readers of the Johnsonian News Letter? Needless to say, I'd be thrilled to see it in print—now more than ever.

With warm regards always,
Sincerely yours,

ALBRECHT STRAUSS

Herewith is the letter, which indeed readers of this journal will find both interesting and delightful.

December 26, 1989

Dear Dr. Strauss,

Hope your family will have a healthy, happy new year with none of the rude shocks and scares of the previous one!

Just wanted you to know I joined the Southern California Johnson Society. They had a huge elegant dinner. First thing you
know, the speaker of the evening gave a lecture attacking Boswell!!!

ANYWAY—the lecture was everything you taught me a scholarly paper should not be. Not only did the guy give unsubstantiated arguments, he never pre-considered any possible objections to his thesis. The lecture basically said that when Boswell claimed he was reproducing Johnson’s conversation, he couldn’t possibly have done so because no writer can do that. So Boswell was fibbing. Boswell explained his ability by saying he got into the “Johnsonian ether,” and the lecturer questioned what that might be, and referred to it snidely.

After the lecture I decided not to confront the lecturer, which would have been like stepping on a homeless person. I instead went for Donald Greene!!! Of course I know his fame but had never met him before; however, he had been pointed out to me by a lot of people at the lecture as “someone who doesn’t like Boswell very much.” I began telling him my objections to the lecture. My basic proof was the movies of John Wayne! (“We are talking about the real John Wayne,” said Professor Greene elegantly, meaning John Wayne, not John Wain - happy coincidence!) After somehow digressing into movies in which John Wayne was un-John Wayne-like (Professor Greene mentioned Red River; I mentioned The Searchers), we eventually got back to the point. I informed Dr. Greene that when John Wayne was alive, two people would write all his scripts. First was the scriptwriter, a person who changed from script to script. Then there was the “John Wayne specialist,” the one man who was able to change all of John Wayne’s dialogue so that the character spoke just like John Wayne was supposed to speak. Did this man not enter the “Waynian ether”? Therefore, even Hollywood philosophically recognized—that means, they actually paid money for the talent to reproduce conversational style accurately.

I then went on to the formal style of Johnson’s hundreds (or thousands?) of personal letters, none of which were referred to in the lecture, and the fact that Johnson might have spoken more formally to Boswell because Boswell needed and expected him to. Dr. Greene was very, very impressed by my arguments. He kept saying, over and over, “That’s a good point, that’s excellent!” To everyone’s amazement, including mine, he kept questioning me for about 20 minutes. Everybody stood around us in a circle, terribly impressed that Dr. Greene was impressed with me, whoever I was.
Then, at the end—if I understood him correctly—he said he hadn't changed his mind at all!

"EVEN POTTLE," he said, doubted Boswell's claims. I had to agree that Pottle was God himself. It's hard to argue against Pottle.

But I was of course totally bowled over by Dr. Greene's incredibly vast erudition.

At any rate—just want you to know—I am ready to defend Boswell anywhere—any time—and now you see—to anyone!

Have a happy holiday. Love, SHAR.
Teaching Johnson to Teach Shakespeare

Undergraduates rarely take to Johnson immediately. He does not have the dark, cynical imagination of Swift, or the charming, fully modern characters of Austen. He never produced an undeniable masterpiece that demands inclusion in a survey course (in this sense, he resembles Dryden). His poetic oeuvre contains nothing with the irresistible and accessible wit of The Rape of the Lock, his prose nothing with the simple force of Robinson Crusoe. Exacerbating the situation is the fact that Johnson is no longer famous—at least to undergraduates. Teachers today cannot count on any help from students’ memories of Johnson’s quips and pronouncements: the vast majority does not know who Boswell is. One of the few witticisms which seems to have survived is that on women preachers—which doesn’t help matters. Without the Life behind him, Johnson can seem quite strange on first encounter. Though he is chronologically closer to us than Shakespeare, Shakespeare seems much more modern to many undergraduates.

Yet this, I suggest, can be a good thing: Johnson is worth teaching partly because of his resolute un-modernity, his isolation from our moral worldview. Making historical authors seem “relevant” often involves treating them as versions of ourselves; this of course elides their foreignness and difference. Johnson resists the narcissistic urges of students (and professors); he is no mirror of our contemporary selves. Johnson sees things in a way we do not, and perhaps more importantly, says things we would not.

Nowhere is this tendency more useful than in Johnson’s criticism. Johnson’s “difficulty” sorts itself out quickly enough in a Johnson course. In courses not specifically on Johnson, where exposure is limited, it is Johnson’s criticism—and particularly his criticism of Shakespeare—that I find most useful. For many undergraduates, Johnson’s self-certainty can initially be off-putting: to quote a recent student paper, he seems an “arrogant know-it-all.” Yet in the criticism this ostensible failing becomes his greatest strength. His self-assured and unhesitating criticism of Shakespeare especially is striking—he does what students cannot, in that he can actually point out imperfections. For many undergraduates,
the notion that Shakespeare is above criticism is simply understood; the idea that Shakespeare might have faults, or that the occasional scene or even line might have been improved, is almost heretical, or at least perverse. To read Johnson calmly listing Shakespeare's flaws is for many a fascinating experience.

For all the difficulties in teaching Johnson himself, introducing him makes teaching other authors easier. Teaching Shakespeare can sound easier than it proves: giving a guided tour of the plays is one thing, but getting students to pull the plays apart can be surprisingly hard, since they occasionally see them as something approaching sacred texts. What is there to say, other than that they are great? Johnson is invaluable in getting beyond this stage. Whenever I teach one of the tragedies, I introduce early on Johnson's famous declaration about Shakespeare's addiction to puns: "Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisition, whether he be enlarging knowledge or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchanting it in suspense, let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished." Students of course do not have to disapprove of this habit as Johnson does, but it certainly encourages them to pause at and reflect upon Hamlet's mention of grave men and other such moments, rather than just reading them straight, as perfect and unquestionable lines in perfect plays. Johnson makes Shakespeare stranger, more foreign.

The introduction of Johnson's criticism is most provocative, in my experience, in classes on King Lear. Many students are inclined to dismiss as implausible Lear's opening love competition between his daughters, and his rejection of Cordelia when she refuses to cooperate. Johnson's contextualization is useful:

On the seeming improbability of Lear's conduct it may be observed, that he is represented according to histories at that time vulgarly received as true. And perhaps if we turn our thoughts upon the barbarity and ignorance of the age to which this story is referred, it will appear not so unlikely as while we estimate Lear's manners by our own. Such preference of one daughter to another, or resignation of dominion on such conditions, would be yet credible, if told of a petty prince of Guinea or Madagascar.

The passage challenges some easy ideas about political correctness, and is a useful introduction not just to cultural relativism, but to temporal relativism as well. Johnson's defense of King Lear, meanwhile, initially continues, extending to his justification of the
Teaching Johnson to Teach Shakespeare

presentation of Goneril and Regan ("the cruelty of the daughters is an historical fact, to which the poet has added little") and even, though more reluctantly, Edmund's blinding of Gloucester ("let it be remembered that our authour well knew what would please the audience for which he wrote"). It comes as a surprise, then, to find Johnson refusing to accept Cordelia's death. His real emotion and horror at Cordelia's fate, his inability to "endure" it, often jolts students into thinking about the emotional impact of drama. The way in which a reader as sophisticated as Johnson is unsurprised by his own reaction to the ending—a reaction which might seem naïve were it voiced by a lesser critic—encourages an examination of our own reactions. Johnson's endorsement of the Tate ending is extremely valuable, since Tate is invariably reduced to a punch-line in many editions—or worse, to a symbol of our own inevitable progress from the dark ages of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Again, Johnson reminds us of our differences from him, without "proving" our superiority to the past.

If, therefore, undergraduates do not fall in with Johnson as easily as they do with Shakespeare, or Austen, or Dickens, he nevertheless provides something that those other authors do not: an introduction to criticism, through a restoration of foreignness. It is not too much to say that teaching Johnson makes teaching Shakespeare—and other authors—more rewarding.

—AARON SANTESSO
James Boswell's noted love of the after-dinner ballad and his desire to secure political preferment combine in this broadside, *William Pitt, The Grocer of London*. After having tried unsuccessfully for several years to establish friendly relations with the Prime Minister, Boswell took the occasion of a feast honoring the installation of a new Lord Mayor of London to address William Pitt with this laudatory song. Combining news of a highly favorable trade agreement with Spain and Pitt's honorary membership in the Company of Grocers, the song salutes Pitt for securing Britain's commercial interests.

Accounts differ as to whether Pitt was in fact present for Boswell's performance of the song on 9 November 1790, but there is agreement that it was a great hit with those assembled, who demanded five encores from Boswell. In any event, it failed to achieve its goal, as Boswell's overture to Pitt was not reciprocated.

This broadside, printed privately as a souvenir of the event, must have been produced in very small quantities, and this is one of only three copies known to exist today.
When it says Lives, Lives, Lives on the label, label, label

As I've mentioned before, one of my favorite things is to discover some feature of a book as it was originally issued, that has been lost in most of the copies of the book as they exist today. This copy of Johnson's Lives of the English Poets has just such a feature. When new, all copies of this four-volume set included a sheet of spine labels that the purchaser could affix to the spines of the temporary pasteboard bindings the set was sold in. The vast majority of purchasers would have either cut this sheet out to put the labels on, or simply thrown it away and put a more permanent leather binding on the books. That's why it's nice to find a copy with the sheet of labels intact and unused, 225 years later. I've also included a photo of another copy, where the labels were applied as intended.

—JOHN OVERHOLT

In his article "Dear Graduates: Money Is a Means" Daniel Akst offers a corrective to the slough of graduation speeches given every year in which we are told over and over again that money is not important. He points out that money helps people succeed in relationships with members of the opposite sex; it lengthens life, partly by assuring one of good medical care; and it can buy one liberty from, among other things, unpleasant working conditions. Finally, he speaks about the value of wealth to a whole society:

After all, the world’s richest societies tend to be the healthiest and the most advanced in protecting civil rights and the environment, for example. (So do those with less inequality, although overall wealth matters in those countries, too.)

Ultimately, perhaps the most important thing that money buys is civilization, with all its well-known discontents—including the knowledge that money and happiness often go hand in hand. But that’s not news, either. As Samuel Johnson recognized long ago, "He who is rich in a civilized society must be happier than he who is poor."

—Adam Potkay


The Week in Review for this date contains an article written by Geoffrey Nunberg that deals with the increase in the numbers of rich Americans. The article points out that more than eight million people are worth more than $1 million. However, an increase in numbers does not exist if reliance is made on individuals describing their individual personal financial status. The following quotation is offered as an explanation for this contradiction: "In part, that’s because we reckon how rich we are,” as Samuel Johnson said, ‘not by the calls of nature but by the plenty of others.”

This quotation has been taken and paraphrased from Rambler 33, “Alternate Rest and Labour Long Endure.” The original passage reads:

Then entered violence and fraud, and theft and rapine. Soon after pride and envy broke into the world, and brought with
them a new standard of wealth; for men, who till then thought themselves rich when they wanted nothing, now rated their demands, not by the calls of nature, but by the plenty of others; and began to consider themselves as poor when they beheld their own possessions exceeded by those of their neighbors. Now only one could be happy, because only one could have most, and that one was always in danger, lest the same arts by which he had supplanted others should be practiced upon himself. (Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, 3: 180)

—Ed Schaeffer

A Tenured Professor

John Kenneth Galbraith, who died earlier this year, imagined the following conversation in his 1990 novel, A Tenured Professor: it takes place during lunch at the long table of the Harvard Faculty Club, and the question "Do you really think he might make money out of this—if it works?" is asked about a young economics professor who is testing his theories by investing in the stock markets:

"There's nothing wrong with that. Over at the Business School we give money a lot of attention. We don't see it as evil. Not at all."
"Dr. Johnson said, 'There are few ways in which a man can be more innocently employed than in getting money.'" Another professor had intervened.
"He also said, 'It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives.'"
"Yeah, and he said, 'I am willing to love all mankind except an American.'"
"To me, I must say, Samuel Johnson is something of a bore."
"That's certainly not the view of Jackson Bate."
The long table was back to normal.

—Joanne Long

Passionate Letters of Great Lovers

There is no telling where Johnson will turn up in the world of letters. My Aunt Jean recently sent me for safe keeping a little book in very poor condition that was around her house for years. The title is Passionate Letters of Great Lovers; it is edited by Alan Price
as Title No. 11 in the New Era Library (1933, Racine, Wisconsin). A
torn and badly embrowned page stuck in between pages 14 and 17
contains the beginning of a letter Johnson wrote to Hester Thrale
on 13 November 1783 (Letters, ed. Bruce Redford, 4: 238):

Dear Madam,

Since you have written to me with the attention and
tenderness of ancient time, your letters give me a great
part of the pleasure which a life of solitude admits. You
will never bestow any share of your good will on one who
deserves better. Those that have loved longest, love best.
A sudden blaze of kindness, may by a single blast of
coldness be extinguished, but that fondness which length
of time has connected with many circumstances and
occasions, though it may for a while be suppressed by
disgust or resentment with or without a cause, is hourly
revived by accidental recollection. To those that have
lived long together every thing heard and every thing
seen recalls some pleasure communicated, or some
benefit conferred, some petty quarrel or some slight
endearment. Esteem of great powers or amiable qualities
newly discovered may embroider a day or a week, but a
friendship of twenty years is interwoven with the texture
of life. A friend may be often found and lost, but an old
Friend never can be found, and Nature has provided that
he cannot easily be lost.

The head note to this inclusion acknowledges its surprising
inclusion and sheds some light on an old-fashioned but not alto-
gether imperceptive view of Johnson:

Even gruff old Doctor Johnson (1709-1784) who lorded it
in London literary circles and terrified other wits, could
turn a good phrase for a lady: writing more as a philoso-
pher than as a lover—but still one who was by no means
insensible to the opposite sex.

—ROBERT DE MARIA, JR.
Yale Boswell Editions Notes

Preachers and Dogs, Revisited

Michael Bundock, in “Johnson and Women in Boswell’s Life of Johnson” (The Age of Johnson, Vol. 16, ed. Paul J. Korshin and Jack Lynch, 2005, pp. 81-109), takes issue with the hefty body of criticism that attributes a misogyny to the Life (which has variably been seen as Boswell’s, Johnson’s, both Boswell’s and Johnson’s together, Boswell’s foisted on to Johnson as if Johnson’s, a deliberate Boswellian project, an inadvertent bias, or a result of Boswell’s misrepresentations of Johnson). In his patient and careful argument, Bundock generously (and rightly) notes that a 1997 essay on this question by Irma S. Lustig, “The Myth of Johnson’s Misogyny in the Life of Johnson: Another View,” in Boswell in Scotland and Beyond, ed. Thomas Crawford (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, Occasional Papers 12, 1997, pp. 71-88), “merits more attention than it has received” (p. 82).

On this general matter, no mot attributed by Boswell to Johnson has proven more vexatious than the remark, frequently and wildly misrepresented and misunderstood, that “a woman’s preaching is like a dog’s walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all” (Life, vol. 1, p. 463, 31 July 1763), which remark both Bundock and Lustig address at length. Boswell for his part, it is important to reiterate, retained consistently warm and amiable feelings towards Quakers and Quakerism—including woman preachers. Some twelve years after recording Johnson’s remark, on 13 May 1785, he attended a Quaker meeting in London at White Hart Court, and noted in his diary: “One man and two women preached very well.” (Irma Lustig, acknowledging the help of librarians at the Friends House Library in London, identifies these preachers as Catherine Payton Phillips, whose memoirs appeared in 1789, Mahitabel Jenkins, and Samuel Emlen, of Philadelphia. The preacher Boswell heard on the morning of 31 July 1763, was Margaret Bell, who died in 1777 “in the seventieth
year of her age”). And Boswell as a father sought to pass these feelings on. His diary in London for 2 March 1788 reports: “Took my three eldest children to the Quakers’ Meeting in St. Martin’s Lane.”

Johnson’s comparison refers essentially to statistical infrequency, to the matter of unusualness, to the fact that a woman’s preaching was still a novelty. The perception of unusualness was itself not unusual, and far from unique to Johnson. In The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African (which first appeared in 1789 and was highly successful and widely read), Equiano notes his “great surprise” at seeing, at a Sunday morning Quaker meeting in the “elegant town of Philadelphia” in 1765, a woman “standing in the midst of them, speaking in an audible voice something which I could not understand” (Interesting Narrative, ed. Vincent Carretta, Penguin, revised ed., 2003, p.130). This he calls an “odd scene.” In a very different register: the account in the Town and Country Magazine for May 1772, nearly nine years after Boswell heard Margaret Bell preach, of one of the grand masquerades (7 May 1772) at Carlisle House, Soho—that is, at the famous assembly rooms of Teresa Cornelys—noted among “the most droll” of the masked characters “a preaching female Quaker, tolerably well sustained” (p. 238). This droll masker operated fully independently of Johnson’s remark, which made no published appearance until 1791.

The manuscript of the Life of Johnson, in one example of the kinds of fascinating material Yale’s ongoing edition brings to light, shows that immediately after Johnson’s remark on the rare sight of a woman preaching Boswell added but then chose to delete a revealing supplementary passage; see Marshall Waingrow’s James Boswell’s Life of Johnson: An Edition of the Original Manuscript in Four Volumes, Vol. 1, 1709-1765 (New Haven: Yale University Press; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994) p. 325. The passage is as follows:

It is remarkable that there was here a coincidence with a saying of my Father’s, who was a man of strong mind and remarkable grave humour / vein of humour. A person who was born blind / person who had been blind from his infancy / blind man took a fancy for some time to be a Clergyman and numbers of people flocked to hear him preach as is usual when anything extraordinary is exhibited. My Father being asked what he thought of this answered “the learned english dog” (Life ms. pp 282-3).
The various internal alternatives remained unresolved, and at some point in composition Boswell deleted "my Father's" and "My Father," evidently intending to attribute the remark to an anonymous "man of strong mind," etc. In the event, he deleted the whole passage, possibly believing (rightly) that it was not directly relevant to Johnson's life, would distract readerly attention from the main subject, and introduce his father needlessly. (Lord Auchinleck's remark seems to make no other appearance in the surviving records). Had Boswell let it stand, he might have done himself a favor. The passage plainly illuminates the essential point about unusualness and novelty, about something "extraordinary" being exhibited. The random "coincidence" of the canine comparison shows it to have occurred to a man strikingly different from Johnson, issuing from an educated and eminent Lowland Scotsman's jab at the English and at a desire to see a religious novelty, and to have been used about a male preacher, freeing it from any charge of misogyny.

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In her review of Roger Lonsdale's new Oxford University Press edition of the Lives of the Poets, H. J. Jackson offers the following intriguingly gendered observation: "The Lives is one of the pair of common ancestors, the Adam to Boswell's Eve, of literary biography as we now know it in English" (TLS April 28, 2006, p. 33). A brief review's clever and amusing summary reference to, as we may say, the Genesis of a modern literary form, should not, of course, be pressed upon too hard, but given the contentious (and critically valuable) world of gender studies, the Yale Boswell Editions are unable to tell whether Boswell was being demeaned or elevated by being regarded as The Mother of All Biographies. In any case, new meaning appears to have been given to Boswell's famous statement that he was "strongly impregnated" with the Johnsonian ether.

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Arianna Huffington (summarized by the New York Times as "columnist, former candidate for governor of California and freelance liberal gadfly") clashed recently with the actor George Clooney, who took exception when she spliced together various remarks by him (in different venues and at different times) into an essay, as if written by Clooney himself, for her weblog, HuffingtonPost.com. Huffington eventually conceded her "big mistake" in failing to source her quotations, and for writing the post as if by Clooney himself. For the future, "when she comes across a published interview, or when someone prominent says something to
her that she thinks is ‘really important and should have as wide an audience as possible,’ she will quote it in her own section of the blog—much as James Boswell documented the comings and goings of Samuel Johnson, she said. Indeed, she intends to name the form for Boswell: ‘BozBlogging.’ (Tom Zeller Jr., “A Guest Blogger, and an Unwritten Law,” New York Times, 20 March 2006. p. C3).

“Or,” added Mr. Zeller, “you could just call it journalism.”

Huffington’s post for 11 June 2005 began: “I’m starting a new feature—‘Boswell Blogging.’ Time and time again when I’m out and about, someone says something interesting that I want to pass on to you. That’s when I’ll BozBlog. It happened yesterday over lunch with Arthur Schlesinger. So Dr. Schlesinger will be the first to take on the role of quotable Dr. Johnson, with me playing the part of his trusty scribe.”

(JNL readers interested in what Schlesinger’s oracular lunchtime pronouncement was are referred to the post itself).

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Bruce Redford’s Designing the Life of Johnson: The Lyell Lectures in Bibliography, 2001-2 has been reissued by Oxford University Press in paperback form (details available on OUP and OUP-USA websites). The new edition of Boswell’s An Account of Corsica, the Journal of a Tour to That Island; and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli (ed. by James T. Boulton and T. O. McLaughlin) has now appeared from Oxford University Press. It will be reviewed in a future JNL issue.

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Boswell’s writing continues popular in snippet form, for those preferring only small doses. A new anthology, Travel Writing 1700-1830, edited by Elizabeth A. Bohls and Ian Duncan (Oxford University Press, 2005), offers a generous representative sampling from the British literature of travel in this period, enjoyable in its own right and more than suitable for college courses in the field. In a section on “Society and Sentiment,” the volume offers Boswell’s description of a stag-hunt in Dessau (25 September 1764), his account of his hopes for the Order of Fidelity from the Prince of Baden-Durlach (16 November 1764) and parts of his conversations with Rousseau (15 December 1764), reproduced from Boswell on the Grand Tour: Germany and Switzerland, 1764, ed. F. A. Pottle (1953). Boswell, says the section’s headnote, “turns conversation into a theatre of self-fashioning,” and “tempers his melancholy egoism with a passionate attention to other people’s lives” (p. 20). (But the note errs when it says that the journal in Europe was “written mainly in French.”) In a later section, portions are
provided of Johnson’s *Journey to the Western Isles* and Boswell’s *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*.

In lighter fare, *Tuscany in Mind: An Anthology* (ed. Alice Leccese Powers, New York: Vintage Departures, 2005), offers samplings from “two centuries of great writers seduced by Tuscany.” Portions of Boswell’s lengthy letter (unsent) to Rousseau of 3 October 1765, and his “Sienese Reflections” (c. 2 September 1764), are reproduced in the English translations from *Boswell on the Grand Tour, Italy, Corsica, and France*, 1765, ed. F. A. Pottle (1955). They nestle between an excerpt from Kinta Beevor’s *A Tuscan Childhood* and Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s “Bianca among the Nightingales.” The headnote contrasts the “adaptable, cheerful” Boswell in Europe, who “loved to meet all kinds of people,” with “his contemporary, the cranky Tobias Smollett” (p. 13). *Hell Hath No Fury: Women’s Letters from the End of the Affair* (ed. Anna Holmes, New York: Ballantine Books, 2002) features, according to its cover, “Breakup Letters for All Occasions” and reprints (in the English translation from the Yale trade edition just mentioned) the affectionately rueful letter to Boswell from Giroloma Piccolomini (“Moma”), dated Siena, 20 March 1767. The letter sits between one from Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Francesco Algarotti, and an excerpt from one from Lady Christina Falkland to Byron. (Piccolomini’s letter was not, however, the end of the correspondence between her and Boswell. For the full surviving correspondence, printed in the original Italian and in English translation, see *The General Correspondence of James Boswell 1766-1769*, vol. 1, 1766-1766, ed. Richard C. Cole et al. 1993).

Inevitably, the “Louisa” affair from Boswell’s 1762-63 journal in London continues to be excerpted frequently in anthologies, and on at least one website that we know of. It appeared, for example, in a collection called *Classic Erotic Tales* (Michael O’Mara Books, 1995) along with excerpts from works ranging from *The Decameron* and *Candide*, to *Emmanuelle* (the title commonly given to Emmanuelle Arsan’s *The Joys of a Woman*), *The Women’s Room* (Marilyn French) and *Rabbit is Rich* (John Updike). This collection has been translated into Spanish, and is soon to appear in Korean. The Yale Boswell Editions have temporarily set aside our mild irritation at this relentless (and unrepresentative) excerpting in favor of wry amusement at one of its odder iterations. Excerpts from Boswell’s diary account of his affair with “Louisa” from 24, 25 and 26 December 1762 appear in an anthology called *Joy to the World: Two Thousand Years of Christmas*, ed. Francis G. James and Miriam G. Hill (Dublin, Ireland, and Portland, Oregon: Four Courts Press, 2000), under the heading “James Boswell’s Christmas Romance, 1762.”

—GORDON TURNBULL
Samuel Johnson Tercentenary

As all Johnsonians will be aware, the tercentenary of the birth of Samuel Johnson falls on 18 September 2009. A number of interested parties in the UK have established the Samuel Johnson Tercentenary Committee to publicize the tercentenary and to encourage organizations and institutions to mount events to mark the occasion.

The Committee includes representatives from the Johnson Birthplace Museum in Lichfield, Dr. Johnson’s House in London, the Johnson Society (Lichfield) and the Johnson Society of London.

We have been in contact with many museums, libraries and other institutions to remind them of the tercentenary, and to encourage them to mark it in some way. A website has been set up at www.johnson2009.org. It includes a calendar of events for 2009. We would like to include on the calendar as many events as possible, wherever they are taking place. We are conscious that the celebrations will not be limited to the UK, and we would particularly welcome information about ways in which the occasion will be marked in the USA and elsewhere. Those planning events may find it useful to check the calendar to avoid clashes of date.

A number of distinguished figures have indicated their support by becoming patrons of the tercentenary. They are: the writers Beryl Bainbridge and Jenny Uglow, Lord Butler (Master of University College, Oxford), the actor Robbie Coltrane, Richard Harries (Bishop of Oxford), Lord Harmsworth (Chairman of the Trustees of Dr. Johnson’s House), Giles Henderson (Master of Pembroke College, Oxford), the Poet Laureate Andrew Motion, Professor Christopher Ricks (Professor of Poetry, Oxford University), and the journalists and broadcasters John Sergeant and Jeremy Paxman.

We welcome contact from anyone involved in planning events; please let us have the details and we will do what we can to publicize them. We can be contacted at info@johnson2009.org.

NICHOLAS CAMBRIDGE
CHAIRMAN, SAMUEL JOHNSON TERCENTENARY COMMITTEE

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The year 2009 marks the 300th anniversary of the birth of Samuel Johnson. To commemorate the event, Harvard University’s Houghton Library will host an international symposium to celebrate Johnson’s manifold contributions to intellectual and creative cultures. The symposium, which will be held Thursday, August 27, through Saturday, August 29, 2009, will coincide with the opening of a major exhibition featuring rare books and manuscripts from the Mary & Donald Hyde Collection of Dr. Samuel Johnson.

Considered one of the world’s most important collections of eighteenth-century literature, the Hyde Collection was assembled over a 60-year period. With Johnson at its center, it encompasses letters, manuscripts, first editions, and works of art relating to Johnson and his circle. The collection includes half of Johnson’s surviving letters and two drafts of his “Plan for a Dictionary” and is comprehensive in its coverage of Johnson’s published works. A bequest of Mary, Viscountess Eccles (1912-2003), to Houghton Library, the Hyde Collection is also rich in materials that document the lives of Johnson’s friends and contemporaries, such as James Boswell, Hester Thrale Piozzi, Tobias Smollett, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and David Garrick.

Details will be announced over the next six months, so please check our website periodically.
http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/conference_johnson.html

John Overholt
Hyde Project Cataloger
Houghton Library
Harvard University
The Rothstein Symposium

Few places surpass Madison, Wisconsin in the early spring. The air is crisp and clear; the skies open over the shimmering blue lakes below; verdant blooms are emerging; and a cultural plenitude of bookstores, coffee houses, and bistros beckon. An additional enticement this year for students of the eighteenth century to visit this Midwestern gem materialized on 7 and 8 April in a special scholarly gathering held on the University of Wisconsin campus: “British Literature and Culture, 1660-1800: A Symposium in Honor of Eric Rothstein.”

The center of this scholarly attention, Eric Rothstein, has forged one of the truly distinctive academic careers of our time. He has made magisterial contributions in four very different areas: eighteenth-century drama (Restoration Tragedy, 1967); the eighteenth-century novel (Systems of Order and Inquiry in Later Eighteenth-Century Fiction, 1975); eighteenth-century poetry (Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Poetry, 1981); and literary theory (Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History, 1991). In addition, Rothstein has graduated a large number of protégés as teacher and dissertation director who continue to sustain his influence—many in attendance—and he has ably served the University of Wisconsin as an academic administrator. He has established an eighteenth-century cursus honorum that few aspirants to academic fame will match.

Rothstein’s longtime colleague at Wisconsin, Howard Weinbrot not only organized this special event, but also served as a warmly genial host and superbly efficient and good-humored master-of-ceremonies. Under his direction, the symposium differed from most scholarly conferences in format. Each of the presenters was allotted more than the customary 20 minutes, allowing each panelist to pursue his or her train of thought with fullness and flexibility. And especially welcome was the Q & A period which followed each paper presentation—these lengthy sessions allowed some of the finest minds currently working in our period to engage in passionate and bracing exchanges.
Lynn Festa, who will be succeeding Rothstein at UW-Madison this fall, commenced the first day’s proceedings by reading her paper, “Clarissa, Classification, and the Natural History of Virginity,” which conjoined discussions of the category of “identity” in natural history and empirical philosophy to Lovelace’s and Richardson’s project of knowing who and what Clarissa is. Melvyn New (University of Florida) continued in the novelistic vein with his “Sterne and the Modernist Moment,” which defined Sterne’s relationship to modernism by looking at two modernist authors, Bruno Schulz and Virginia Woolf. After lunch the audience was entertained and informed by three more strong papers: Richard Kroll’s (University of California-Irvine) “Mercantilism and Bullionism in Behn’s The Rover,” which interrogated Behn’s lively play from a deeply considered scrutiny of its contemporary economic underpinnings; Jack Lynch’s (Rutgers University-Newark) “Shakespeare their Contemporary? The Case of Macbeth, 1660-1818,” which looked at the changing fortunes of Shakespeare’s Macbeth from the re-opening of the theatres at the Restoration through the early nineteenth century; and Howard Weinbrot’s “Root Out this Cursed Race’: Defoe’s Shortest Way with the Dissenters and His Longer Way with Himself,” which traced the harsh religious and political context of Defoe’s polemical tract, showed how its brilliant rhetoric was politically offensive to Queen Anne’s moderate government, and then showed how Defoe’s own responses to government changed over the years. The first day’s events were punctuated by the social highlight of the weekend, a grand banquet in the Virginia F. Harrison Parlor of Lathrop Hall. Following a sumptuous feast of salmon, beef, and pasta, and various liquid refreshments, Rothstein was regaled by alternately comic and moving, but always affectionate, tributes from friends and colleagues.

Day two began with a paper that will be of special interest to JNL readers: Heather Jackson’s (University of Toronto) “Writing for Immortality: The Concept of Literary Fame in Johnson’s Lives of the Poets.” This essay draws on Johnson’s Lives to establish the prevailing idea of literary fame in the late-eighteenth-century. In posing such questions as “What constitutes fame?”; “What is the relationship between fame and celebrity?”; and “What are the proper rewards of fame and what does it take to achieve it?,” Jackson queries how Johnson departs from received wisdom on these points and asks whether, in retrospect, he was right. Michael McKeon (Rutgers University-New Brunswick) followed with his dazzlingly wide-ranging “The Origins of Aesthetic Theory in Eight-
eenth-Century Britain,” which traced a dialectical development of aesthetic theory in relation to the emergence of empiricist epistemology from the late-seventeenth-century’s battle of the Ancients and Moderns through such later writers as Addison, Berkeley, Shaftesbury, Burke, Young, Smith, Fielding and Johnson. The second day—and the conference as a whole—climaxed with Eric Rothstein’s paper “Consuming the Sublime,” which focused on the sublime as an expressive practice functioning within a logic of Modernity as a means for individuals to cope with risk through a mixture of aestheticization and confrontation with that which might cause terror. This and the discussion session following amply merited the extended standing ovation it received. The fullness and range of erudition that he demonstrated—moving across such disparate points of reference as Longinus, C. S. Lewis’ Allegory of Love, and the latest developments in mirror neuron research—testify to Rothstein’s stature as one of the great eighteenth-scholars and critics of our time. This symposium’s uniformly high caliber of papers offered tribute to a man whose manifold achievements deserved no less.

A few hours after the conference concluded, the University of Wisconsin men’s hockey team defeated Boston College for the NCAA national championship—surely a sign that the gods were looking down with happy approbation upon this weekend’s goings-on in Badgerland.

ANTHONY W. LEE
KENTUCKY WESLEYAN COLLEGE
Mid-June rolls around—the depths of the Melbourne winter—and for a few dozen curious, literate and sociable people, the grey is relieved by the Annual Seminar of the Johnson Society.

We have been flattered for the third time with a (self-funded!) visit to far Australia by Genny Gebhardt, from Seattle. Genny is an independent writer/scholar, who investigates street life and entertainment in eighteenth-century London. Her paper “Boudicca’s Daughters” was a lively account of women fighters, professional and otherwise.

Daniel Vuillermin, a postgraduate student in English at Latrobe University, is working with JSA President, Professor John Wiltshire, on a project examining the iconography of Johnson. He presented an illustrated talk about the many nineteenth-century “biographical” paintings which imaginatively depict incidents in Boswell’s Life of Johnson. These were important in fixing an image of Johnson in the public mind.

The highlight of the day’s presentations was without doubt the rehearsed reading of Johnson’s play, Irene. It was performed, in costume, by members of the Melbourne Shakespeare Society, using a shortened text of the play prepared for the occasion by Tony Thomas, a sometime member of the JSA, who also directed the performance. Others of the cast included regular JSA member Robert Kemp. It was very gratifying to hear Johnson’s resonant lines delivered by experienced actors, although it was generally agreed that Johnson had not quite grasped the essentials of stagecraft.

The performance was introduced by some remarks about the play by Tony Thomas (who is now presumably a world expert on the subject) and about Johnson and the theatre, by John Wiltshire.
Phillip Harvey, who works in two specialist Melbourne libraries, and is the poetry editor for the magazine *Eureka Street*, presented an intriguing look at Johnson’s religious life, particularly focussed on his distinctively Anglican form of personal spirituality. Phillip ranged widely across Johnson’s writings for a sensitive portrait.

Larger Johnson societies have numbers of book collectors as members; the JSA, only one. John Byrne, of Perth, Western Australia, makes up for this by his energy and assiduity. Every year he is able to report on his new findings and acquisitions. John is a Governor of Johnson’s House in London, and returned from his most recent trip with his first autograph manuscript of Johnson. It is one of the slips on which Johnson, in the last year of his life, translated (into Latin) an entry from the collection, *The Greek Anthology*. In English, the text reads, “Ask not, sea-farer, whose tomb I am / But thyself chance upon a kinder sea”: suitable for a former yachtsman like its new owner. The 250th anniversary of the *Dictionary* also produced various memorabilia, which John also displayed for the curiosity of the Society.

The day was completed with music from a classical trio, and followed by a convivial meal at a nearby restaurant.

The *Papers* of the Society (edited by the “present writer”) are published, usually annually, though not in the year of presentation! The eighth volume, containing papers and the Fleeman lecture for 2003, will be launched at our next event, in September 2006, the Annual Meeting and Fleeman Memorial Lecture.

This year, the Fleeman lecturer will be broadcaster and eighteenth-centuryist, Alan Saunders. Dr. Saunders writes and reviews widely. He was well-known for his ABC Radio National series *The Comfort Zone* (1997-2004) which explored what might be called the philosophy of domestic life: food, design, architecture and other issues. His lecture for the Johnson Society of Australia will consider Johnson not for his place as a moral and literary figure, but in what sense he can be regarded as a philosopher, a philosophical writer.
Notes and Queries

A Proverbial Candle and Johnson's Candlestick

In an intriguing short article, “Boswell, Johnson, and a Proverbial Candlestick,” published many years ago (1982) in the Midwestern Journal of Language and Folklore, Daniel Barnes argued that an anecdote included in the Life of Johnson relating to Johnson's early education under the whip of the master of Lichfield Grammar School “is almost certainly apocryphal” (120), having its provenance in Boswell's “unwitting” misapprehension of Johnson's testimony. It is undoubtedly fair to say that for various reasons this article has passed under the radar of most Johnsonians. Nevertheless, the fact remains that so long as it goes unchallenged it enjoys, because of its preservation in print and despite its residence in a somewhat obscure location, a certain, if largely unrecognized, authority. In writing in support of his conjecture that Boswell is the “sole authority” for what, as far as I can tell, all readers have heretofore taken to be Boswell's faithful record of Johnson's veridical recollection of John Hunter's “hands on” approach to pedagogy, Barnes has done something to diminish our esteem for Boswell's accuracy as a reporter, to mitigate our opinion of Hunter's cruelty as a schoolmaster, and, perhaps inadvertently, to undermine our assessment of Johnson's perspicacity as a memorialist. In what follows, I will attempt to relieve the anecdote of any critic-induced anxiety about its status and origins, thereby restoring Boswell and Hunter to their former positions of, respectively, positive and negative distinction. Additionally, I will show how as a consequence of pursuing the proverbial trail blazed by Barnes we find ourselves face to face with a minor failure of exact recall on Johnson's part that, paradoxically, enhances our admiration of his prodigious memory. To the details.

The anecdote in question reads as follows:

He began to learn Latin with Mr. Hawkins, usher, or undermaster at Lichfield school, “a man (said he) very skilful in his little way.” With him he continued two
years, and then rose to be under the care of Mr. Hunter, the head-master, who, according to his account, "was very severe, and wrong-headedly severe. He used (said he) to beat us unmercifully; and he did not distinguish between ignorance and negligence; for he would beat a boy equally for not knowing a thing, as for neglecting to know it. He would ask a boy a question; and if he did not answer it, he would beat him, without considering whether he had an opportunity of knowing how to answer it. For instance, he would call up a boy and ask him Latin for a candlestick, which the boy could not expect to be asked. Now, Sir, if a boy could answer every question, there would be no need of a master to teach him." Life, 33

What attracts the attention of our critic in this paragraph is the example, the "instance" of a boy's being asked to give the Latin for a candlestick. It is this request that gives the game away, since, according to Barnes, it reveals that Boswell has mistaken for "historical fact Johnson's allusion to a traditional English proverb" (120), namely, "Tace is Latin for a candle." (Tace, as explained below, is Latin for "be silent." When the proverb is put in the form of a question—"What is the Latin for a candle?"—it is really a command to hush, to keep quiet, be silent.) In other words, to Barnes, Boswell has built a fictional account of Hunter's "unmerciful" severity around his misunderstanding of Johnson's allusion to a proverbial expression. In short, he treats the injunction "to be silent," which was perhaps used by Hunter (and countless other schoolmasters) on a daily basis, as a specific, "historical" instance of Hunter's failure to discriminate between willful and accidental ignorance, between indolence and negligence, and of the celerity with which he administered corporal chastisement to the innocent and guilty alike. Now, to this reader, it would seem that if Boswell made the mistake of taking Johnson's allusion to the well-known proverb for a fact, Johnson could be charged with a much greater offense, namely, careless disregard for the well-being of an anecdote or, more exactly, bringing a short tale to an inappropriate and bathetic conclusion. The example or "instance" that Boswell provides does not give conclusive evidence of the cruelty and injustice of Hunter's deplorable failure to make necessary distinctions. An allusion to the proverb at this point would be worse than irrelevant; it would be pointless. It would be comparable to a prosecutor's showing in his closing argument that the person on trial for a capital crime is demonstrably guilty only of using the wrong fork. In brief, if Boswell made a mistake by failing to recognize Johnson's
allusion to a popular proverb, then we are left with a very weak, a
very lame anecdote, since the whole point of the “instance” should
be to supply a compelling example of Hunter’s “wrong-headed”
severity.

At any rate, to account for Boswell’s “mistake,” Barnes supplies
two possibilities, one involving a lapse of memory on Johnson’s part
and the other a creative fiction by Boswell, the former possibility
being rejected and the latter being selected as the most probable.
Because the first possibility will lead directly to issues central to
the second part of this essay, I will now focus attention on the
second and preferred option, as a lead-in to my final assessment of
Barnes’s argument in support of the apocryphal nature of the
anecdote. The preferred explanation of Boswell’s mistake is suc-
cinctly stated:

I think it more probably the case that, in transcribing
from his notes what Johnson had intended as an allusion
to tradition (“Why, Sir, one might as reasonably punish a
boy for not knowing the Latin for a candle!”), Boswell
unwittingly created instead an “instance” of wanton
cruelty of which, despite his other culpable lapses,
Hunter was simply not guilty. (121)

The more one stares at this sentence the more puzzling it
becomes. Initially, it would be interesting to know in what context
Johnson introduced the allusion. If he introduced it in the context
that we are given, the one in which the topic is Hunter’s failure to
make appropriate distinctions, then our former charge against
Johnson of narrative ineptitude holds. On the other hand, if we
accept the context as given and reject the possibility of ineptitude
but concede the possibility that Boswell simply mis-transcribed the
remark that Barnes hypothetically attributes to Johnson—“Why,
Sir, one might as reasonably punish a boy for not knowing the
Latin for a candle”—then we must recognize that Johnson’s point
would be made only if he had intended the remark to be understood
in its ordinary, not its proverbial sense, if only because the prover-
bial sense makes no sense in the immediate context. If, however,
Boswell has conflated separate contexts, juxtaposing one involving
Hunter’s injustice and another relating to his reliance on the prover-
bial expression to silence his bumptious students, then
Boswell is responsible for capping the anecdote with an illustrative
example that misses the point for which it was introduced, that is,
to illustrate Hunter’s failure or reluctance to distinguish between
blameworthy and blameless ignorance. The perplexities aroused
by the preferred explanation continue to multiply, for if, as Barnes says, Boswell is guilty of "unwittingly creating" this "instance" of wanton cruelty," thereby adding to Hunter's already full rap sheet a crime of which he is innocent, then it would only be fair to attribute the anecdote as a whole to him. Of course, in doing so, we at one and the same time convict him of defamation of character and pay tribute to his artistic genius in producing a maximally integrated, formally tidy, and substantively coherent anecdote—taking special note of his attempt to deflect attention from the proverb by substituting candlestick for candle. There are further complications yet inhering in this account of Boswell's "mistake," but in the interests of economy and in deference to the reader's patience, I shall pay them the kindness of neglect. At this point in the discussion, I am inclined to think that no one would be inclined to accuse me of peremptorily closing debate if I suggested that until we have more compelling reasons to apply the word apocryphal to any aspect of the anecdote than we have thus far been offered, we should allow the wrong-headedly severe Hunter to enjoy his well-deserved obloquy. (And, of course, in making this allowance, we do not simultaneously strip him of his earned achievements as a scholar and, yes, a schoolmaster, for as Johnson himself once said, "Abating his brutality, he was a very good master" Life, 459.)

Before taking a look at Barnes's rejected possibility for Boswell's "mistake"—the possibility that serves as a bridge to the second part of this essay—I would like to pause for a moment and say a few words about the proverb, "tace is Latin for a candle," which, because it seems to lurk within the "Latin for a candlestick" phrase of the anecdote, is the agent provocateur responsible for Barnes's incendiary revisionism. The proverb has an ancient lineage and is remarkable for its longevity. Both the Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs and the OED locate an early analogue in William Camden's Remains Concerning Britain (1605): "Edmund of Langley ... asked ... his sonnes ... what was Latine for a fetter-locke: Whereat when the young gentleman [sic] studied, the father said, 'Hic haec hoc taceatis,' as advising them to be silent and quiet." The OED goes on to cite instances of the proverb in the form on which it durably settled (i.e., tace is Latin for a candle) in William Dampier's A New Voyage Round the World (1697), in Book I, chapter 10, of Henry Fielding's Amelia (1752), and in Sir Walter Scott's Familiar Letters (1821). Indeed, one can say without fear of resistance or contradiction that the proverb is something of a Methuselah, enduring as a meme through several centuries, from at least the seventeenth through the twentieth. A quick Google search, for example, will disclose appearances of the remark in Sir
Walter Scott's *The Abbot* and *Redgauntlet*, in W.B. Yeats's 1888 edition of *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, in Robert Louis Stevenson's *St. Ives*, in several of Patrick O'Brian's novels of the sea featuring Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin, including *Master and Commander* (1969), and in a good many other texts printed in these centuries. Although not sighted very often in public nowadays, the proverb is still ambulatory and still worthy of notice by Eric Partridge and other folks interested in slang, catch phrases, and other terms in common use.

The proverb itself, of course, is puzzling. *Tace* is not Latin for a candle; *candela* is Latin for a candle (and, incidentally, *candelabrum* is Latin for a candlestick). *Tace* is the imperative singular of *tacere*, to be silent. When the question “What is Latin for a candle?” is posed to rambunctious students (or any other gathering of people operating in obstreperous mode) *tace* is “tacit”; i.e., it is silent, “tacitly” understood. What is framed as a question or interrogative is actually a command as a speech act, an imperative order to be silent. No one is expected to enunciate *tace* in response to the “question,” because silence, not *tace*, is the only acceptable answer; “taciturnity” is the only approved mode of response to the “question.” Of course, the entire declarative sentence, “*tace* is Latin for a candle,” can be used as an imperative to command silence, but in practice the full expression is most frequently used to caution or advise a person to be quiet about some matter, to keep it hidden, or unexpressed. It is so used, for example, in chapter ten of Book I of Amelia: “*Tace, Madam,*” answered Murphy, “is Latin for a candle; I commend your prudence.” In instances of this type, the point is that it would be unwise, inappropriate, imprudent, impolitic, hurtful, embarrassing, indecent, impolite, and so on, to say now, at this point, in this company what could be said, what could be revealed or disclosed.

What remains enigmatic is how *candle* came to be the object for which *tace* is said to be the Latin term. Again, Google is a mildly prolific source of ramblings in the field of idle speculation or wild surmise, providing numerous results of “folk explanation.” Unfortunately, although many of the conjectures are interesting, none is compelling. I, too, must admit that I have no enigma-resolving ideas ready to hand, but unwilling merely to watch the bustle from the sidelines, I join the fray with the following bit of “folk” (none dare call it) wisdom. If the attachment of *tace* to “fetter-locke” in the first *OED* citation above is any clue, then it might not be entirely outrageous to suggest that in its earliest usages *tace* could be said to be Latin for almost anything, any object at least that was intrinsically still, quiet, passive, and noiseless. Since *tace* is the
word, stated or implied, that does all the lifting, the object to which it is linked is useful or has functional value as an implicit simile; it is what one should be as quiet as. Over the years, as the battle of memes raged on, candle emerged as the term with survival fitness. For the fitness of this "folk explanation" I cannot vouch, but I do know that we are now ready to bring the proverb to Johnson's doorstep by way of Barnes's first possible, but immediately rejected, explanation for what he is convinced is Boswell's, not Johnson's mistake.

To explain the appearance in the anecdote of what is throughout the essay assumed to be an allusion to the proverb, Barnes avers that it is "possible that Hunter" had occasionally used the "question" in its proverbial form to insist that "his young charges . . . remain silent when they did not know the answer, and that Johnson had simply forgotten the proverbial context and instead added this atrocity to the . . . list of complaints against his master" (121). My experience in front of the classroom has persuaded me that students require no inducement to be silent when they do not know the answer to a question. They invariably respond as one, and silence is what, as one, they shout. More to the point, this possibility supposes perhaps a little too much forgetting on Johnson's part, since he clearly loses track of both the context and the candle, substituting for the latter a candlestick, which at this stage in the meme's history has no established association with tace. (We have no evidence that it ever shared the company of tace.)

Furthermore, if we can suppose with Barnes (and it is worth remembering that throughout the whole case against the authenticity of the anecdote we are in Supposition-land or Surmise-world) that Hunter occasionally enjoined his "young charges" to be silent with the "Latin-for-a-candle" question, then we can with equal warrant suppose, given the scene of admonition, that he put the question to them countless times, each and every day undoubtedly supplying several opportunities for its enunciation. Now these multiple iterations would most certainly have done their assigned work of imprinting the exact words and precise meaning of the question indelibly on Johnson's impressionable mind, already notable for its uncommonly strong retentive powers, as evidenced, for example, in his ability from a very early age to repeat verbatim long passages from texts that he had cursorily examined. The supposition that Johnson was himself a not infrequent target of the question/command perhaps garners some reinforcement from remarks made to Boswell by Edmund Hector, Johnson's schoolfellow at Lichfield School. In a passage introduced a mere four para-
graphs beyond that containing our anecdote, Hector “assures” Boswell that “he never knew him [Johnson] corrected, but for talking and diverting other boys from their business” (Life, 34-35). Also (and finally on this matter), it is clear, I think, that in terms of priority, the habitual cruelty of Hunter has pride of place in the anecdote. The felicitous “candlestick” example of Hunter’s malicious lack of discrimination certainly provides a nice finish for the anecdote, but it is not absolutely necessary to it. Barnes’s version tends to give priority to the example, making it the catalyst of the anecdote, not the functionally appropriate grace note to it that it is.

Curiously, it is the strength of Johnson’s memory to which appeal is made when, immediately after floating the possibility of forgetfulness, Barnes rejects the suggestion, insisting that Johnson knew the proverb too well from his reading to fail to recall its meaning when talking to Boswell about his early education. We are assured that “by the time” Johnson told Boswell about Hunter’s wrong-headed severity, he had “long since been reminded of the saying’s proverbial character, for among others Swift had made use of it in his Polite Conversation [1738], as had Fielding in Amelia [1752] (a book which, according to Boswell, Johnson claimed to have ‘read . . . through without stopping’)” (121). In a note, Barnes informs us that Johnson was also familiar with Camden’s Remains, observing that he specifically refers to it twice in the Life. It is possible that sedulous inquiry will subsequently uncover many other works familiar to Johnson in which “pace is Latin for a candle” rears its proverbial head. Indeed, many Johnsonians will be quick to note that in his “Thoughts on Falklands Islands” Johnson refers to Dampier’s Voyages, another work previously identified as a source for “pace/candle.”

But, to return to the case at hand, according to Barnes, the possibility that Johnson may have forgotten the proverbial sense of an admonition that he in all likelihood heard innumerable times in Hunter’s classroom is summarily rejected because Johnson had clearly encountered the proverbial expression in isolated passages of a very few of the extraordinarily many texts with which he was acquainted. In short, as a result of this fleeting exposure to passages separated presumably by large intervals of time, Johnson, we are assured, would clearly not have misremembered the meaning of the proverb (and, thus, Boswell must be the peccant party). On the face of matters, it would seem that Johnson would be more likely to forget the printed than the oral encounters with the proverb, but I’m quite willing to believe that both forms of experience contributed to Johnson’s memory and to his clear understanding of the meaning of the expression.
Without being obliged to choose between sources, then, we can agree with Barnes that, if any mistake were made, Johnson did not make it. In the interests of economy, let me just say that with regard to an expression as common as "tace . . . candle" seems to have been, there would appear to be no reason why Boswell—or any other man, woman, or child, for that matter—would not be as familiar with it as Johnson was (and, hence, not mistake its meaning). Moreover, since the proverb has remained relatively sound in wind and limb for several centuries, it is difficult to understand why not a single reader of the Life in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries has bothered to call attention to "Boswell's mistake" or at least to the unhappiness of the fit between the "instance" and the anecdote. Indeed, it is odd that no one until now, when the proverb is at the nadir of its general circulation, has noticed the "mistake" or been struck by the inaptness of a "proverbial" example at the climax of the anecdote. On the other hand, since, in point of fact, we are dealing with a "candlestick" and not a "candle," there may be good reason to think that no one would make the mistake of thinking that there's a mistake of any kind lurking within the anecdote. It may simply be that in almost every conceivable case what is Latin for a candlestick is candelabrum, not tace, but, of course, that is not something anyone, including Johnson, could reasonably expect the boys at Lichfield Grammar School to know.

Nevertheless, after becoming aware of Barnes's article, every reader who has any regard for candor must admit that it is not much of a stretch to apply the sense of "what is Latin for a candle" to "what is Latin for a candlestick," especially when the context of record is the classroom. At any rate, a possible genetic basis to this ostensible family resemblance sent me on a genealogical excursion into the wilds of cyberspace, where, unfortunately, I found no candlesticks insisting on silence. Quite unexpectedly, however, I did find one Latin candle using the alias tace in a, to me, surprising environment—Johnson's quite vitriolic, very ironic (bordering on the sarcastic) excoriation of booksellers and their toadies and confederates at the journals Common Sense and the Craftsman, who were determined to undermine the integrity, sully the reputation, and thereby endanger the profitability of the Gentleman's Magazine. In short, to establish Johnson's intimate familiarity with the proverbial expression at issue, one is not obliged to peruse his library tome by tome. One can shorten the work week by simply consulting his scalpel—but mostly hatchet—job for Cave, "An Appeal to the Publick," which appeared in the March 1739, issue of the Magazine. At one point, Johnson stick-pins the author
of Common Sense to the specimen board for his feeble effort to mount a devastating rejoinder to an opponent by employing a jejune and unimaginative play on words, namely, calling those he attacks “enemies to common sense” and overwhelming “the strongest objections and the clearest reasonings” by saying “they are contrary to common sense” (“Appeal,” 350). Eschewing the fine and employing the broad brush of irony, Johnson says that he “can remember but two instances of a genius able to use a few syllables to such great and so various purposes.” Of these “two instances,” it is the first one that draws our attention. Of this “genius,” Johnson writes: “One is the old man in Shadwell, who seems, by long time and experience, to have attained to equal perfection with our author; for, ‘when a young fellow began to prate and be pert,’ says he, ‘I silenced him with my old word, Tace is Latin for a candle’” (350). In the process of aligning the author of Common Sense with an excessively dull and boring character in a Thomas Shadwell play, Johnson also manages to supply unimpeachable testimony to his certain knowledge of the proverb. To conjecture, speculation, and surmise, the printed evidence says tace. About this evidence a word or two is required, I think.

In affirming a fraternal bond between the author of Common Sense and Shadwell’s character (and incidentally betraying his knowledge of the proverb), Johnson makes a couple of mistakes: he misidentifies the speaker and misremembers exactly what the actual speaker says. But, as I intimated earlier, in the end, these lapses enhance rather than diminish our admiration of Johnson’s extraordinary memory. It is not the old man, Snarl, in Shadwell’s The Virtuoso (1676) who regularly displays the poverty of his intellectual resources by relying on the proverb as his sole weapon of closure in exchanges of wit; it is the much younger Sir Samuel Hearty who has claim to the dubious honor. In the Dramatis Personae, Snarl is described as “an old, pettish fellow, a great admirer of the last age and a declamer against the vices of this [age], and privately very vicious himself,” whereas Sir Samuel Hearty, another stock character of Restoration drama, a witwoud, is described as “a brisk, amorous, adventurous, unfortunate coxcomb; one that by the help of humorous, nonsensical bywords takes himself to be a wit.” He and Sir Formal Trifle are the witwouds who serve as foils to Longvil and Bruce, the wits (identified as “gentlemen of wit and sense”) who are destined to prevail in the contests of wit and in their quests for the hands of Clarinda and Miranda. Sir Samuel Hearty uses the proverbial expression four times in the play, twice in the first act, once in second act, and once again in the fifth act.
What Johnson puts within quotation marks is really a memorial reconstruction, a paraphrastic version of part of the first speech in which Hearty make use of the proverb. In Johnson's "Appeal" the "old man" says: "for when a young fellow began to prate and be pert," says he, "I silenced him with my old word, Tace is Latin for a candle." In Shadwell's The Virtuoso, however, Samuel Hearty (in Act I, scene i, ll.163-65) expresses his view of someone who was, in his less than discerning judgment, "pretend[ing] to be a wit" as follows: "Whenever he was impertinent, I took him up with my old repartee: Peace, said I, Tace is Latin for a candle." Now it is incontrovertibly true, of course, that Johnson attached the expression to the wrong speaker and deviated from the exact language of the original, but when we put Johnson's "when a young fellow began to prate and be pert" next to Shadwell's "Whenever he was impertinent" and juxtapose "I silenced him with my old word" to "I took him up with my old repartee," we are inevitably struck by the verbal consonance obtaining between the play and the essay. I don't know exactly when Johnson last perused The Virtuoso, but even if he had done so in the fairly recent past, which is unlikely, given his indigence and the exigencies of survival that he confronted daily in 1739, the linguistic similarities in the two passages are quite remarkable. Moreover, it is almost certainly the case that in taking on the role of Cave's Rottweiler and working presumably under the pressure of a deadline, he undoubtedly wrote the "Appeal," as he tells us (in reference to the completion of the Lives) he usually wrote, that is, "hastily . . . working with vigour and haste" (Diaries, Prayers, and Annals, 303-04). Also, if Johnson's recall here is not perfect, the memory not eidetic, the lexical parallels are nonetheless truly impressive and, most important, the sense of Samuel Hearty's remarks is exactly preserved.

And so, with Barnes, we entirely agree that it is highly unlikely (to the point of being almost certainly impossible) that Johnson would have forgotten the proverbial sense of the question, "What is the Latin for a candlestick?" when relating to Boswell his recollections of his boyhood training under the formidably brutal John Hunter. It is not clear, however, that the "candlestick" ever enjoyed the pleasure of bearing a proverbial significance, or that it was inadvertently substituted for "candle," or that Boswell mistook Johnson's word or his sense. There's no question that the "candlestick," because it has "candle" embedded within it, has the potential to evoke the proverb in the minds of those in the know about—or brought to the knowledge of—tace as the appropriate, if unvoiced, response to "What is Latin for a candle." And, indubitably, the anecdote would not have had its peace disturbed if Johnson (and
Boswell after him) had found a suitable illustration of Hunter’s failure to distinguish blameless ignorance from blameworthy negligence in the question, “What is Latin for a pork pie? or a periwig?” At the end of the day, however, I think we can say with more than a moderate degree of security that the anecdote is just fine where and as it is and that the “candlestick” does a perfectly respectable job of capping Johnson’s point about Hunter’s “wrong-headed severity.” Still, we can be grateful to Barnes for opening up a counterfeet can of insubstantial worms, because as a result of his bringing “tace is Latin for a candle” to our attention, we have been able to track down Johnson’s intimate acquaintance with the expression and to gain thereby new evidence of his wide reading and powerful memory. More undoubtedly could be said, but, frankly, I can no longer ignore the steadily increasing roar of my readers, who as one insistently bellow “What is Latin for a candle?” To which, I answer, voicelessly—tace.

—James Battersby

WORKS CITED


Why Dr. Johnson was the First Mr. Everyman

For readers of the classics 2006 marks a significant milestone. We celebrate the 100th birthday of Everyman's Library. In February of 1906 the first fifty volumes of Everyman's Library were issued by the firm of J. M. Dent, thus launching one of the most massive publishing projects of all time. Each volume had a minimum printing of 10,000 copies. These numbers were well beyond Dent's in-house printing capacity. Thus, so that all titles were available simultaneously, he sub-contracted with several other printers.1 May of 1906 saw the issuance of 50 more titles and another 55 by the end of 1906. To complicate matters, several of the early volumes were in such demand that reprints were called for in the first year. This enormous demand caused Dent to decide to build his own printing facility. Everyman's Library books used quality paper, heavy gilding on the spines, and cost only a shilling. Thus, the idea of a library the common man could afford, a library comprehensive in scope and beautiful in design, was born.

From the very start Dent planned an eventual library of exactly 1000 volumes. Following the huge first year output of 155 volumes, the next few years saw equally impressive numbers with 733 complete by the end of 1915. World War I, however, brought the effort to a complete halt, and the old momentum was never resumed. Not until 1956 was the 1000th volume finally published. All references in this article to Everyman's Library volume numbers are in bold print.

The execution of Everyman's Library was the product of three men's efforts: Joseph Dent, his son Hugh, and Ernest Rhys. Joseph Dent provided the capital, perfectionist book binding background and the monomaniacal drive to complete such an endeavor. Rhys contributed editorial acumen, the ability to work hard and well under pressure, and what we would now call a golden Rolodex. He knew virtually everyone in the London literary world. Hugh Dent,

1 Richard Clay and Sons made the heaviest contribution, printing more than half of the first year's output.
already a key employee, possessed the people skills that kept the enterprise from self-destruction under the pressure of numerous deadlines.

When the three men first hatched the idea for Everyman’s Library, they almost immediately decided that *The Life of Johnson* would comprise the first two volumes. While we don't know all of the reasons for this decision, Johnson’s influence on Dent is probably foremost. As an indifferent student at the age of fifteen, Dent first discovered Johnson through a careful reading of Boswell’s *Life*. The impact of this work essentially set the course of Dent’s life. He tells us in his memoirs: “I became interested, not so much in Johnson as in the men who surrounded him; and I was amazed that these greater men, as they seemed to me, should bow down before this old Juggernaut and allow him to walk over them, insult them, blaze out at them and threaten them as if they were his inferiors—men like Edmund Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Oliver Goldsmith...” At last it dawned upon me that it was not the man that they worshipped, but the scholarship for which he stood... I quickly learnt to worship at the same altar, and I bless the day that brought me into touch with Boswell’s *Life*.”

By the time he conceived Everyman’s Library, Dent was already an expert bookmaker and a successful publisher of off-copyright works with a natural nose for what the public would buy. Ernest Rhys was a seasoned editor and critic who knew more authors and books than most men alive at the time. He remained as the general editor of the series for more than forty years until his death in 1946. Rhys was so identified with the Library that he came to be known as “Mr. Everyman.” He frequently gave lectures and was typically introduced as Mr. Everyman. One of the editor’s many responsibilities was to select and persuade someone to write an introduction or foreword to each volume. Because the books were issued in such rapid profusion, Rhys himself was often the introducer by default. In that epic first year of 1906 he produced an astonishing 78 introductions. He ultimately would write some 227

2 The works of all three friends of Johnson would in due course be part of Everyman’s Library: Reynolds Discourses 118; Goldsmith’s *The Vicar of Wakefield* 295, Poems and Plays 415 and *The Citizen of the World; The Bee* 902; and Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* 460 and *Speeches and Letters on American Affairs* 340. Another member of the Club, Thomas Percy, sought Johnson’s advice in publishing his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* issued in two volumes of EML 148-149.
4 At his home Rhys held gatherings for young poets. Some of those in attendance were D. H. Lawrence, Ford Madox Ford, Yeats and Pound. As a young man, Rhys visited America and lived with Walt Whitman for a week.
introductions. He introduced both Boswell’s Life, 1 and 2, and
Boswell’s Tour to the Hebrides, 387.

Had EML existed in his day, Dr. Johnson might well have
predated Rhys as Mr. Everyman (or perhaps Dr. Everyman upon
the award of his degree). Although their work habits were undoubt-
edly very different, Rhys and Dr. Johnson shared an intellectual
expertise that was nearly unique. Both were possessed of an ency-
clopedic knowledge of books and the ability to write under deadline
about these books and their authors. What’s more, Rhys and
Johnson invariably wrote with insight and verve. Often their com-
mentary broke new ground across a range of fields. Rhys in-
duced volumes in the Children’s section as well as Essays, Fiction
(American, English, Russian and French), History, Biography,
Poetry, Classics, Religion, Drama and Travel. Trying to compre-
hend the range of Rhys’s effort evokes the memory of Dr. Johnson’s
work. Starting with his anonymous toil for Gentleman’s Magazine
and the compilation of the Harleian Catalogue, and ending with
The Lives of the Poets, Dr. Johnson was able (if not eager) to write
and criticize and comment on almost any subject without recourse
to much else than his capacious memory.

What books might Johnson have nominated for inclusion in
Everyman’s Library? While this hypothetical exercise is little more
than an entertaining parlor game for Johnsonians, some selections
are obvious. Certainly, the books most quoted in the Dictionary are
on the list. These would include Shakespeare (Complete Works, 153-
155) and the Bible (New Testament, 93 and Ancient Hebrew Litera-
ture, 253-256). Addison (Spectator, 164-167, and Tatler, 993), Bacon
(Essays, 10, and Advancement of Learning, 719), Swift (Gulliver’s
Travels, 60, Journal to Stella, 757, A Tale of a Tub and Other
Satires, 347) and Locke (An Essay Concerning Human Under-
standing, 332, 984, and Two Treatises of Government, 751) are other
EML authors who appear with frequency in the Dictionary. One of
the more heartening choices is Law’s Serious Call to a Devout and
Holy Life, 91. Law’s impact on Johnson is axiomatic among John-
sonians. In the same vein of religious influence, Richard Baxter’s
Autobiography, 868, would have also received Johnson’s approba-

5 Much like Johnson, Rhys was a poet at heart. He published several volumes of poetry and got his start as an editor with The Camelot Series of poetry. Both men realized early on that other kinds of writing were necessary to support themselves.

6 Henry Hitchings in Defining the World (2005) has counted 4167 citations from the Bible in the Dictionary.
tion. The entire Classical Section of EML (some 33 volumes) would be locked in the Doctor's bear-like embrace, while Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son, 823, would just as quickly suffer rejection. Johnson would have applauded the inclusion of Fanny Burney's Evelina, 352, though perhaps not her Diary, 960. The inclusion of Lady Montagu's Letters, 69, might have inspired him to write more courtly verse.7

Johnson himself is well represented in EML. Complete Johnson volumes are The Lives of the Poets, 770-771, and The Rambler, 994; Rasselas is included in Shorter Novels, 856. Portuguese Writings, 986, contains an excerpt from Lobos's Voyage to Abyssinia. And of course he is discussed in numerous works of criticism that are part of the Library. The only significant omission, is the absence of any poetry from Johnson's pen.

When looking at the Everyman's Library list through Dr. Johnson's eyes we cannot, of course, consider books published after his death. It is, however, delicious to guess at how he would have manhandled Lord Macauley (Critical and Historical Essays, 225-226) upon hearing his dining style compared with that of a cormorant. Of further post-mortem note is Dr. Johnson's actual appearance as a character in Thackeray's The Virginians, 507-508.

Finally, in light of new evidence that Johnson and Franklin might have actually met we mention Franklin's Autobiography, 316. Plainly Dr. Johnson, as well as the great American printer, Franklin, would join us in toasting one hundred years of Everyman's Library.

—Terry I. Seymour

Query

Heritage Book Shop in Los Angeles currently is selling a copy of the first edition of Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language whose Preface and "History of the English Language" are marked up with sixty instances of what look to be compositor's notes or proofreader's marks. By far the most common occurrence is when a section of the printed text has been bracketed with the word "out" written in the margin (figure 1). Additionally, each leaf in the "History" has been neatly sliced down the middle, between the columns, and then pasted back together (figure 2).

Assuming these marks denote passages someone wanted excised in a subsequent edition, we looked through W.R. Keast's observations about the differences between the prefaces of the earliest editions of the Dictionary in an article he wrote for Studies in Bibliography 5 (1952), but none of what was eventually changed in the second edition has been marked to be changed in our copy. We also asked librarians at several U.S. institutions to check their copies of the second and third editions to see if these marks had any bearing on these later printings. They didn't. And Robert DeMaria, Jr. has confirmed that none of the notes in the Heritage copy were taken up in any of the editions he examined with Gwin Kolb in "The Preliminaries to Dr. Johnson's Dictionary" published in Studies in Bibliography 48 (1995).

So what's going on here? One explanation could be that an editor of another work based on the material in Johnson may have made these marks. But again, the neat cuts down the middle of the leaves complicate matters, and if someone were to use the prefatory material in this copy for something else entirely, what kind of work would it have been?

One final twist: recently James Caudle has pointed out that the text of the British Library copy of the Dictionary examined by Allen Reddick in his Johnson's Dictionary: The Sneyd-Gimbel Copy (1991) is incomplete, lacking prefatory material, and that the preface in the Heritage copy might very well be related to the British Library's.
Notes and Queries

I wonder, can anyone offer any insight as to what might be going on here? Of course we are interested in trying to figure out whether this is a proof of some kind, but we would also be particularly interested in whether anyone recognizes the handwriting in these images.

—MICHAEL GARABEDIAN

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HERITAGE BOOK SHOP
Howard D. Weinbrot:  
*Aspects of Samuel Johnson: Essays on His Arts, Mind, Afterlife, and Politics*


The sixteen essays in this collection are organized according to the taxonomy of the subtitle. "Arts" (the longest section, filling about half the book) collects seven articles, all previously published: two on Johnson's *Dictionary*, three on his poetry, one on his narrative technique, and one on his use of homely metaphors. "Mind" includes a reprinted piece on Johnson's ideas about poetry (particularly the theory of poetry expounded by Imlac in Chapter 10 of *Rasselas*) with two new essays: one on his attitudes to genre, and one on the skeptical element that several critics have discovered in his thought. "Afterlife" comprises an account of Percival Stockdale and his campaign to denigrate Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* (reprinted), and a survey of Johnson's early reception and reputation in France (here first printed, though forthcoming in another collection). "Johnson and Politics" condenses seven contributions (first printed between 1996 and 2003) to the debate about Johnson's supposed Jacobitism into an introduction to the controversy and three substantial essays: one on whether he refused to take the oaths of abjuration and allegiance, and two on the significance of the passage on Charles XII of Sweden in *The Vanity of Human Wishes*.

Though the subjects of the individual essays thus range widely, the collection is unified by a strong sense of purpose and methodology. In the Introduction, Weinbrot identifies himself as a Chicago neo-Aristotelian of the school of Ronald Crane, and aligns himself with the historical criticism championed in Robert D. Hume's *Reconstructing Contexts* (1999). The declared aim of what Hume calls "Archaeo-Historicism" is the understanding of literary texts within the historical contexts in which they were written, the reconstruction of these contexts to be grounded on hard evidence handled according to strict rules. Literary scholars too often
produce a species of speculative history, developing would-be “historical” arguments that may or may not be historical, and paying scant regard to the evidence needed to support their historical validity. A leitmotiv in Hume’s argument is the need for proper evidence. One of Weinbrot’s great strengths as a critic is the abundance, solidity, and pertinence of the evidence he cites. Each of these essays is amply documented, several with many pages of endnotes. These notes are rich in citations of relevant primary sources, as well as of recent criticism. Weinbrot’s evidential basis is massive: nothing is advanced as a mere opinion, or on the mere authority of a magnus nomen. Several of the essays could be recommended to students as examples of methodology, apart from their Johnsonian interest.

Always a vigorous controversialist, Weinbrot is at his most combative in his contributions to the question of Johnson’s supposed Jacobitism, which a few years ago was the most controverted topic in Johnsonian studies. The debate is of more than Johnsonian interest. The Jacobite interpretation has been advanced most forcefully by J. C. D. Clark, as part of his larger campaign to interpret eighteenth-century Britain as an ancien régime, a backward-looking, confessional state. Clark’s Johnson represents the values of that state. Those who deny or minimize Johnson’s Jacobitism, on the other hand, are more likely to see Johnson’s England as the crucible of the modern world, and to associate Johnson with this modernity. Nicholas Hudson’s Samuel Johnson and the Making of Modern England (2003) exemplifies this approach. Since there is much in the Janus-faced eighteenth century, and in Johnson himself, to support both views, on the larger question opinions will perhaps be determined as much by taste and by temperament as by evidence. Weinbrot, however, in the contributions he has reprinted here, concentrates on two particular problems which are more readily resolved by adducing evidence. The first is the question of whether Johnson was a “non juror,” on which Weinbrot marshals much evidence to confute the Jacobite interpretation, including Johnson’s apparent willingness to stand for Parliament. The second topic is whether the passage on Charles XII of Sweden in The Vanity of Human Wishes should be read as a covert declaration of Jacobite sympathies. Again, Weinbrot adduces a formidable weight of evidence to show how Charles XII was regarded in England at the time of writing, and therefore how Johnson probably expected his readers to respond. Weinbrot’s contextualization is especially welcome as an antidote to the rather casual use that Nicholas Hudson makes of this episode to argue that The Vanity of Human Wishes is “one of the most forceful expressions of the nascent
English imperial mentality of the mid-century” (Samuel Johnson and the Making of Modern England, p. 202). Closer attention to contexts, such as Weinbrot admirably provides, exposes the absurdity of this claim.

Similar in method to the treatment of Charles XII is the 1976 essay which refutes the notion (advanced by Mary Lascelles and supported by other critics) that Johnson missed the ironic intention of Juvenal’s third satire. Through an exhaustive compilation of early critical and scholarly comment, Weinbrot reconstructs the context in which Johnson and his contemporaries probably read the satire, and disqualifies the “ironic” reading as an anachronism. Another essay in total refutation (also published in Anniversary Essays on Johnson’s “Dictionary,” 2005) argues (against J. C. D. Clark, John Barrell, and Alan Reddick) that the selection of quotations in the Dictionary was not driven by a hidden political agenda. One of the new essays is also in this category: it demolishes the suggestion (advanced in various forms by E. C. Mossner, Adam Potkay, Stephen Miller, and others) that, beneath his surface religious orthodoxy, Johnson was at heart a sceptic.

These refutations are never merely negative. Weinbrot’s targets are carefully selected, critics who share his historical approach, so that constructive interpretive debate is possible; and he always has an argument to advance as well as an error to correct. Nor is he always as swashbuckling as he is when fighting the Jacobites. Other essays, while still polemical, serve less to contradict than to refine, to present a more nuanced view of Johnson’s writings and ideas. Thus in an essay on Chapter 10 of Rasselas, Weinbrot first denies that Imlac simply voices Johnson’s ideas about poetry, then proceeds to discriminate which of Imlac’s pronouncements can properly be equated with Johnson’s own notions. In an essay arguing against the familiar complaint that Johnson’s language is excessively abstract and Latinate, Weinbrot shows that Johnson made extensive use of ordinary words and homely metaphors, without claiming that he never used the polysyllabic. Likewise, a new essay takes as its starting point the argument of Willard R. Keast’s “The Theoretical Foundations of Johnson’s Critical” (that Johnson was hostile to the idea of genre and to generic rules), and shows where and in what contexts Johnson found generic distinctions helpful.

Weinbrot also writes informatively and persuasively about Johnson without the stimulus of disagreement. The essay on Percival Stockdale and his antipathy to Johnson (first published in 1993) is a model treatment of a minor author. Neither belittling Stockdale nor promoting him as a great unknown, Weinbrot inves-
tigates and explains the personal and intellectual origins of his hostility to Johnson. The piece on Johnson's reception and reputation in France, a groundbreaking exploration of a strangely neglected theme, shows that Johnson was widely admired in France as a writer before the influence of Boswell made him a biographical oddity. A general survey of Johnson's poetry (reprinted from the Cambridge Companion to Samuel Johnson, 1997) can be recommended as an excellent introduction. Two essays advance dialogic interpretations: one (from 1980) argues that the questions posed by the speaker in The Vanity of Human Wishes are by no means rhetorical but demand to be taken seriously, the other (1986) illustrates Johnson's use of shifts in personal pronouns and other devices to create a more companionate, less didactic relationship with the reader than is commonly assumed. Finally, the oldest (1972) piece in the collection explores how Johnson's ideas about lexicography changed between the Plan of a Dictionary (1746) and the Preface published in 1755.

The old caricature of Johnson as an unthinking dogmatist who unremittingly enforced monolithic opinions in a ponderous, monotonous style is so potent that even those who know its untruth can hardly escape its influence. The Johnson who emerges from these essays provides a valuable and persuasive corrective. He is a pragmatist on many issues, capable of changing his mind (as on the question of what a dictionary ought to do). His moral and critical ideas are complex and nuanced, not unthinking reflexes but responsive to different circumstances and situations. As a moralist and as a critic, he seeks to guide his readers, but from a position of companionship, not from the lofty pulpit of infallibility. He commands a varied and adaptable style. While accepting that there is much that we do not and cannot know, he remains a firm believer in the Christian revelation. This collection, the fruit of more than thirty years study of Johnson, brings to the quest for the historical Johnson a formidable combination of erudition and insight.

—F. P. Lock
Freya Johnston:  
*Samuel Johnson and the Art of Sinking, 1709-1791*


Freya Johnston’s new book, *Samuel Johnson and the Art of Sinking, 1709-1791*, focuses on a well known topic: the tension in eighteenth-century writing and thinking between “great and little, dignified and familiar” subjects and the styles chosen to adorn them (6). Johnston, whose study is structurally conceived, concerns herself primarily with breaking down categorical distinctions between high and low, great and small, with Samuel Johnson as her main test case. Previous treatments of this theme in Samuel Johnson’s writing include William Wimsatt, *Philosophic Words* (1948), Jean Hagstrum, *Samuel Johnson’s Literary Criticism* (1952) and William Edinger, *Johnson and Detailed Representation: The Significance of the Classical Sources* (1997). Johnston’s central point of reference, as the book’s title suggests, is Alexander Pope’s mock rhetorical treatise, *Peri Bathous, or the Art of Sinking in Poetry*. She argues that there are two competing sets of ethical and aesthetic standards by which literature is judged in the eighteenth century, one classical, one Christian. The classical standard insists on propriety of subject and style—that is, as Pope remarks in *An Essay on Criticism*, “diff’rent Styles with diff’rent Subjects sort / As several Garbs with Country, Town, and Court” (ll. 322-23). To ignore this decorum is as ridiculous as clothing a rustic “Clown” in “regal Purple” (l. 321). By contrast, a newer, Christian standard sanctions, and even encourages, the marriage of high style to low subject matter, with its reference point being the incarnation of the Son of God in the body of the human Jesus of Nazareth. Johnston, like Johnson before her, regards the latter, with its melding of high and low as “not necessarily a bad or undesirable thing” (10).

This tension between classical and Christian standards long has been the concern of scholars, at least since the publication of Erich Auerbach’s seminal *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* in 1946. But never before has its relevance to eighteenth-century British literature been explored so scrupulously. I emphasize *scrupulously* because Johnston constructs her
book around a series of detailed—sometimes intensely detailed—close textual readings in which brief, important passages synecdochally exemplify an important work or theme.

Johnston divides her book into four interlocking, intersecting chapters of almost equal length: “Inclusion and Exclusion”; “Voluntary Degradation”: Johnson’s Prefaces and Dedications”; “Diminishing Returns: A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland”; and “Stooping to Conquer: Johnsonian Biography.” This design is both a strength and weakness of the book because topics and texts are addressed, laid aside, and readdressed sometimes within the same chapter (for example, Hazlitt on Wordsworth’s “proud humility” (182-83, 226) and sometimes from chapter to chapter (Peri Bathous appears in all four chapters plus the introduction). Consequently, topics are dealt with very thoroughly, although sometimes diffusely over many pages and several chapters.

The major contribution of Freya Johnston’s study is her emphasis on Samuel Johnson’s rhetorical flexibility in the pursuit of what he regarded as more important goals. Unlike many of his more doctrinaire contemporaries, Johnson, who, incidentally, was more deeply classically learned than most of them, does not waste time worrying about supposedly indecorous combinations of high and low, great and small, in his writing or in his criticism of others’ writing. Thus, in his poetic epitaph on Claudioch Phillips, an itinerant musician, and his elegy on Robert Levet, “an obscure practiser in physick amongst the lower people” (232), the Christian Johnson writes with great dignity about persons who, because of their low social status and awkward manners, likely would have been mocked after the fashion of the dunces in Peri Bathous and the Dunciad by a neoclassical author such as Pope. Moreover, as Johnston astutely demonstrates in her final chapter, Johnson rehabilitates on ethical, not aesthetic grounds, in his Prefaces Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English Poets, authors such as Isaac Watts and Sir Richard Blackmore, who had been satirized by Pope as dunces for their “art of sinking in poetry.” As Johnston revealingly observes in his review of Soame Jenyns’s Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil, moral decency is far more valuable in everyday life than the aesthetics of fine manners—or of any of the fine arts, for that matter.

If there is a shortcoming to Freya Johnston’s thoughtful book, it lies in the scope of her focus, which either might have been sharpened or expanded. By sharpening her focus, Johnston might have been able to eliminate some of the repetitions to which I alluded earlier, and, by so doing, have produced a leaner, tighter, more compelling argument. Conversely, she might have explored Johnson’s
reconciliation of high and low, great and small, within the larger
context of his dialectical habit of mind, which regularly drove him
brilliantly to reconcile seeming opposites within larger syntheses.
W. J. Bate’s *Samuel Johnson* and Paul Fussell’s *Samuel Johnson
and the Life of Writing*, cited in Johnston’s bibliography, are partic-
ularly helpful on this subject. She also missed a number of impor-
tant sources, many published in the last twenty years, which would
have enhanced her study, most notably Blanford Parker’s remark-
able *Triumph of Augustan Poetics* (Cambridge, 1998), which would
have deepened and refined her understanding of Johnson’s rather
complicated relationship to classical and Christian traditions and
sources.

Despite these criticisms, Freya Johnston’s *Samuel Johnson and
the Art of Sinking* helpfully reframes for a new generation of John-
sonians and eighteenth-century scholars some important rhetoric-
al, ethical, and aesthetic concerns. Her first book presages a
bright scholarly future.

—DAVID F. VENTURO

**Tita Chico:**

*Designing Women: The Dressing Room in
Eighteenth-Century English Literature
and Culture*


Samuel Johnson plays a minor role in Tita Chico’s
genealogy of the dressing room, but his appearance, via
James Boswell’s biography, animates her intriguing
discussion of the intimate ties between the dressing room and the
theater. Boswell relates that Johnson halted his visits to the green
room during the production of his tragedy *Irene*, explaining to
David Garrick: “I’ll come no more behind your scenes, David; for the
silk stockings and white bosoms of your actresses excite my
amorous propensities” (55). Chico traces the links between the
eroticized, behind-the-scenes spaces of the newly reconfigured
Restoration tiring room (ancestor of the green room Johnson
renounces) and the architectural innovation of the dressing room,
a space poised between privacy and theatricality, autonomy and artifice.

In her investigation of the dressing room as a physical, literary, and metaphorical space, Chico balances such historical contexts with literary readings as she recovers a familiar if strangely overlooked eighteenth-century trope that both reflected and shaped changing perceptions of women during the long eighteenth century. Many of Chico's key materials, such as Belinda's toilet, Celia's cabinet, Pamela's and Clarissa's closets, and Lady Delacour's boudoir, make regular appearances in feminist, post-colonial, and materialist accounts of the period and her readings draw on the work of Laura Brown, Felicity Nussbaum, Claudia Johnson, and Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, among others. She juxtaposes well-known illustrations of the dressing room with more obscure examples as she tracks a constellation of issues such as privacy, gender roles, aesthetics, epistemology, education, and motherhood. The dressing room emerges as a space in which women could "design" themselves through the literal materials of clothing and cosmetics and through the figurative tools of contemplation, reading, and plots (13). But Chico's extended study of the dressing-room trope also reveals how women were designed by others and fitted to gender codes (13). In three parts, she tells the story of how the dressing-room trope changed from a space of eroticism and theatricality to one of maternal, feminine virtue. Her chronological account also traces a shift from satire to the domestic novel. Rather than emphasize differences between genres, she delineates their intersections, as refracted through the dressing room.

Chapters 1 and 2 serve as introductions to the cultural and architectural history of the dressing room. Chico seeks to offer a "corrective for the erasure of women in general from theories of the closet" (43), as seen in Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's treatment of the queer closet. Moving from theoretical contexts to material ones, she develops two important insights from domestic inventories. She foregrounds the inventories' writing materials and books as evidence of the dressing room's pedagogical function. She further documents how dressing rooms were only available to a small sector of upper-class women despite their literary currency. The discrepancy she uncovers between the literary popularity of the trope and its relative absence in the historical record conveys a cultural obsession with female secrecy, transgression, and independence (although one wonders about the influence of authors' and readers' status).
The following three chapters treat the famous dressing rooms of Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift, but also touch on lesser-known depictions by John Oldman, Edmund Waller, Allan Ramsey, and John Breval. Chico understands satirical portraits of the dressing room as a reflection of the competing interests of women and satirists (81). She coins the term “double take” to describe the satirist’s clandestine gaze on his aesthetic rival as he claims to uncover an inside and, therefore truthful, view of the dressing room that operates beyond the scope of a woman’s self-presentation (95). Chapter 3 offers a persuasive reading of poetic inventories that attempt to order the material and epistemological chaos of the dressing room. Chico reveals how these inventories, composed via several lines of exhaustive detail, suggest the satirist’s failure to master the dressing room (105). In chapter 4, she tackles face painting and shows how Pope’s The Rape of the Lock pits Belinda’s visual painting, via cosmetics, against the art of poetic painting, or ekphrasis. Chico pairs her reading of the poem’s aesthetic contest between ekphrasis and cosmetics with Joseph Addison’s and Richard Steele’s Spectator 41, which labels women who paint as “Picts.” Chico comments on the visual allusions of the Spectator label, but a discussion of the ancient Picts, known for their body painting, might have strengthened her point about women and cosmetics. The last chapter in this section concludes with an evocative discussion of Swift’s epistemological experiments in the dressing room. Chico shows how Swift mocks the empiricism of the Moderns, revealing how “The Lady’s Dressing Room” constitutes an experiment in which Strephon tests the hypothesis that Celia is a goddess (144). She contends that the poem exposes Strephon’s dubious methodology of experimentation and speculation, one that depends on the objectification and subjugation of women (156).

In the last two chapters, Chico works with a more flexible definition of the dressing room, arguing that closets, boudoirs, and brothels, as well as concepts such as fashion and self-presentation, incorporate features of the trope. After three chapters of satiric and scatological depictions of dressing rooms, domestic novels are something of a relief. In chapter 6, Chico investigates Pamela and Clarissa, elucidating how Richardson redefines the dressing room as a virtuous space. In contrast with Pamela’s unstable triumph over the erotic associations of the dressing room, she sees Clarissa holding a firmer, if sometimes questionable, grip on the dressing room’s potential as a space of female education. Her reading of Clarissa includes an intriguing section on Clarissa’s performance.
of satire in Mrs. Sinclair's brothel. She persuasively argues that the dressing room's technologies of privacy contribute to the domestic novel's production of subjectivity (190). In her last chapter, she treats several novels, including Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752), Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778), and Maria Edgeworth's *The Absentee* (1812), but Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801) functions as the lynchpin of her argument. She reads *Belinda* as an attempt to incorporate the satiric legacy of Pope and Swift while also introducing the possibility of change into the dressing-room trope. Although Edgeworth trades Lady Delacour's theatrical boudoir for a maternal space of transparent virtue, her novel joins the dressing room to generic debates about romance and narrative form (221). Chico concludes that Edgeworth contributes a "new means of negotiating generic difference—using the trope of the dressing room to debate the merits of moral tales over romances" (230).

Chico's sharpest insights emerge from her analysis of the architectural and literary spaces of the dressing room, including her vigorous discussions of the relationship between literature and architecture and the domestic novel's use of satire. Although she notes the absence of women in Sedgwick's closet theory, readers might wonder why she avoids attacks on the male dressing room. She characterizes the male dressing room, like the gentleman's closet, as the province of male prerogative. Prints from the 1770s of foppish Macaronis primping in their dressing rooms might present an interesting, if atypical, parallel to the unstable metaphors Chico skillfully draws from the female dressing room. However, the textual and visual examples of dressing rooms that fill one's mind after reading this compelling study reflect Chico's sophisticated analysis of familiar and unusual literary moments and her diligent recovery of a fascinating trope.

—CHLOE WIGSTON SMITH
Arthur H. Cash: 
John Wilkes: The Scandalous Father 
of Civil Liberty


Arthur Cash says in his “afterword” that his biography of John Wilkes is not definitive and is not meant for scholars but “for a general audience of well-read, intelligent people.” Such modesty is not quite accurate, since scholars (especially those new to the extraordinary John Wilkes and to this crucial period of English and American political life) will find this book richly rewarding, not only informative but entertaining. The author of what is indeed the definitive biography of Wilkes’s friend and contemporary, Laurence Sterne, Professor Cash has a compelling as well as racy story to tell. And he tells it with verve and a sure narrative touch, memorably evoking eighteenth-century circumstances of his subject’s astonishing political career and tumultuous personal life. For general readers new to the period, his colorful evocations of Wilkes’s life and milieu will startle and entertain, and indeed one of the many virtues of Cash’s book is its reminders of the differences between life then and now. One example that hits home for American readers is that Wilkes’s scandalous personal life posed no hindrance for his political career. A notorious libertine and indefatigable sexual athlete, whose charm and wit overcame his remarkable ugliness (Cash tells us that Wilkes liked to say that he needed only “twenty minutes to talk away my face”), Wilkes’s sexual exploits occupy a good deal of the narrative. Cash is no prude, and he clearly delights in marking each and every one of Wilkes’ many mistresses. Wilkes, he notes, was a sexual as well as political radical, and we learn that he liked his lovers to take off all their clothes to make love, this at a time when “English and French women almost never disrobed to make love, and in London people were sometimes arrested for having intercourse in the nude.” Thus, as Cash remarks, Wilkes took special delight with his Italian mistress, the actress, Gertrude Corradini, in getting “naked together.” But these are incidental delights. The most valuable and enjoyable part of Cash’s book is his detailed (and equally lively) drama-
tization of how crucial Wilkes's political career was for the establishment in England of many of those civil liberties we take for granted and which nowadays in the United States some would say are endangered by the Bush administration. Wilkes's story begins in fairly conventional terms; a feckless and profligate young gentleman aspires to a political career and manages, after a false start in Berwick, Scotland, to enter Parliament in 1757 as the member from Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire, where the Wilkes family spent their summers. Cash evokes Wilkes's first Parliament vividly, with the Pitt ministry managing the triumphant Seven Years War with France for imperial domination in Europe and America. He's scrupulous, however, about Wilkes's limitations, noting that "in this exciting Parliament, Wilkes did not shine" (50). So nearsighted that he had to hold his script right up to his eyes, articulating poorly and lisping because of his bad teeth, he was no orator like Pitt or Burke, and moreover he failed to win from the ministry the patronage he had hoped for. But subsequent events proved that he was an incendiary political activist and polemicist with tremendous rhetorical powers. With the coming to the throne of George III and the elevation to power of the Scottish Earl of Bute, Wilkes began to attack the government in *The North Briton*, a periodical of which he was the editor and chief contributor, although assisted in its production by his friend and fellow rake, the poet Charles Churchill. Matters reached a head with number 45 in April 1763, an attack on the king's speech dismissing Parliament a few days previously. A furious George III demanded that Wilkes be arrested. Cash narrates the complex and tangled sequence of subsequent events masterfully; since the case against Wilkes was weak—there was no evidence that he was in fact the author of the number—a "general warrant" was issued, giving the authorities license to arrest individuals indiscriminately. Printers associated with the paper were arrested; Wilkes's house was searched and ransacked; privately printed copies of the bawdy parody of Pope, "An Essay on Woman," that he had helped compose turned up; and he was imprisoned in the Tower of London and in due course expelled from Parliament and charged with seditious libel. In the aftermath of a duel in which he narrowly escaped death, Wilkes at the end of 1763 fled to France. Four years later, he returned; as Cash puts it dramatically, Wilkes, "an outlaw, penniless and in debt over head and ears, surreptitiously entered the City of London" (204). In the months that followed, he was arrested again and then elected while in prison to Parliament from Middlesex, riding the crest of popularity with the citizens of the City, which was, Cash explains, "the most politically advanced and
dynamic constituency in Great Britain” (206). Expelled by Parliament, and then after being re-elected to the same seat expelled again, he became as a result more and more a symbol of liberty, a rallying cry (“Wilkes and Liberty!”), an embodiment of resistance to tyranny for many Englishmen and for the rebellious American colonists.

Cash is nothing if not thorough, and if his admirable book has a flaw it may be in the exhaustive quality of his narrative, in which one feels at times overwhelmed by the day-to-day details of Wilkes’s escapades; they occasionally give the book a diary-like quality. But this particularity is more than compensated for by the fascinating variety of Wilkes’s life that Cash reveals, his involvement in the intellectual as well as political world of his time. For example, in Paris he quickly came to move along with David Hume in the dazzling company of the French philosophes such as Diderot, d’Holbach, and Helvétius, and when in Geneva he paid a visit to Voltaire. Later, on the verge of the American Revolution, Wilkes was in touch with colonial leaders such as John and Samuel Adams and John Hancock, and in London he was on intimate terms with American agitators such as Arthur Lee and Richard Penn, William’s grandson, with the famous cross-dresser, the Chevalier d’Eon, and with the French playwright, Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, who would shortly succeed in supplying the colonists with arms from Louis XVI.

Throughout this sometimes breathless and action-packed narrative, impossible to summarize in a review, Cash also traces the evolution in Wilkes’s political thinking as these events unfold, and as he becomes, thanks to the blundering of his enemies, the embodiment of English liberty, the “radical” champion of the common people who rallied to the cause. But Wilkes, Cash the careful scholar is at pains to emphasize, never ceased to be a monarchist; he was a moderate and reformist Whig, and by our standards no radical. Indeed, the last phases of Wilkes’s career bear this out dramatically in his role during the Gordon Riots.

—JOHN RICHETTI
Gwin J. Kolb and Robert DeMaria, Jr.: 
Johnson on the English Language

The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, Volume XVIII 

Gwin Kolb’s Final Work

Gwin Kolb’s final work is Johnson on the English Language, appropriately appearing on the 250th anniversary of the publishing of the Dictionary, and the 50th anniversary of the publication of his own Dr. Johnson’s Dictionary. It is fitting that the volume contains only pieces related to, or from, the Dictionary, Johnson’s statements on language in such works as the Rambler, Idler, Adventurer, and the Plays of William Shakespeare having already been published in their respective volumes. Published in appendices in this volume are “A Short Scheme for compiling a new Dictionary of the English Language,” a manuscript reproduced in facsimile with a transcription, and a facsimile of a draft of The Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language. The main body of the volume contains the Plan, and from the Dictionary (1755), the Preface, “The History of the English Language,” and “A Grammar of the English Tongue.” It also includes original material Johnson wrote for later editions of the Dictionary: from the first abridged edition (1756) it includes the Preface, and from the fourth folio edition (1773), the “Advertisement to this Edition.” As would be expected the introductions and notes are thorough, erudite, and well written, and a pleasure to read. Even those who think they know well a familiar work like the Preface to the Dictionary will learn something about its composition, textual history, sources, reception, or influence. Finally, a comprehensive index gives the reader ready access to Johnson’s ideas and the scholarship about them.

Johnson on the English Language is a pioneering work in a way that may surprise even the most seasoned Johnsonian. In the 250 years since its publication, the Preface to the Dictionary has been

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1 The following is a version of a portion of the obituary of Gwin Kolb that will appear in the fall in the East-Central Intelligencer.
published an incalculable number of times, yet there has never been a scholarly edition until now; for that matter, none of the pieces in this volume have been critically edited. The amount of collation required by Gwin and Ruth Kolb, and Robert DeMaria, Jr., in order to establish the text for each piece makes it clear why this daunting task has not been performed previously. To discover the variations in the texts from the Dictionary it was necessary for the editors to collate six authoritative folio editions against the first folio edition, and to collate six authoritative abridged editions against the first abridged edition. Hundreds of decisions were required to relegate variants introduced by anonymous amanuenses or compositors to historical textual notes, and to retain the revisions by Johnson, in order to produce texts that can be read with confidence as representing Johnson's intentions.

All bibliographical and textual enterprises are by their very nature provisional; there is always the possibility of the discovery of a new edition, a new manuscript, or a hitherto unrecognized source. The complexity and cost of this editorial undertaking makes it unlikely that the writings will again be critically edited; it is fortunate they fell into such capable hands; two (three) editors who, in an imperfect world, have reached a high level of perfection, and prepared a model edition likely to stand the test of time.

Gwin's coadjutrix on this volume, his edition of Rasselas and Other Tales, and all of his other scholarly writings, was his wife of sixty-two years, Ruth, who he says, "sustained and shared his labor for more than sixty years." The contributions to Johnson on the English Language by Ruth Kolb are graciously acknowledged by DeMaria: "She has been very nearly a third co-editor, . . . continuing faithfully through to the conclusion of the work. She provided essential help in the laborious collations necessary to establish the text, and she worked on every other phase of the project." DeMaria modestly describes himself as having "joined the team" of Gwin and Ruth Kolb in editing and preparing the volume for the press.

Those of us who had the privilege of calling Gwin friend will always remember his generosity, his wisdom, his sense of humor, his old-fashioned Southern charm and manners, and the soft Mississippi accent that sixty years in Hyde Park never erased. His Dr. Johnson's Dictionary: Essays in the Biography of a Book, and his two monumental editions of Johnson's writings, ensure that all Johnsonians forever will remember him.

—O M Brack, Jr.
Arizona State University
Remembrances

Gwin J. Kolb (1919-2006)

Gwin Kolb died on 3 April in Chicago. He was one of the greatest students and teachers of Samuel Johnson who ever lived. He taught and inspired several generations of Johnsonians as a teacher at the University of Chicago and the several other colleges and universities at which he held visiting posts over the years. Gwin was first and foremost a teacher, which for him meant establishing lines of communication with other people that were both academic, ethical, and, in the best sense, personal. Teaching was for Gwin a matter of communicating not only knowledge and not only method, but a love of knowledge and a respect for method. In addition, for him, the communication between student and teacher was mutual: he genuinely respected and often admired his students as much as they did him. This was a startling revelation for many of his students, since his comprehensive knowledge of Johnson and many other subjects, though he wore his learning lightly, was remarkable.

Gwin clearly became a true student and a true teacher early in life. He was a highly decorated graduate of Millsaps College in Mississippi; a member of the class of 1941, he was a loyal alumnus who understood the importance of undergraduate education. It was at Millsaps that he met his wife Ruth Godbold through grading her papers; she became his companion in every aspect of his life for sixty-two years. In the environs of Millsaps, too, Gwin met Eudora Welty with whom he had a life-long social and literary relationship. Both Gwin and Ruth remained true to their roots as hill-country Mississippians from Millsaps—always retaining their beautiful accents, their old friends, and their love of liberal arts education. Gwin regretted the advance of professionalism in the academy and lamented the consequently diminished respect for teaching, particularly undergraduate teaching. He was immensely loyal to the University of Chicago, but he wished it had remained

1 It would be contrary to Gwin’s teaching not to note that I draw in some parts of this remembrance on a similar piece that I published in The Caxtonian, vol. XIV, no. 6 (June 2006), pp. 5-6.

There are several other remembrances of Gwin in that volume. The most notable of the many obituaries appeared in the New York Times, 14 April 2006, and the Independent, 18 April 2006.
more thoroughly faithful to its mission for undergraduates. I recall discussing with him the change in teaching loads over the years at Chicago. The standard assignment for the three trimesters when Gwin began teaching was three, three, and three. "It is now two, two, and zero," I can hear him saying, "but I don't believe the quality of research has advanced all that much. Are today's teachers producing more and better work than Wayne Booth, or Ronald Crane, or Sheldon Sachs did under the old teaching load? I doubt it very much."

Deep as his commitment was to teaching undergraduates and to an older, less professionalized ideal of professorial responsibility, Gwin was also a consummate professional. In 1955 Gwin both won the Quantrell Prize for "excellence in undergraduate teaching," and he published, with James Sledd, Dr. Johnson's Dictionary: Essays in the Biography of a Book. The special contribution of this work is to show in great detail exactly how Johnson's Dictionary came into being, how it changed through the course of the eighteenth century, and how it was received. Sledd and Kolb, as the book will forever be known, represents an immense advance on earlier accounts of the Dictionary, and it will always be the foundation of our knowledge of Johnson's great book, even though some scholars of the next generation have been able to contribute new information and added detail. Sledd and Kolb's distinction and importance as scholars derives not only from the fact that that they found out more about the Dictionary than their predecessors, but also from their new approach to the subject. In assembling their picture of Johnson's work, they focused on the facts that were discoverable in books, in letters, and in manuscripts. They did not allow anyone's feelings for Dr. Johnson, the great Cham of literature, to interfere with the science of their approach.

Thirty-five years passed between the publication of Dr. Johnson's Dictionary and the appearance of Gwin's next major production, his definitive edition of Rasselas, Volume 16 in the Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson. In that time, however, Gwin edited (often in collaboration) five useful books, and he published thirty-three articles, mostly on Johnson. He also served as head of the Humanities division of the College for two years, and for nine years he was the chairman of the English department. When he left the chairmanship, Gwin became the co-editor of Modern Philology and served in that capacity for sixteen years. These are only the most prominent, and most exhausting, of the many administrative tasks he undertook. This central period of Gwin's career is marked by extensive service to the University of Chicago and to his profession; it represents a full career in itself—

62
a career of teaching, research, and service extended over a thirty-five year period.

Gwin retired from full-time teaching in 1989, and in 1990 he published his Rasselas, a work which he began as a graduate student. Gwin's dissertation (Chicago, 1949) was, by his own account, a rough draft of the splendidly complete edition that appeared in 1990. As a graduate student Gwin learned the editorial techniques that he applied with consummate skill in the final product—the "theory of the copy text" as developed by W.W. Gregg, and the emphasis on the processes of composition, publication, and reception. The writer, in this way of proceeding, is clearly secondary to the text. Speculation about his inner life, where present at all, is couched in skepticism, whereas the life of the text is paramount. What mattered to Gwin was the place of the text among its "generic antecedents," as he called them. This was far more important than the place of the work in the life of the author or its place in the even more abstract realm of intellectual history. Gwin, of course, could use biographical and historical facts to understand the work and even to explain something about its generation, but it was the text and its "relatives" that really mattered. This approach makes for a stern discipline; it is so much easier to go on about the author and what he has expressed—especially when the author is as magnetic and as compelling as Johnson. Only through such discipline, however, can editorial work succeed in its own sphere.

In his notes on Rasselas Gwin decided to depart boldly from the principles of the Yale edition by providing much more thorough commentary than the founders of that edition directed. In these notes, Gwin traces the indebtedness of the text to earlier works and, in an important sense, fills out the history of its composition. The notes suggest what the author of Rasselas might have known, and they draw us closer to the intellectual conditions under which the book was created. Gwin puts us at Johnson's side, in his library, and in what might well be his memory (without invoking his dining manners, his aperçus, or other irrelevant biographical features). But, what did Gwin think of Johnson the man? We talked about this sometimes. Gwin's admiration for Johnson's intellect was boundless, and he imagined he was a person of many aspects and many moods, but he did not fantasize about meeting him; he felt Johnson would probably not be interested in him, and he wondered how easy he would be with Johnson's sometimes rough manners and his abruptness with those around him. Gwin was content to have spent a lifetime with Johnson's works; he did not have to know the man.

In retirement Gwin continued to teach on visiting appointments and in the summer school. He also continued to publish articles and
he worked steadily on Volume 18 of the Yale Edition, Johnson on the English Language. (OM Brack offers an appreciation of Gwin's work on this volume in the book review section above.) In the autumn of 1993 Gwin enjoyed a Frederick and Marion Pottle Fellowship to the Beinecke Library for work on the edition. It is difficult to imagine a more appropriately chosen fellow. Gwin and Ruth worked ardently on the edition that fall, but they found time, characteristically, to thank their host librarians with delightful lunches and time also to meet new people and to encourage students and younger scholars. Gwin's persistent and sincere encouragement of younger scholars was certainly one of the hallmarks of his life. He did it graciously, honestly, and with untiring pleasure; he gave one heart to perform difficult tasks, and he increased the self-respect of every worthy person he met.

Gwin is survived by his wife Ruth, his children Jack and Alma Dean, by two granddaughters, and by generations of students. The Kolb family asks that friends interested in making contributions on Gwin's behalf, send them either to the Gwin and Ruth Kolb ASECS Travel Fund (ASECS, PO Box 7867, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC 27109) or to the The Library Society, the University of Chicago Library, 1100 E. 57th Street, Chicago, 60637.²

² A scheme to provide Ruth Kolb with a modest but steady supply of flowers has been started by her friends. Contributions may be made by calling Cornell Florist (773-324-1651).