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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 1 December; those for the September issue are due 1 June.
recently, in the mail—the actual, material, non-electronic post—I received two books about Johnson in languages I do not understand. Fortunately, both contain enough material in English for me to make out their subjects. The first is a work in Chinese by an occasional contributor to the JNL, Tian Ming Cai. An appended table of contents in English, and a note from John Byrne (who acted as intermediary in sending the book), shows that the work includes translations of the Life of Savage and the Life of Cowley with some appendices: “A General View of Johnson Study Abroad” and “My Trip to Johnson’s Hometown: Lichfield.” Readers of the JNL may have seen previews of these works in recent issues (LXIV, 2 [September 2013] and LXI, 1 [March 2010]). Of course, being incapable of reading this book, I have little to say, but I note the somewhat surprising choice of “Cowley” to accompany “Savage.” I applaud the choice because the Life of Cowley is one of my favorites, and Johnson evidently thought it the best of his Lives because of the essay on the metaphysical poets (Boswell’s Life, IV.38). Perhaps “Cowley” and “Savage” are the best of the Lives and that’s the plain and simple answer to the question of why they were chosen. The book was published in 2013 in Beijing by the International Culture Publishing Company.

The other book I received is in Japanese. This work is by Isamu Hayakawa and its title, in the translation provided, is Dr. Johnson’s Dictionary in the Context of the Eighteenth-Century Enlightenment in England. It was published in Yokohama by Shunpu-sha Publishing also in 2013. There is a brief English introduction, and many (perhaps all) of the quotations of the Dictionary, and English commentary on the Dictionary, are in their original language. The English introduction includes brief summaries of the eleven chapters and the appendix. This list shows that the book includes Japanese translations of the Plan and Preface; separate chapters on the history of British lexicography before Johnson, “A view of academies for establishing an elegant ‘national language,’” and the history of lexicography between Johnson and the OED. Several chapters treat Johnson’s lexicographical principles and his practice, and one is devoted to “Quotations from Johnson’s Dictionary as an illustration of accumulated British wisdom and knowledge.” The appendix is a list of works quoted in Johnson’s Dictionary with
a count of the number of times each is referenced in the first and
fourth editions combined. This list, like the very good bibliography,
is useful even for those who read English but not Japanese. The list
clearly makes use of the Cambridge University Press CD-ROM of
the Dictionary, edited by Anne MacDermott, and probably uses
studies of the quotations, such as Lewis Freed’s 1939 Cornell Uni-
versity dissertation, which is cited in the bibliography. Looking it
over myself, I find that the list is not absolutely complete, but it
seems very good nevertheless. Overall, this is a vast, handsome
book (566 pp.) and, as far as I can tell, a good candidate for the
shortlist of important books about Johnson’s Dictionary.

Given China’s skyrocketing economy and our nation’s, as well as
the world’s, “pivot to the Pacific,” it is hard not to reflect that these
books are further evidence of the growing importance of eastern
Asia in all aspects of human life. The cornerstone of the western
literary tradition, Virgil’s Aeneid, concerns a translatio imperii, a
translation of empire westward from Troy, in Asia, to the shores of
Italy. Later writers tracked the course of empire as it went further
west to England and then to America. In the wake of empire—or at
its side—went the muses. (Adam Potkay writes very engagingly
about this westward movement in the recently published Blackwell
Companion to British Literature, volume 3). Americans are used to
a further westering that locates the cutting edge of our culture on
the shores of the Pacific, somewhere between Haight-Ashbury and
Hollywood. Now it would appear that empire and the muses have
gone so far west that they are again in the east. Having visited
China last summer, I can report that the cities of Beijing and
Shanghai are bigger, newer, more populous, and more frenetic than
London, New York, or Los Angeles. Our hero once remarked that
“the full tide of human life is at Charing Cross.” In later times
Americans may justly have located that tide in Times Square, but
now we have to confess that the full tide of human life is on the
Bund in Shanghai. Looking across the Huang-po River to the
impossible verticalities of Pudang, one can at least be happy that
Johnson has a foothold there—a good old-fashioned, paper-and-ink
foothold.

Robert de Maria, Jr.
As you can imagine, I consider it a great honor to stand before everyone here as tonight’s speaker. When I recently reviewed last year’s keepsake—that magnificent work on Johnsonian Societies in America—my eyes inevitably drifted to the names of the distinguished scholars, writers, and Johnsonians who have spoken to our group since its founding in 1946. Doing so reminded me yet again that speaking before this group, and in the shadow of the worthies who have spoken before, is not only a great honor, but a pretty daunting task. And many people here tonight are my friends: if they don’t like what they hear, they won’t hesitate for a second to “toss and gore” me, as Boswell puts it. So once again, George [Davidson], thanks for calling upon me and giving me this opportunity to try to keep my friendship, as Johnson says, “in constant repair.”

Let me begin this talk on Johnson’s sense of humor by presenting an anecdote about one of my own friends here tonight, Bob DeMaria. When I first met Bob—“Professor DeMaria” to me then—I found myself in a pretty uncomfortable situation. I was on a job interview, and Bob and his charming wife Joanne were leading me around on that odd springtime ritual in American universities, the Campus Tour. As those who work at Vassar learn early on, the beauty of the campus makes a powerful impression on outsiders. Not only does Vassar boast a “Shakespeare Garden,” where there is a living version of many plants named in Shakespeare’s plays, but the college also adorns many of its notable trees with plaques, much the way the London County Council marks the houses of historically meaningful people with inlaid light-blue signs. I’d seen plaques on trees before, but never so many. The sheer horticultural beauty of Vassar’s campus, however, ill-suited a long-impoverished grad student who had come to define true pleasure as spending
hour after hour in the basement reading room of a library in a tough, post-industrial Northeastern city [New Haven]. My study of Johnson, and my devotion to his bracing writing on the pastoral life, made my situation worse. Inevitably, long silences ensued. I did know, however, Bob’s splendid book on Johnson’s Dictionary, and imagining that he’d at least have some sympathy for my now hard-to disguise awkwardness, I ventured a question, to change the mood. “Professor DeMaria,” I said, smiling, “do you remember Johnson’s definition of tree?” My interviewer’s face quickly brightened, thank God!, as he struggled to recall the definition. After a moment or two, I broke the silence and said, “Tree: A large vegetable rising, with one woody stem, to a considerable height.” Bob smiled in joy! We both laughed. (Who knows what Joanne thought of this little to-and-fro between her husband and a grad student!)

I begin with this anecdote to emphasize just how much our sense of humor depends on historical context. For while we justifiably laugh today at that definition of tree, for Johnson, the definition undoubtedly wasn’t funny at all, as the succeeding long, scientific extract in the Dictionary from Philip Miller, the famed Chelsea Physic Gardener, suggests. The meaning of the word vegetable, in Johnson’s time, meant plants, not edible plants. Edmund Burke, for example, uses the word as Johnson does: “It is not the oak, the ash, or the elm, or any of the robust trees of the forest, which we consider beautiful; they are awful and majestic; they inspire a sort of reverence. It is the delicate myrtle, it is the orange, it is the almond, it is the jasmine, it is the vine, which we look on as vegetable beauties.” Certainly that was not funny either. When we consider Johnson’s spirited comments on the weather, we can confidently say that the word vegetable may endow the passage with a special linguistic kick for us, but it probably didn’t for Boswell, who himself uses it in its normal eighteenth-century meaning:

It happening to be a very rainy night, I made some common-place observations on the relaxation of nerves and depression of spirits which such weather occasioned; adding, however that it was good for the vegetable creation... . Johnson... answered with a smile of ridicule, “Why yes, Sir, it is good for vegetables, and

3 Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language (1755), s.v. tree.
for the animals who eat those vegetables, and for the animals who eat those animals." 5

All this talk of trees and vegetables I introduce to suggest that Johnson’s own sense of humor is still more elusive than we might think, regardless of how much joy his words bring us today. And although there have been great advances in recent years in our understanding of Johnson’s intellectual biography, in part because of the achievements of many of you in this room, our understanding of Johnson’s sense of humor still remains rather embryonic. Surprisingly, very few scholarly studies address this matter directly. Jack Lynch’s superb new collection, *Samuel Johnson in Context*, to which many of us here tonight have contributed, contains forty-seven chapters on various aspects of Johnson’s world, but not one of them primarily addresses Johnson’s widely loved sense of humor. 6 (I myself didn’t notice the absence, until recently.) And the few scholars who have written on this important dimension of Johnson’s life tend to see his sense of humor as relatively static, as if Johnson’s sense of humor remained more or less the same over the course of his long literary and social life. They seem to presuppose, unwittingly, that the events of the day and the historical transformations of the contexts in which Johnson lived—a life surrounded by “literature and literary men in Great Britain, for near half a century,” to use the words from the title page of Boswell’s *Life*—did not much influence his sense of humor. This I find not so much wrong, as incomplete.

Surely one of the most deservedly influential studies is W. J. Bate’s “Johnson and Satire Manqué,” grandly published in a Grolier Club collection honoring Donald Hyde in 1970. 7 I think it’s fair to say that this essay served as the foundation for Bate’s conception of Johnson’s sense of humor in his biography of the mid-1970s, as others have suggested, too. 8 (By the way, the core idea of that essay was first delivered as a talk to the Johnsonians in 1958. As correspondence in the Beinecke proves, James M. Osborn, the great scholar, editor, and biographer, and the Chairman that year, spent considerable effort easing this talk out of Bate, which Bate delivered from notes.) You’ll recall Bate’s principal idea: Johnson, a

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JOHNSON. (smiling)

man supremely qualified to become a satirist, writes works that show strong elements of satire, but that ultimately unfold in non-satiric ways. "[R]idicule, anger, satiric protest are always in the process of turning into something else. It is the process that is important." An obvious example would be, say, Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*, where he famously Christianizes the last section of Juvenal's Satire X. But while Bate's essay is unquestionably compelling—it's certainly among the best things he wrote—I wonder if he tends to find too much consistency over too many years in Johnson's sense of humor.

A second powerful treatment of Johnson's sense of humor is John Vance's excellent essay, "The Laughing Johnson." Published more than twenty years ago, Vance argues that Johnson liked to cultivate his "teasing nature." "Through his vigorous and brash method of needling[,]" writes Vance, Johnson "'shook' laughter or at least a grudging smile from his many friends. He could not abide in social situations a dour countenance or an air of pomposity or solemnity. Johnson saw the corrective and purgative benefits to be derived from exposing oneself to the kind of teasing he endured from others and indulged in with alacrity and pleasure." This conception, like Bate's, makes a lot of sense. Yet by design, Vance concentrates on the degree to which Boswell invented Johnson by means of narrative art. And the essay tells us little about the variety of those high-spirited, humorous moments in Johnson's writing. Like Bate, Vance offers an important, but limited view of Johnson's complicated sense of humor.

I think we can begin to extend our understanding of Johnson's sense of humor if we attend to its development—its evolution, over the course of many years. And when we do this, we see a much less static sense of humor. Johnson himself was especially sensitive to how people's mental lives change over the course of life. "Hard it would be," Johnson once wrote in a note to himself for one of his *Rambler* essays, "if men entered life with the same views with which they leave it" (*Life*, 1:206). Gwin Kolb, among others, has emphasized this important aspect of Johnson's career. As Kolb wrote in a superb book review towards the end of his life, "a number of Johnson's opinions were decidedly not monolithic, [and] shifted and evolved with the passing of time and circumstances." Like many of Johnson's ideas, I believe Johnson's sense of humor was

9 Bate, "Satire Manqué," p. 150.
decidedly not monolithic; it, too, shifted and evolved with the passing of time and circumstances. And it did so at a time when wit and laughter themselves emerged and remained vibrant topics for many years.

In the brief time allotted to us this evening, then, let’s concentrate on a few passages that touch on Johnson’s involvement in the century’s debates about ridicule, jesting, low buffoonery, laughter, and merriment from three different times of his life. Let’s look first at an example of his early journalism—his essay in the Gentleman’s Magazine on John Gay’s epitaph. Then let’s look at the period just after he published his Dictionary—the late 1750s and early 1760s, when he wrote book reviews for the Literary Magazine, wrote various journalistic essays for the Idler, and edited Shakespeare. And then finally, let’s look at a few of the more memorable passages from Boswell’s Life, drawn from his later years. Although I must be cursory, even these brief glimpses should suggest that if Johnson begins his literary career strongly shaped by the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century instinct to ridicule from on high, and to reject the “low,” he tends to end it well aware of “laughter’s potential for geniality and generosity,” to use the words of Vic Gatrell in his superb recent book, City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London.¹² I think we’ll find that the evolution of Johnson’s sense of humor, in the end, may not be that surprising at all: as Johnson once said to Boswell, “Why, Sir, I am a man of the world. I live in the world, and take, in some degree, the colour of the world as it moves along” (Life, 1:427).

When Johnson was setting out as a writer in the 1730s, expressive, raucous laughter, jesting, and various forms of what Boswell later called “low jocularity” were thought by some to be violations of social decorum, in part because of the influence of such Renaissance writers as Erasmus and Baldassare Castiglione. Gatrell quotes Erasmus to great effect on this. “If something so funny should occur that it produces uncontrolled laughter . . . , the face should be covered with a napkin or with the hand.”¹³ One of Chesterfield’s letters to his son provides the paradigmatic statement of this attitude:

Dear Boy,

Having mentioned laughing, I must particularly warn you against it; and I could heartily wish, that you may

¹³ Gatrell, p. 161
JOHNSON. (smiling)

... be ... never heard to laugh, while you live. Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill manners: it is the manner in which the mob express their silly joy, at silly things: and they call it being merry. ... [I]t is low buffoonery, or silly accidents, that always excite laughter; ... A man's going to sit down, in the supposition that he has a chair behind him, and falling down upon his breech for want of one, sets a whole company a laughing. ... a plain proof, in my mind, how low and unbecoming a thing laughter is.14

Johnson distinguished himself from Chesterfield on many occasions, as you know. But Johnson's comments on Gay's epitaph in Westminster Abbey—"Life is a jest, and all things show it; / I thought so once, but now I know it"15—actually resemble Chesterfield's. For Chesterfield, the real issue is the social inappropriate-ness of low wit, and that's the issue for Johnson, too. Just as Chesterfield sees the dignity of the higher social classes threatened by low jests, Johnson believes the words beneath John Rysbrack's portrait bust of Gay in Westminster Abbey completely ill-suited to the circumstances. "There are different species of wit appropriated to particular persons and places," writes Johnson. "[T]he smartness of a schoolboy would not be extremely agreeable in a chancellor, and a tavern joke sounds but ill in a church, from which it ought to be banished." Deploying a word he favored when he wanted to register strong criticism, Johnson writes with irony, "I never heard when or where this wonderful [my emphasis] couplet was composed, or to what happy genius we are indebted for it: the miserable poetry of the first line makes it unlikely that it could be a studied production, unless it were one of the first efforts of a romantic girl. ..." Johnson's tough, satiric criticism is unchecked here, and it does not evolve into something else. "[B]uffoonery speaks with a very ill grace, and impiety with much worse, in temples and on tombs. A childish levity has of late infected our conversation and behaviour, but let it not make its way into our churches."16

His conversation during his early literary career and into the

15 The lines as Johnson quotes them in the Gentleman's Magazine, October 1738. Subsequent quotations about Gay's epitaph come from this number of the Gentleman's Magazine.
early 1750s, when he was in his forties, is also marked by uncom­
promising satire in places. Now to be sure, the record of his con­
versation during these years isn’t nearly as expansive as the vast


corpus of his conversation from his fifties, sixties, and early seven­
ties, and I don’t mean to make too much of this. Still, it’s notable

that Johnson seems not to mollify at all his satiric responses to


various publications. When David Mallet brought out an edition of


Lord Bolingbroke’s work, Johnson, as Boswell puts it, “was roused


with a just indignation.” Johnson’s words on Mallet are unstinting:


“Sir, he was a scoundrel, and a coward: a scoundrel, for charging a


blunderbuss [that is, a kind of eighteenth-century shotgun] against


religion and morality; a coward, because he had not resolution to


fire it off himself, but left a half a crown to a beggarly Scotchman,


to draw the trigger after his death” (Life, 1:268). The intensity of


Johnson’s condemnation here aligns him with any number of early
eighteenth-century angry public wits and satirists. Such a state­


ment, of limited importance in itself, underscores his acceptance of


and participation in the robust, often personal, satiric criticism of


lesser writers.


We should never forget, too, that in his early career, Johnson

spent a lot of time and energy on translation, in one way or

another, as many scholars have emphasized. And if we remind

ourselves of what he translated, or hoped to translate, we see

Johnson educating himself in ways that tended to look back­

wards, to the Renaissance, and particularly to the scholars of that
time. Certainly at this time of his life, we can say he had little

interest in preparing himself to be any kind of a humorist. Aspiring
to translate Paolo Sarpi’s History of the Council of Trent

is not normally the move of a man who hopes to make his mark

in popular comedy and benevolent social criticism. Typical of his

intellectual journalism at this time is, say, his Life of Boerhaave,
published in early 1738 in the Gentleman’s Magazine, and drawn


principally from an elaborate and widely attended funeral oration
delivered (in Latin) in the Grand Auditorium at Leiden Univer­
sity by one of Boerhaave’s academic colleagues, a professor of

Oriental languages and philologist, Albert Schultens. Johnson

emphasizes Boerhaave’s scientific learning and piety, his curios­
ity and intellectual independence.

3.

The late 1750s mark a turning point for Johnson in many

aspects of his life, and I think his sense of humor gradually changes

somewhat at this time, too. The Rambler, the Dictionary, and

Rasselas, three of his most enduring works, were written during

this productive decade, and by the late 1750s, Johnson was widely
known in the world. "Anonymous Johnson," as Robert Folkenflik called him in a paper delivered a short while ago at the annual meeting of the Johnson Society of the Central Region, faded somewhat by the late 1750s.\textsuperscript{17} To be sure, Johnson maintained his rejection of the "low." And the strength of his opinions on a range of topics hardly attenuates. But it is at just this time that a special comic verve, and a more genial critical spirit, emerges in his writing, and perhaps in his conversation as well. Maybe this change had something to do with his rising literary fame. New people entered his life during the next decade or so—like Boswell! Perhaps, too, his realization that he was—egad!—in his fifties, which he refers to often at this time in his letters and in his conversation, enabled him to reach out to people in new ways, as he does to Bennett Langton. To be sure, Johnson suffered miserable personal problems in these years. He was arrested for debt, suffered the death of Hill Boothby (whom he may have hoped to marry), and experienced what was probably severe conjunctivitis in his eye—especially debilitating for a literary man whose sight was never good. But in his book reviews for the *Literary Magazine* in 1756-57, Johnson's spirits remained high. And his energy for lively turns of phrase, and for gentle irony, make this collection of writings, I think, a precursor of Johnson's capacious, profound, and sprightly writing of his later years, including various cheerful and buoyant passages in his *Lives of the Poets*. I'm thinking of, say, some of the lighter critical touches of the Life of Shenstone. The importance of these mid-career reviews to Johnson's developing sense of humor can be gauged if we compare the beginnings of the *Rambler* essays, from the early 1750s, to the beginnings of the reviews, from the later 1750s.

While the earlier *Rambler* surely offers its readers many comic moments, the opening paragraphs of the *Rambler* usually set the tone, and the openings typically present an important moral topic in general and earnest terms, usually in long sentences notable for subtle thought and relatively complicated grammatical subordination. Things begin differently in the book reviews, almost as if Johnson turns his back on the stylistic and intellectual orientations that, for better or worse, gave the *Rambler* a reputation for moral seriousness. In keeping with the international outlook of the *Literary Magazine*, Johnson reviews one particular book not only because of its concentration on activities in the North American colonies, but because of its wild title:

\textsuperscript{17} Robert Folkenflik, "Anonymous Johnson." (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Johnson Society of the Central Region, Marquette University, Spring 2007.)
An account of the Conferences held, and treatises made, between major-general Sir Wm Johnson, and the chief sachems and warriors of the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senekas, Tuskaroras, Aughquageys, Skaniadaradighronos, Chugnuts, Mahickanders, Shawanese, Kanuskagos, Toderghronos, and Oghquagoes, Indian nations in North America, at their meetings on different occasions at Fort Johnson in the county of Albany, in the colony of New York, in 1755 and 1756; with a letter from the rev. Mr. Hawley to Sir Wm Johnson, written at the desire of the Delaware Indians; and a preface giving a short account of the six nations, some anecdotes of Sir William, and notes illustrating the whole; also an appendix containing an account of conferences between several Quakers in Philadelphia, and some of the heads of the Six Nations in April 1756.

Johnson's opening? "A Book with such words on the first page might easily frighten a reader from turning to the second." A similar genial attitude appears from time to time throughout the entire run of the book reviews in the Literary Magazine. Those of you who are drinking tea rather than coffee (or port) right now can probably recite from memory the following disclaimer from Johnson's review of Jonas Hanway's Journal of an Eight Days' Journey:

We have already given in our collections, one of the letters, in which Mr. Hanway endeavours to show, that the consumption of Tea is injurious to the interest of our country. We shall now endeavour to follow him, regularly, through all his observations on this modern luxury; but it can scarcely be candid not to make a previous declaration, that he is to expect little justice from the author of this extract, a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, who has for twenty years diluted his meals with only the infusion of this fascinating plant, whose kettle has scarcely time to cool; who with Tea amuses the evening, with Tea solaces the midnights, and with Tea welcomes the morning.

If by mid-century, "Satiric wit gave way to benevolent humor," as Stuart Tave wrote long ago, then Johnson’s posture here indicates he may well be aware of the changing expectations of his readers. I think he aspires to align his writing with their expectations, as experienced, practicing professional writers instinctively do, especially when writing for new publications in search of readers.

The *Idler*, written shortly after the *Literary Magazine* folded, also presents numerous passages with a similarly critical, but amiable perspective. In *Idler* 36, for example, Johnson observes that there are indeed some "men who seem to think nothing so much characteristic of a genius, as to do common things in an uncommon manner." Johnson then proceeds to caricature different "species of eloquence," all of them promulgated by writers and speakers looking to be admired. As if he is supplying an extract as he did for the readers of the *Literary Magazine*, Johnson quotes a bizarre passage from John Petvin’s philosophical book, *Letters Concerning Mind*, which he stigmatizes as an example of the “true ‘bugbear’ style”:

> the Ares, in the former sense, are things that lie between the Have-beens and the Shall-bes. The Have-beens are things that are past; the Shall-bes are things that are to come; and the things that Are, in the latter sense, are things that have not been, nor shall be, nor stand in the midst of such as are before them or shall be after them. The things that have been, and shall be, have respect to present, past, and future. Those likewise that now Are have moreover place; that, for instance, which is here, that which is to the east, that which is to the west.

Johnson’s response? “All this, my dear reader, is very strange; but though it be strange, it is not new; survey these wonderful sentences again”—there’s Johnson’s favored word—“and they will be found to contain nothing more than very plain truths, which till this author arose had always been delivered in plain language.”

By the late 1750s, then, Johnson seems to handle his journalistic enterprises differently than he did earlier. He’s funnier now. Boswell, not always the best literary critic, accurately notes the

change: “The IDLER is evidently the work of the same mind which produced The Rambler, but has less body and more spirit. It has more variety of real life, and greater facility of language” (Life, 1:330-31). Perhaps Johnson is enacting the advice Imlac gives to Rasselas: “commit yourself again to the current of the world.”

And Johnson evidently knew of the fresh debates on laughter’s relation to social geniality, as he proves in Idler 64. Here he tells the story of “Tim. Ranger,” who was born to a farmer, but who got a good education, and inherited enough money from his uncle to be able to buy race horses. Ranger writes of the difficulties he experiences when he attempts to pass himself off in polite coffee houses as a rich man:

In this new scene of life my great labour was to learn to laugh. I had been used to consider laughter as the effect of merriment, but I soon learned that it is one of the arts of adulation, and . . . , I now began to laugh when I wished to please. This was at first very difficult. I sometimes heard the story with dull indifference, and not exalting myself to merriment by due gradations, burst out suddenly into an awkward noise which was not always favourably interpreted. . . . Sometimes . . . I . . . was deficient in loudness or in length. But by diligent imitation of the best models, I attained at last such flexibility of muscles, that I was always a welcome auditor of a story, and got the reputation of a good-natured fellow. (Yale, 2:199)

That passage presents a man who is trying to fit in—trying to please in company in order to prevail—in the manner Chesterfield hoped his bastard son would. But note: Johnson is not so much ridiculing, as making fun of this status seeker for not laughing naturally.

A representative passage from Johnson’s writing in these so-called “middle years,” touching on the evolution of Johnson’s changing views on laughter and humor, is found in his 1765 edition of Shakespeare, in his afterword on the First and Second Parts of Henry IV. “Perhaps no author has ever in two plays afforded so much delight,” he writes straightforwardly. His writing on Falstaff many of you here could quote from memory, I’m sure:

But Falstaff unimitated, unimitable Falstaff, how shall I describe thee? . . . Falstaff is a character loaded with

22 Rasselas, ed. Gwin J. Kolb, Yale, 16:127.
JOHNSON. (smiling)

faults, and with those faults which naturally produce contempt. He is a thief, and a glutton, a coward, and a boaster, always ready to cheat the weak, and prey upon the poor; to terrify the timorous and insult the defenceless. At once obsequious and malignant, he satirises in their absence those upon whom he lives by flattering. . . . Yet the man thus corrupt, thus despicable, makes himself necessary to the prince that despises him, by the most pleasing of all qualities, perpetual gaiety, by an unfailing power of exciting laughter, which is the more freely indulged, as his wit is not of the splendid or ambitious kind, but consists in easy escapes and sallies of levity, which make sport but raise no envy. 23

This statement suggests, I think, how far Johnson has come by 1765 as not only a thinker about wit and laughter, but as a practitioner.

4.

Finally, we may turn to that which you all probably most associate with Johnson’s sense of humor—his conversation in the later years of his life. Everyone here, I know, could select a favorite passage that would help illustrate just how complicated Johnson’s sense of humor actually had become by this time in his life. Let me speak of one passage that we all know fairly well, a portion of his conversation with Wilkes, which takes place when Johnson was in his late sixties. You’ll recall, of course, how Wilkes and Johnson turn the tables on a Boswell who, now well into his thirties, is still a celebrity hound:

Mr. Arthur Lee mentioned some Scotch who had taken possession of a barren part of America, and wondered why they should choose it. JOHNSON. “Why, sir, all barrenness is comparative. The Scotch would not know it to be barren.” BOSWELL. “Come, come, he is flattering the English. You have now been in Scotland, sir, and say if you did not see meat and drink enough there.” JOHNSON. “Why yes, sir; meat and drink enough to give the inhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home.”

Boswell at this point, in a very boring editorial insertion, explains away the joke by telling us what Johnson meant, just as he does much earlier in the *Life* when he expands the language of his journal for 16 May 1763, the day he met Johnson—the day Johnson responded to him with the infamous joke about Boswell coming “from Scotland.” Eventually, Boswell responds to Johnson’s crack with a prideful, but maybe playful, sally about Scots law:

a seizure of the person, before judgement is obtained, can take place only if his creditor should swear that he is about to fly from the country, or, as it is technically expressed, is *in meditacione fugae*—WILKES. “That, I should think, may be safely sworn of all the Scotch nation.” JOHNSON (to Mr. Wilkes). “You must know, sir, I lately took my friend Boswell and showed him genuine civilized life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield, my native city, that he might see for once real civility: for you know he lives among savages in Scotland, and among rakes in London.” WILKES. “Except when he is with grave, sober, decent people like you and me.” JOHNSON (smiling). “And we ashamed of him.” (*Life*, 3:76-77)

As this passage amply demonstrates, Johnson, at age 67 in 1776, could easily deploy his wit and a smile to promote conviviality, good feelings, even friendship—and team up with the radical Wilkes to do so. All three are happy. It’s significant, by the way, that only a few pages earlier in the conversation, Wilkes and Johnson discussed varieties of wit.

Johnson functions similarly in conversation a few years later when discussing drink. As Boswell writes:

Johnson harangued upon the qualities of different liquors; and spoke with great contempt of claret, as so weak, that a “man would be drowned by it before it made him drunk.” He was persuaded to drink one glass of it, that he might judge…. “Poor Stuff! No, Sir, claret is the liquor for boys; port for men, but he who aspires to be a hero (smiling,) must drink brandy. In the first place, the flavor of brandy is most grateful to the palate; and then brandy will do soonest for man what drinking can do for him. There are, indeed, few who are able to drink brandy. That is a power rather to be wished for than attained.”
JOHNSON (smiling)

Johnson a bit off balance in order to solicit fresh material, recalls with some pluck their earlier days together:

I reminded him how heartily he and I used to drink wine together, when we were first acquainted; and how I used to have a head-ache after sitting up with him. He did not like to have this recalled, or, perhaps, thinking that I boasted improperly, resolved to have a witty stroke at me: “Nay, Sir, it was not the wine that made your head ache, but the sense that I put into it.” BOSWELL. “What, Sir!, will sense make the head ache?” JOHNSON. “Yes, Sir (with a smile), when it is not used to it.” (Life, 3:381-82)

“(With a smile)”: that’s the evocative phrase here, as was “JOHNSON. (smiling),” in the earlier passages with Wilkes. The smile, at this point in Johnson’s life, is the social glue. And it signals how greatly Johnson’s sense of humor has evolved since the late 1730s. While still often founded on critical, usually combative responses to life and literature, his sense of humor by his early seventies was now large enough to accommodate the genial sociability that was winning the day.

And finally, something of a post-script: even Johnson’s laughter itself, from the late 1750s onwards, was viewed as a benevolent social lubricant. It was infectious. “His laugh was irresistible,” wrote Mrs. Thrale, “and was observed immediately to produce that of the company.”24 His laughter was a curiosity, as well: “Johnson’s laugh was as remarkable as any circumstance in his manner,” writes Boswell. “It was a kind of good humoured growl. Tom Davies described it drollly enough in 1775—when Johnson was in his late sixties: “He laughs like a rhinoceros.’ ” (Life, 2:378). Like a what? The rhinoceros was not native to Britain. Johnson—a rhinoceros, of all things? Where did that come from? And yet, a new book hints that Tom Davies may actually have been on to something. According to Glynis Ridley, Douwe Van der Meer, an “entrepreneurial” Dutchman, actually brought from Calcutta to Europe a young female rhinoceros whom he named, charmingly, Clara.25 Van der Meer carted Clara on a kind of Grand Tour throughout Europe, stopping in Rotterdam, Leipsig, Paris, Rome, and Venice, among

other places, where she fascinated princes, naturalists, and doubtless a vast collection of everyday people. The widely respected painter Jean-Baptiste Oudry, famed for his *King Louis XV Hunting a Deer in the Forest of Saint-Germain* (1730) as well as assorted pictures of killed game, actually painted a portrait of Clara—life size! (This imposing painting, *Clara le Rhinoceros* [1749], now hangs in the Staatliches Museum in Schwerin, Germany.) Clara finally made it to London in 1758. And as Ridley writes in arresting detail, Clara, to the delight of scores of people, turned out to be far from the fierce brute people had expected. Furthermore, Ridley speculates that Johnson’s friend Davies must have known something about Clara, and maybe even saw her. Davies at least knew of Clara’s popularity. And the memory of that is what he recalled, when speaking of Johnson’s laugh. (For what it’s worth, young kids today can learn about Clara: the Getty Museum recently published a children’s book on the whole episode, *My Travels with Clara.*

So: perhaps Davies really did have a special feel for Johnson’s laugh and his sense of humor.

Regardless, tracing the specifics of this change in Johnson’s sense of humor, as I have begun to do tonight, and comparing the changes in Johnson’s sense of humor to the developments in the complicated history of theories of humor and laughter in the eighteenth century, is not simply a diverting topic—though I hope it has been that, too. Why, how, and under what conditions human beings respond to the world with humor is currently a big topic among both academic and popular writers—among evolutionary biologists and theorists of human cognition, as well as wide-ranging literary and cultural historians. How could it not be? As one scientist has noted, “Humor . . . depends on thought . . . it requires a certain category of information processing involving most of the faculties of thought, including memory recall, inference, and semantic integration.”

Johnson was particularly gifted in those three cognitive acts. And so, although Johnson perhaps doesn’t belong in the pantheon of the great comic writers, it would be nice if Johnson figured prominently in this revival of interest in humor and laughter. And if that does happen, we will be able to understand afresh what truly lay behind such intriguing phrases as “JOHNSON (smiling).”

—J. T. SCANLAN

27 Matthew Hurley, Daniel C. Dennett, and Reginald B. Adams, Jr., *Inside Jokes: Using...
For Johnsonians, 1763 is the decisive year in which Samuel Johnson and James Boswell first met. In one recent history of the West it is also the start of the Anthropocene Era, the “geological phase during which human activities have had a global impact upon the planet,” especially upon climate.  

I would like to start from this historical coincidence to approach three related questions: How might the significance of some of Johnson’s work change in our changing climate? What can Johnson’s writing about learning and posterity now mean for us as scholars and teachers of the young? What is required to be “Johnsonian” today?

We may approach these questions through Johnson’s “On the Character and Duty of an Academick,” a work most readers of this journal probably have come to know over the last twenty years but one still not widely known. This inspiring, humbling piece was attributed to Johnson shortly after his death (when it was included in 1793 as an appendix to a wholly unrelated work by John Moir, Hospitality. A Discourse Occasioned by Reading His Majesty’s Letter in Behalf of the Emigrant French Clergy, but not until 1994 was it rediscovered by Richard Hatchwell and called to the attention of David Fleeman, who incorporated it into his authoritative bibliography, and thus into the Johnson canon. Johnson’s 461-word essay has been republished in our age by David Fairer as part of a 1995 article paying tribute to David Fleeman, and by Robert DeMaria, Jr. in his address to the Johnsonians in 2000. It is slated for inclusion in volume 20 of the Yale Johnson.

The noun “academick” or “academic” is less common during

1 This essay is a revised and shortened version of a paper delivered to the Johnson Society of the Central Region in Montreal on 27 April 2013.
2 Historian Paul Dukes concedes the arbitrariness of choosing a single year but picks this point of origin because hostilities with France ended then and Watt’s successful improvements on the Newcomen Engine began: Minutes to Midnight: History and the Anthropocene Era (2011), pp. 11-12.
Johnson's lifetime than the adjective, but it does occur. In his Dictionary Johnson defines an “academick” as “a student of an university”; others used it to mean a university fellow, including Thomas Warton in an amusing contribution to Johnson’s Idler (number 33), the supposed “Journal of a Senior Fellow, or Genuine Idler.” Warton’s “modern Academick” describes meals and other recreations but apparently never reads a word. Conversely, Johnson’s ideal academic devotes his life to learning.

“On the Character and Duty of an Academick” first explains the role of the academic economically, as deriving from the division of labor in an advanced society:

From this complex system arise different obligations. Every man has his task assigned, of which, if he accepts it, he must consider himself as accountable for the performance. The individuals of this illustrious community are set apart, and distinguished from the rest of the people, for the confirmation and promotion of national knowledge.

If the Academick’s “Character” depends on the organization of society, his “Duty” flows directly from his place in the polity:

An academick is a man supported at the public cost, and dignified with public honours, that he may attain and impart wisdom. He is maintained by the public, that he may study at leisure; he is dignified with honours, that he may teach with weight. The great duty therefore of an academick is diligence of inquiry, and liberality of communication. Of him that is appointed to teach, the first business is to learn, an unintermitted attendance to reading must qualify him to be heard with profit.

When men whose active employments allow them little time for cultivating the mind, and whose narrow education leaves them unable to judge of abstruse questions, may content themselves with popular tenets, and current opinions, they may repose upon

4 The noun “academic” occurs also in Johnson’s Life of [Edmund] Smith, which is largely by William Oldisworth, who notes admiringly of Smith that “Though he was an academick the greatest part of his life, he contracted no sourness of temper, no spice of pedantry, no itch of disputation, or obstinate contention for the old or new philosophy [and] no assuming way of dictating to others.” See The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets, ed. Roger Lonsdale (2006), 2:167.
their instructors, and believe many important truths upon the bare authority of those from whom they received them; but the academick is the depositary of the public faith, it is required of him to be always able to prove what he asserts, to give an account of his hope, and to display his opinion with such evidence as every species of argument admits. Our colleges may be considered as the citadel of truth, where he is to stand on his guard as a sentinel, to watch and discover the approach of falsehood, and from which he is to march out into the field of controversy, and bid defiance to the teachers of corruption. For such service he can be fitted only by laborious study, and study therefore is the business of his life; the business which he cannot neglect without breaking a virtual contract with the community. Ignorance in other men may be censured as idleness, in an academick it must be abhorred as treachery.

To think of what Johnson may mean in our climate requires acknowledging the double, that is, metaphorical and literal, meaning of the word. Our metaphorical climate is one in which the word “climate” grows insistently literal. Our “climate crisis”—literated to concern over whether global average temperatures will rise quickly and substantially enough to imperil nothing less than Civilization As We Know It—has begun to make itself felt in literary as well as scientific journals. In the spring 2012 issue of American Literary History (devoted to “Sustainability in America”) Gillen Wood speaks of our standing “at the beginning of the most crucial decades in the history of the human species on earth,” not the usual language of scholarly literary journals. About the same time, The American Psychologist ran a special issue on climate because, in the editors’ words, “Global climate change poses one of the greatest challenges facing humanity in this century.”5 In 2012-13, Daedalus published two issues on “the alternative energy future.” The publication of the Daedalus issues highlights the fact that in our Anthropocene Age the traditional division between the humanities and natural sciences has grown less clear. To oversimplify, Vico’s designation of the sciences as concerned with the natural world and the humanities with the world made by humans blurs in the age of the anthropogenic environment because much of

the found world turns out also to have been made by us. Dipesh Chakrabarty argues this point more fully in “The Climate of History: Four Theses,” the first thesis of which is, “Anthropogenic Explanations of Climate Change Spell the Collapse of the Age-old Humanist Distinction between Natural History and Human History.”

I will return to this collapsed distinction, but first must note a large gap between our age and Johnson’s: the distance between our popular political culture’s avoidance of thinking about future generations and Johnson’s preoccupation with posterity. For Johnson, as for many of his contemporaries, appealing to posterity is an important dimension of ethical and literary meaning, while in our cultural and civic discourse posterity is largely absent. Recovering Johnson’s sense of future generations might help move us toward the reanimated idea of posterity we will need to sustain our studies.

Eighteenth-century invocations of posterity range from comic to grave, of course, with a fair amount of satiric irony in between. We think immediately of Swift’s dedication of his early Tale of a Tub to Prince Posterity, a playful gesture that also signals an anxious ambition that would persist all the way into his late poems of the 1730s. This preoccupation includes the running dialogue in Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift between footnotes that seem to be written for future readers and the fantasy of oblivion, as Swift imagines the memory of his works fast fading. To the customer who wants titles by Swift, Bernard Lintot replies,

To fancy they could live a year!
I find you’re but a stranger here.

The comic and earnest could coexist, of course. When Addison writes a Spectator paper on the obligations that propertied gentlemen should feel to plant trees for future generations, he leavens his counsel with a joke that Groucho Marx would appropriate. The Marxian version: “Why should I care about posterity? What’s posterity ever done for me?” Addison’s version concerns “an old Fellow of a College, who, when he was pressed by the Society to come into something that might redound to the good of their Successors, grew very peevish,” and replied, “We are always doing, says he, something for Posterity, but I would fain see Posterity do something for us” (no. 583).

Johnson’s care for posterity begins in the register of political

Johnson and the Climate of Posterity

satire, especially in Marmor Norfolciense and A Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage, both published in 1739, the year after London. These are the years when Johnson was most attuned to the alienated anger of the Patriot Opposition and most influenced by Richard Savage—his period of “Savage indignation.” Both works are mock-defenses, using impersonated pro-administration speakers who attack the Patriots for their puzzling “regard for posterity” a “wild Passion” that “we have no name for . . . at Court.”

“Strange delusion! that can confine all their thoughts to a race of men whom they neither know, nor can know; from whom nothing is to be feared, nor any thing expected; who cannot even bribe a special jury, nor have so much as a single riband to bestow.”

The complacent, Scriblerian-esque commentator on the prophetic poem “To Posterity,” supposedly an ancient inscription unearthed in Norfolk, notes approvingly that the modern monarch shares none of the old-fashioned thought for the nation’s future:

Nothing, indeed, can be more unreasonable and absurd, than to require, that a monarch, distracted with cares and surrounded with enemies, should involve himself in superfluous anxieties, by an unnecessary concern about future generations. Are not pretenders, mock-patriots, masquerades, operas, birth-nights, treaties, conventions, reviews, drawing-rooms, the births of heirs, and the deaths of queens, sufficient . . . ? Surely, he that acquires himself successfully of such affairs may . . . leave posterity to his successors.

When the “compleat vindicator” of licensing eventually has a good word to say for posterity, it is to imagine a future age in which government control has assured domestic tranquility by closing schools and rooting out literacy: “These seminaries may, by an act of parliament, be, at once, suppressed; and [so] that our posterity be deprived of all means of reviving this corrupt method of education, it may be made felony to teach to read without a license from the lord chamberlain.” It is the Dunciad’s fantasy of a country soon to “rest in ignorance and peace.” Most of Johnson’s later references to posterity are comparatively non-partisan, but the early association of posterity and learning will remain important.

Johnson often considers posterity as conferring judgments or obligations, as an imagined place of vindication or as a possible

8 Yale, 10:31.
beneficiary of present actions. In the former aspect it can be treated with some humor. The Preface to Shakespeare begins by glancing at authors “who, being forced by disappointment upon consolatory expedients, are willing to hope from posterity what the present age refuses, and flatter themselves that the regard, which is yet denied by envy, will at last be bestowed by time.” Posterity figures explicitly in Rasselas in Imlac’s account of the poet, who must “content himself with the slow progress of his name, contemn the praise of his own time, and commit his claims to the justice of posterity.” In the next sentence the poet “must . . . consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations; as a being superior to time and place.” We are soon told, of course, that this grand statement was part of an “enthusiastic fit,” in which Imlac “was proceeding to aggrandize his own profession,” an account in which inspiration becomes inflation (chs. 10-11).

But if Johnson parodies the cant of posterity, he also takes seriously the idea that its good judgment is a reasonable aspiration. Posterity, not Ridicule, is the test of truth: Swift, Johnson wrote in his Life (para. 28), ventured beyond his depth in thinking he could mock Wotton and Bentley into obscurity: “Wit can stand its ground against truth only a little while. The honours due to Learning have been justly distributed by the decision of posterity.”29 The young writers hoping for reputation on the strength of their own reason, in Adventurer 85, are not wrong for aspiring to endure into the future but for hoping to do so without a deeper knowledge of past writers: “if the wits of the present time expect the regard of posterity, which will then inherit the reason which is now thought superior to instruction, surely they may allow themselves to be instructed by the reason of former generations.” The proposer of “an Attempt to Ascertain the Longitude” reasonably leaves the evaluation of his work to “the candour of posterity” (para. 3).

Johnson would not go so far as Diderot, who thought the intellectual most strongly motivated by the “judgment of posterity anticipated.” And he would probably have regarded as blasphemous Diderot’s statement that “posterity is for the philosopher what the other world is for the religious.”30 Even so, Johnson thinks it reasonable not only to aspire to produce work that might “stand firm against the attacks of time” but also to become one of the “benefactors of posterity” (Rambler 154). Johnson’s famous dictum that “no man ever yet became great by imitation” arises in this

10 Carl L. Becker, The Heavenly City of the 

same essay, and we sometimes forget that it is addressed to scholars, not poets.

Indeed, most of Johnson’s ideas of possible duties and benefits to posterity arise in relation to scholarship and teaching. The goal of cataloguing the Harleian Library is to “inform posterity of the excellence and value of this great collection, and promote the knowledge of scarce books.” Even The Preceptor (1748) may benefit later times—an extraordinary claim to make for a school textbook. If it helps teach “real Knowledge” at an earlier age, Johnson writes in the Preface, “all the future ages of the world may find advantage.” By letting students make better use of a period often indulged in idleness and vice, The Preceptor (1748) will “in some sense lengthen life, by teaching posterity to enjoy those years which have hitherto been lost.”

But perhaps Johnson’s most eloquent statement on the relation of intellectual work to posterity occurs in the pamphlet Some Remarks on the Progress of Learning since the Reformation, published anonymously in 1746, attributed to Johnson in 2001 by O M Brack, Jr. and Robert DeMaria, Jr., and also slated for publication in volume 20 of the Yale Johnson. This work aimed to stir up subscription interest in publishing a seventeenth-century Hebrew dictionary, an expensive undertaking. Johnson appeals to English nationalism, first by praising the country’s reputation in the learned European community: “the World has been long accustom’d to look upon this Country as the Birth-place of Knowledge, and expect from it by every favourable Wind, new Hints for the Advancement of Science.” He then issues a patriotic challenge that “at a Time when we may be said to boast a Generation of Patriots, when almost every Man endeavours to be distinguished by his Zeal for the public Prosperity, and when an Attention to National Honour seems to be the fashionable Principle, it may be hoped we shall not easily suffer our country to be deprived” of equivalent praise for national honor in learning:

[W]hile we are so anxiously diligent to secure Property, and to deliver down our Liberties and our privileges to Posterity, unviolated and unimpaired [we should] likewise extend our Care to more valuable Advantages, and hand to them the Lamp of Science unextinguished, that Lamp without which they will find little

11 The Preceptor (1748), pp. xxx-xxxi (concluding paragraph of Preface).
Johnson insists that “the only Way to preserve Knowledge is to increase it, and that he who does not go forward is losing Ground,” a truth that applies “to the Learning of a Nation, as well as that of Individuals.” Thus, the country’s scholars and patrons of learning must step forward: “some of those whose Studies qualify them to take a View of the whole Extent of Science, and whose Eminence of Station make them Superintendants of Literature, should inquire in what Parts of Knowledge the Nation is yet defective” and then “direct that Curiosity which cannot wholly be at rest, to those Objects on which it may be most usefully employ’d.”

With this nationalistic appeal in mind, let us return to the passage on the duties of an academic quoted earlier, this time including the introductory sentence framing it: “The individuals of this illustrious community are set apart, and distinguished from the rest of the people, for the confirmation and promotion of national knowledge.” In modern printings, the word “national” has been emended to “rational,” following Fleeman. But perhaps the emendation is unnecessary. The two reasons given for it are that Johnson’s handwritten initial “r” might easily have been misread and that “Johnson’s sense of the internationalism of learning and knowledge” makes “national” unlikely. But we see that in some contexts Johnson could argue forcefully for the nationalism of learning and knowledge. “On the Character & Duty of an Academick” emphasizes national knowledge quite strongly. Johnson casts the academic’s duties not in the abstract terms of philosophic vocation but in the social, political, and economic terms of his appointment, deriving from his country’s support. Because the academic is appointed at public cost and thus freed from other business, he bears obligations the ordinary citizen does not. Most citizens have neither time nor tools to assess common views on most subjects, but the academic must acquire first-hand knowledge: “Ignorance in other men may be censured as idleness, in an academick it must be abhorred as treachery.”

The strong language of public intellectual obligation recurs in Rasselas, in a passage less quoted than Imlac’s somewhat self-deprecating description of the scholar’s life: “To talk in public, to think in solitude, to read and to hear, to inquire and answer inquiries, is the
business of a scholar. He wanders about the world without pomp or terror, and is neither known nor valued but by men like himself” (ch. 8). A more civic-minded account of learning emerges later, as Imlac answers Rasselas’s presentist reluctance to view antiquities:

If we act only for ourselves, to neglect the study of history is not prudent. If we are entrusted with the care of others, it is not just. Ignorance, when it is voluntary, is criminal; and he may properly be charged with evil who refused to learn how he might prevent it (ch. 30).

The condition in which negligence becomes evil—when we are “entrusted with the care of others”—may apply pointedly to the future ruler, but it also applies to Imlac himself in his role as teacher-scholar.

The history that we are obligated to study is surely, for Johnson, human history rather than natural history. But to honor Johnson’s principle of professing the best truth available, we will need to take a more “extensive view” than that available in 1759. We need to revise Johnson in order to be Johnsonian. I say this in the spirit in which philosopher Holmes Rolston tells readers of his *A New Environmental Ethics* that they will need to “become wiser than Socrates.”

This provocative way of saying we are later than Socrates means that we now need to understand ethics as more than a human-to-human affair, extending our moral concern to the non-human world as well. If we grant Chakrabarty’s argument that the distinction between natural history and human history collapses in the era of anthropogenic climate change, and if we acknowledge that such a collapse requires our understanding that we are later than Johnson, then Imlac’s pronouncement might be supplemented to this effect: “If we act only for ourselves, to neglect the study of natural history—science—is not prudent. If we are entrusted with the care of others, it is not just. Environmental ignorance, when it is voluntary, is criminal; and he may properly be charged with evil who refused to learn how he might prevent it.”

This revision is not to suggest that there should be no distinction between letters and science. Johnson’s delineation of the academic’s duties begins, after all, with the division of labor in modern society. But it does suggest a calling beyond specialization. The privileged scholar as truth’s “sentinel,” socially positioned “to watch and discover the approach of falsehood,” and, beyond that, ready “to march out into the field ... and bid defiance to the teachers of corruption,” is an intellectual engaged in the discourse of the day. Unlike those too occupied with “active employments” to have time “for cultivating the mind” and

judging “abstruse questions,” academics have the time, education, and obligation to find truth and fight its corruption.

Much discourse of our day is corrupt discourse, corrupted in no small part through denial of ecological urgency. Public conversation lives in temporal parochialism, a tyranny of the present in which posterity is ignored and environmental damage outsourced to the future. To such corruption, scholars who imagine passing on to future generations the “Lamp of Science unextinguished” must be prepared to bid defiance. This is corruption in the second sense given in Johnson’s Dictionary: “wickedness, perversion of principles, loss of integrity.” But it is also corruption in his first sense: “the principle by which bodies tend toward the separation of their parts.” To work against the separation of the social body into lifeless parts and for the integration of its future members into our Anthropocene consciousness now seems a central task of scholars in many disciplines, perhaps not least the contemporary Johnsonian seeking to join the character and duty of an academic.

—JOHN SITTER

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In “Did Our Brains Evolve to Foolishly Follow Celebrities” the social anthropologist Jamie Tehrani, Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at Durham University, proposes that “our obsession with celebrity culture is a result of our poorly adapted brains.” Tehrani urges, by way of explanation, a “focus on the anthropology of prestige.” Our brains “are programmed to associate prestige with adaptive behaviour. And because fame is the primary cue of prestige, the more attention celebrities get, the more they attract.” But why should we give celebrities “the benefits of our prestige, if it is not reciprocated with anything that might be of use to us?” In pondering these and related questions, says Tehrani, “we would do well to reflect on the words of Samuel Johnson: ‘To get a name is one of the few things that cannot be bought. It is the free gift of mankind, which must be deserved before it will be granted.’” The quotation comes from Idler 12 (1 July 1758).

The full article can be seen at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-23046602

—GORDON TURNBULL

Quoting Johnson for Diplomatic Leverage?

In early September 2013, the United States, along with other world powers, considered how to react to Syria’s recent alleged use of chemical weapons on its own people. While people around the world—but especially in the Middle East—waited anxiously, Secretary of State John Kerry appeared before the House Armed Services Committee in Washington, DC. In his opening statement to the Committee, he argued that the United States needed to make a credible threat of force. And remarkably, he invoked Johnson. As a long-practiced speaker in Congress, he said with impressive sternness, “But make no mistake — make no mistake — about why this idea has any potential legs at all and why it is that the Russians have reached out to the Syrians and why the Syrians have initially suggested they might be interested. A lot of people
say that nothing focuses the mind like the prospect of a hanging. Well, it’s the credible threat of force that has been on the table for these last weeks that has, for the first time, brought this regime to even acknowledge that they have a chemical weapons arsenal. And it is the threat of this force and our determination to hold Assad accountable that has motivated others to even talk about a real and credible international action that might have an impact.”

Obviously, Kerry (or his speechwriter) misquotes one of Johnson’s more famous comments. On 19 September 1777, Boswell reviews with Johnson his participation in the writing of Dr. Dodd’s “Convict’s Address.” Challenging Johnson on the effect of Johnson’s own participation in the writing of the address, Boswell himself quotes Johnson: “But, Sir, (said I,) you contributed to the deception . . ., you answered,— ‘Why should you think so? Depend upon it, Sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully’” (Life, 3: 167).

Perhaps it is too much to demand these days that an American Secretary of State, educated at St. Paul’s School in New Hampshire and at Yale, vet his speeches for reliance on dubious sources.

On the other hand, perhaps historians of the future will note that Kerry’s invocation of Johnson’s memorable idea may well have contributed, in a small way, to the avoidance of war.

—J. T. Scanlan

“Specious Prayers” on Broadway

When contemporary writers allude to Johnson, they usually allude to conversational bon mots recorded by Boswell. “When a man knows he is to be hanged . . .” is one that gets mentioned frequently. “Patriotism is the last refuge. . .” is another. It is less common for writers to allude to Johnson’s own writings, and I am not sure I had ever seen an allusion to line 354 of “The Vanity of Human Wishes” until recently, when I was reading The New Yorker for 15 October 2012.

In that issue, theater critic John Lahr reviews the play Grace, by Craig Wright. One of the main characters in the play is a man named Steven. Lahr describes Steven as a pious fraud, a selfish and insensitive man “enticed by the offer of nine million dollars to start a Christian hotel chain.” That is where Johnson comes in:

Cloaking his greed in paeans to God’s glory, [Steven] is a master of what Dr. Johnson called “the secret ambush of a specious prayer”: “Keep carrying us forward, Lord, always forward, deeper and deeper into your grace,” Steven prays, when it looks like the deal has been clinched.

—Matthew Davis
Boswell, as a lawyer, lamented the general absence in the eighteenth-century Scottish courts of oral argument (at which, on the evidence of contemporary testimony, he had excellent theatrical and forensic prowess) and the emphasis instead on written Memorials and other documents.

A diary entry from the tenth year of his legal career leads him to a revealing analogy:

I had attended a pleading in the Inner House all the forenoon [in a cause concerning the nature of day laborers’ wages]. . . . It was well argued on both sides, but so little attention is paid to pleading in the Court of Session that I was the only lawyer who attended today from beginning to end; and for long intervals there was an absolute void in the benches. Ours is a court of papers. We are never seriously engaged but when we write. We may be compared to the Highlanders in 1745. Our pleading is like their firing their musketry, which did little execution. We do not fall heartily to work till we take to our pens, as they to their broadswords. (Journal in Edinburgh, 2 February 1776)

Boswell’s diaries offer only glimpses of, but enough to imply, the daily grinding isolated and isolating tedium of his legal work, so against the grain of his mercurially sociable temperament, his pining for convivial metropolitan pleasures, for the gratifications of social popularity and literary prestige. The catastrophic outcome of the Highlanders’ use of their muskets and broadswords in 1745 is, of course, like the city of Edinburgh at the opening of Johnson’s Journey, “too well known to admit description,” and Boswell’s analogy here, perhaps unwittingly, adumbrates something of the eventual despair he would come to feel about the nature of the Scottish legal system (especially in what he saw as its far from infallible dispensations of “justice”) a despair by which he himself
would in time be defeated—an outcome which has had the unfortunate effect of misleading many about the actual nature of his life (especially in the years before his move to London). It regularly startles modern readers, and not only those with a predisposition to hostility, to know that Boswell's Johnsonian biographies, his copious personal correspondence and his diaries, his prolific newspaper and magazine journalism, and much more (he was the devoted father of five children), were all produced in what might laughably be called his spare time. For the seventeen years after he passed advocate on 26 July 1766, Boswell, in the words of F. A. Pottle (first appearing in 1966),

... followed the practice of the law in Edinburgh with complete regularity and a fair degree of assiduity.... The popular or Macaulayan image, which makes him an imbecile, can be peremptorily dismissed as uninformed, but it is not so easy to dismiss the informed view that he was an idler. [H]is idleness has become as fixed an attribute as his notebook [i.e. that Boswell rudely recorded conversations on the spot, in company, as they were happening]. But the notebook is now known to be apocryphal, and it behoves us to limit the idleness.... From 1766 to 1783 Boswell did not once absent himself from Edinburgh during term time. For six months of every year he was busily engaged in a daily routine of studying, dictating, consulting, and arguing in court. (James Boswell: The Earlier Years, 1740-1769 [1966; rpt. 1985], pp. 292-93)


We quote an excerpt from “The Edinburgh Legal History Blog” by John W. Cairns, Professor of Civil Law at the Edinburgh Law School, the University of Edinburgh a post of 18 September 2013:

... James Boswell, like all Scots advocates of his era, produced numerous documents for litigation. Unless you are familiar with Scots litigation, the previous sentence does not really do justice to the quires upon quires that they produced, dictating to their clerks. The Court of Session judge, Lord Swinton, reckoned that in six months in 1789 he read 24,930 quarto pages of advocates' printed papers....
The Stair Society has just now published the first volume of *The Legal Papers of James Boswell*, edited by Hugh Milne. This covers cases Boswell became involved in between 29 July [1766] and 11 November 1767. Including index, introduction and the like, the volume runs to 469 pages. 41 cases are dealt with. This gives a crude indication of how much legal drafting was carried out by Boswell in his first year of practice as an advocate. . . .

Mr. Milne supplements the papers with additional material that brings out their significance. He has exercised a fine and careful judgment, and the editing is first class. . . . [I] congratulate Mr. Milne on a wonderful work that will be of fascination to lawyers, legal historians, Boswell scholars, and scholars of the eighteenth century generally. (http://www.elhblog.law.ed.ac.uk)

Hugh Milne is now at work on his second volume, covering cases in which Boswell first became involved in the period 12 November 1767 to 11 November 1769. These volumes, not part of the Yale Boswell Editions research series (whose remit is Boswell’s private papers), are immensely valuable supplements to it, and we salute Hugh Milne’s expertise and his very high degree of (corrective) assiduity.

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James J. Caudle and Michael Bundock, authors of the keepsake for The Johnsonians 2011 annual dinner, *The Runaway and the Apothecary: Francis Barber, Edward Ferrand, and the ‘Life of Johnson,’* have expanded their essay into a fuller article, *A Newly Identified Apothecary in Boswell’s Life of Johnson: Edward Ferrand (1691-1769),* in the *Journal of Medical Biography*. The online version can be found at: http://jmb.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/07/31/0967772013480612.

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Dates have now been set for the fourth annual Boswell Book Festival at Boswell’s family estate, Auchinleck: May 9-11, 2014. Fuller details of participants, and related activities and events, will be available on the Festival website by the time this issue of the *JNL* appears: www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk.

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We alert *JNL* readers who may be pondering future researches,
or visiting fellowship applications, to the fact that the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (which opened in 1963 and has just completed a fine series of events, exhibitions, talks, and symposia to mark its 50th anniversary year) will be closed for major repairs and renovations during the academic year 2015-2016. The Beinecke (we quote from their website)

will operate a temporary reading room in Sterling Memorial Library from May 2015 through September 2016. During that time the library will suspend its fellowship programs for visiting scholars. The Library will continue its fellowship programs that support research by graduate and professional students at Yale. We anticipate resuming our visiting fellows programs for the academic year 2016-2017. Further information about that decision and application procedures for visiting fellowships will be posted in fall 2015.

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Claude Rawson, Maynard Mack Professor of English, Yale University, pays tribute to the late Martin Price (1920-2010), formerly a Sterling Professor of English at Yale (who served for a brief period in the 1990s as chairman of the Yale Boswell Editions Editorial Committee) in The Scriblerian and the Kit-Cats, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Spring and Autumn 2012), pp. 141-42. Price was, in Rawson's estimate, "one of the towering figures of eighteenth-century English studies" and part of "the great constellation of scholars in the middle years of the twentieth century whose rare combination of deep learning and energetic critical acumen gave eighteenth-century literature a cultural centrality uncommon at any time as a product mainly of academic effort." The work of scholars such as Price, W. K. Wimsatt, and Maynard Mack, "to name only three," showed "a rare combination of outstanding historical and editorial scholarship, with a sharp and innovative freshness of critical thinking...." These scholars were "heirs of a live and mature New Criticism, never impervious to the genuinely historical and," Rawson continues, "as yet untouched by the fetid breath of know-nothing punditry that has since pervaded the entire discipline. They were interested in books, and knowledge about books, and their reading had not given way to the mechanical frivolity of 'readings' (sometimes described as 'close'), or the equally text-evading resort to other disciplines, invoked without expertise, as another means of writing about books without engaging with
them.” Rawson reports further that he “had the honor of working with (and succeeding)” Martin Price “as Chairman of the [Editorial Committee of] the Yale Boswell Editions,” and remembers “the iron-willed gentleness with which” Price managed this “active but often turbulent enterprise.”

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In Subtle Bodies (Knopf, 2013), the latest novel by Norman Rush, author of Whites (1986), Mating (1991) — winner of the National Book Award for fiction—and Mortals (2003), a group of now middle-aged men who had been college friends at NYU some twenty years earlier, and had gone their separate ways, reunite to mourn the sudden tragic accidental death of Douglas Delmarter, who had been the admired, charismatic de facto leader of this “group of wits” in their college days. Among Douglas’s characteristics, we learn, was a passionate fondness for Boswell’s Life of Johnson. “Douglas loved this book,” reports his grieving friend Ned (holding in his hand “Douglas’s paperback copy of Boswell’s Life of Samuel Johnson” as he speaks tearfully at the commemorative service). “It was probably the best reading recommendation to us, his friends, that he made, and he made many. In fact he loved the damn thing so much he stopped reading it at page 847 in order to save the experience of finishing it for some celebratory high moment he assumed would come, some moment greater and happier than any so far.” Ned reads to those assembled, “starting halfway down page 847,” the words that Douglas “would have read next.” The passage begins: “I had learnt from Dr. Johnson during this interview not to think with a dejected indifference of the works of art, and the pleasures of life, because life is uncertain and short,” and it concludes where Boswell begins his often-quoted meditation on how friendship forms: “We cannot tell the precise moment when friendship is formed....” Evidently too moved, and unable to continue with the rest of the quotation, “Ned pressed the tears from his eyes with a ball of tissue. He hesitated, and returned to his seat.” (Had Ned been able to proceed, he would have read as follows: “We cannot tell the precise moment when friendship is formed. As in filling a vessel drop by drop, there is at last a drop which makes it run over; so in a series of kindnesses there is at last one which makes the heart run over.”) The passage’s fuller context, to which Rush is implicitly directing his readers, is Boswell’s own wider meditation on the (in)significance of any individual human mortality in the “large mass of human existence.” And Rush’s point is that Douglas, in deferring the pleasure of reading the Life to some future moment of greater happiness, has tragically missed
the joint Boswellian-Johnsonian point of the passage here, that happiness is fleeting, ephemeral, to be seized ("because life is uncertain and short") when in moments it offers itself. In the deferring of the prospect of happiness to a nebulously expected later and greater moment, it never actually arrived, and Douglas never experienced it.

The passage comes, of course, from Boswell's account of the visit with Johnson to Derby, Friday, 19 September 1777, a sub-excursion from the longer visit with Johnson to Dr. John Taylor's home at Ashbourne. Which "paperback copy" of the Life Douglas owned is not specified in the novel, but with the energetic critical acumen that characterizes the active but often turbulent Yale Boswell Editions, the author of these Notes has cleverly deduced that it is the Oxford World's Classics edition (ed. R. W. Chapman, with a new, excellent Introduction by Pat Rogers [1980; rpt. 1983]), halfway down p. 847 of which edition the passage quoted by Ned begins.

Had Douglas lived, the Yale Boswell Editions would also have recommended to him its most recent publication, James Boswell's Life of Johnson: An Edition of the Original Manuscript in Four Volumes, Volume 3, 1776-1780, in which the editor, Thomas F. Bonnell, expertly traces the complex revisionary metamorphosis of Boswell's original Ashbourne Journal of 1777 into final form for the Life. [See the review of this work below, pp. 54-57.]

Rush's novel, alas, has appeared to a chorus of generally poor and negative reviews (many examples can easily be found online.) One reviewer, Drew Toal of National Public Radio, appears to disapprove of not just the novel and the deceased Douglas, but his favorite book too:

Subtle Bodies begins with a 48-year-old man named Ned dropping everything to attend the funeral of Douglas, the de facto leader of Ned's small group of college friends. Ned hasn't seen Douglas in many years. Douglas . . . was a wit, a man who casually tossed around too-clever-by-half bon mots and regularly quoted Boswell's Life of Johnson. (In other words, a complete jerk.) (NPR, 13 September 2013, "Death and the Aging Hipster: A Tale of Intolerable Men")

—GORDON TURNBULL
The Johnsonians Dinner (USA), 2013

The Johnsonians held their annual black-tie dinner, timed to celebrate the great man’s birthday, on 20 September 2013, at the Century Association in New York City. The event, which was hosted by George Davidson, began at 6 pm with cocktails and moved gracefully into dinner at 7 pm. Dinner featured choices of salmon in champagne sauce, beef bordelaise, and vegetarian penne.

During the dinner, Bob DeMaria offered the toast to the immortal memory. Elaine Bander gave the toast to the guests and G. Gabrielle Starr gave the toast to the hosts. Todd Gilman presented the treasurer’s report, and let us know that our association was in good financial order. John Scanlan gave the membership secretary’s report and had the sad duty of announcing the passing of two of our members: Alvaro Ribeiro and OM Brack. Nancy Johnson then took the podium to remember Alvaro, and Bob DeMaria followed with his remembrance of Skip Brack. Jack Lynch, reporting as corresponding secretary, gave a well-deserved shout out to Jim Caudle, who has for years handled three critical jobs for the Johnsonians: Gilman’s, Scanlan’s, and Lynch’s. Jack acknowledged Jim as “three times the man I am.”

After dinner, John Scanlan delivered his talk entitled “Johnson (smiling),” which is presented on page 6 of this publication. I am pleased to see the talk in print, and to have the title of the talk set down on paper. The phrase, “Johnson (smiling)” is fun to look at. Coming from Boswell’s Life, it also offers a neat picture of the author and the subject. We see Boswell, for all his well-known buffoonery, as earnest and exact; and Johnson, for all his “rhinoceros laughter,” savoring his moment of lightness and command. Scanlan’s talk took us on a tour not only of funny things Johnson wrote and said (which is always a treat), but of Johnson’s evolving views on the topics of humor and laughter. Something must be said, too, of Professor Scanlan’s delivery. He uses and modulates his voice like an actor. His voice (especially when he lowered it), his postures and his pauses provided drama and gave an intimacy and immediacy to his talk.

The evening’s keepsake was an unusual and creative one. It was an elegant box made to resemble the first one-volume folio of the
Dictionary (along with a print of the portrait of Johnson that appeared in that edition). The box’s design and manufacture was arranged (and, I am confident, subsidized) by Bryan Garner and his family. An English master bookbinder was hired to make the original box, and 103 copies of it were then manufactured in China. Bryan’s family and contacts in Hong Kong and China oversaw the production and shipping of the boxes, which must have been a daunting task. A new tradition of meta-keepsakes seems to have begun: last year’s keepsake was a bibliography of past Johnsonian keepsakes; this year’s keepsake is a box in which to keep them.

Ninety people attended this year’s dinner. Conversation was animated and spirits were high. Probably half of the diners remained after the dinner and had to be ushered out of the bar at 10 pm. About thirty of us then wound our way to the Algonquin Hotel (I am always afraid we will form a conga line), where we appropriated a large part of the bar. Tables and chairs were scraped together and expensive cocktails ordered.

The next Johnsonian dinner will take place in New York City at the Knickerbocker Club on 19 September 2014. Stephen Clarke will be the host.

—Peter Kanter
Croker on Johnson's Latin Poetry

Quoting Johnson on Pembroke College ale, John Wilson Croker opines: "though the two first lines are awkward, [they have] more point and pleasantry than his epigrams usually have." (For full text and commentary, see my edition of Johnson's Latin poems [1995], pp. 9-17). The offending couplet reads:

Quid mirum Maro quod digne canit arma virumque
Quid quod putidulum nostra Camoena sonat?

"Awkward" they are not. The first line neatly interweaves Virgil's famous opening to the *Aeneid* with an alliteration (it might be rendered "What marvel that Maro . . .") that gains effect if one remembers Thracian Maronea, a town celebrated for its wine. The second one smartly offsets the opening compliment with *putidulum*, a very rare adjective, almost certainly obtained from Martial 4. 20. 4, *altera ridicula est, altera putidula*, the only example adduced by the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*; it also occurs in the *Historia Augusta's Life of Macrinus* 14. 1, *hominem putidulum*.

Croker juxtaposes another of Johnson's Horace-based undergraduate pieces (*Quas Natura dedit, Academia promit . . .*; my edition, pp. 17-19), commending its "graver and better style," after remarking of the previous one, "it may be inferred that the college beer was at this time indifferent." (I fancy most readers would have worked that out for themselves.)

Next in the firing line are Johnson's *Ad Urbanum* (his ode to Cave) and Boswell's eulogy thereof: "In so happy a style of compliment, that Cave must have been destitute both of taste and sensibility had he not found himself highly gratified." Denying these latter qualities to the *Gentleman's Magazine's* publisher, Croker also questions the biographer's literary verdict, singling out the tropes *fronte sertum in erudita, linguae plumbea spicula, victrix per obstantes Camenas*, plus the concluding stanza's invocation of rose, violet, and rainbow, asking if any of these were "In any way appropriate to the printer of St. John's Gate, his magazine, or his antagonists?"
To these contextual rather than textual reproaches, Johnson might have riposted that, as in lapidary inscriptions, in verse eulogies a man was not upon oath. (For other, diverse, critical receptions, views of Cave, and full commentary, see my edition, pp. 37-41.) As to the offending expressions, judged on purely literary terms: singular *sertum* has few parallels in Lewis & Short or the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, whilst in his final stanza, which by a kind of ring composition reverts to garlands and colors, Johnson switches to the plural; *linguae procacis* echoes both Tacitus (*Annals* 1. 16) and Milton’s *Ode to Rouse* (his last Latin poem); *spicula* was classically uncommon in this figurative sense; *victrix per obstantes catervas* reproduces (with a twist of gender) Horace, *Odes* 4. 9. 43-44, *per obstantes catervas victor*.

Johnson’s couplet on Molly Ashton is dubbed “the celebrated epigram,” postulated by reproduction of his ode to Dr. Birch, without comment, except a bare reference to its Greek original. Croker was keeping his powder dry for Johnson’s Address to the Pregnant Laura (my edition, pp. 54-57). After Englishing it, Croker lets fly with both barrels: “This version is awkward enough, but not more so than the original, which indeed, seems hardly worth the distinction of being specially quoted. If the first line was proposed as a *thesis*, we cannot much admire the style in which it was followed up: the designation, surely, of the lady as *puella*, would lead us to expect anything rather than the turn which the epigram takes. Is not the second line gross and awkward; the third pedantic; and the conceit of the fourth not even classical—for Lucina was never famed for her beauty; and does not the whole seem a very strange subject for poetical composition?”

We may smile at this limp moralizing conclusion, in which Croker again veers from literary appreciation to castigation of content. One who did more was Thomas Babington Macauley who in his notorious hatchet-job (*Edinburgh Review* 107 [1831]) on Croker’s edition, while sharing his low opinion of the poem as such, ridiculed the strictures on Johnson’s applications of *puella* and *Lucina* to the parturient protagonist. Macauley was somewhat fumblingly countered by Croker himself and more forcefully in the *Spectator’s* full-dress Answers, therein reprinted. Neither took into account Boswell’s statement (*Life*, 1:157) that “Mr. Hector was present when this epigram was made impromptu. The first line was proposed by Dr. James, and Johnson was called upon by the company to finish it, which he instantly did.” Macauley indubitably wins this round. Johnson’s use of *puella* of a pregnant lady is quite classical; see P. Watson, “Puella and Virgo,” *Glotta* 61 (1983), 119-143. Macauley adroitly adduced Horace, *Odes* 3. 22. 1-4, where
Lucina is invoked as the goddess who helps and protects “labo- 
rantes utero puellas.” The key comparison, though, is Ovid, Fasti 2. 451-452: “parce, precor, gravidis, facilis Lucina, puellis / matu-
rumque utero molliter aufer onus.” This provides Johnson with his  “facilis Lucina,” also “uteri,” while “onus” inspires “pondus” and  “gravidis” mutates to “grave.” Therefore, if we accept the Oxford  notion that James produced the first couplet, we are also accepting  the idea that both men were simultaneously evoking the same bit  of Ovid.

As to Lucina, Macauley correctly pointed out the mythical asso-
ociation with Diana and her beauty, albeit Johnson’s “facilis” need  have no connection with Laura’s opening good looks: the epithet is  versatile, but not one that obviously connotes physical charm.

Croker’s other criticisms ignore the offending lines’ heavy  dependence on classical models (instanced with references in my  edition), leaving him in the position of questioning the poetics of  Catullus, Horace, and Phaedrus, open to the ridicule of the Specta-
tor’s Answers that “Macauley thought he was safely sneering at  Mr. Croker, and unexpectedly finds himself correcting Euripides.”  

This latter gibe was prompted by Croker’s interpretation of the  two Greek letters theta and phi attached to Johnson’s “at the altar,  I recommended my th.ph.” as “probably standing for thnetoi philoi  —departed friends.” Macauley goes to town: “No schoolboy could  venture to use the word thnetoi in the sense which Mr. Croker  ascribes to it without imminent danger of a flogging.”

The Spectator’s Answers threw into Macauley’s face verse 273  from Euripides’ Suppliant Women, where the offending adjective  seems to be used in Croker’s sense. The latter, while not deserving  Macauley’s sarcasm, would have been better advised to say “mortal,” the epithet’s normal meaning in classical and patristic Greek, being restricted (according to Liddell & Scott’s Greek-
English Lexicon) to living humans.

Macauley could not leave the matter alone. In a letter to Napier  (19 January 1832), he rants that the Euripides passage is “as every  scholar knows, corrupt; which is nonsense and false metre if read as  he reads it; and which Markland and Matthies have set right by a  most obvious correction. But, as nobody seems to have read his vin-
dication, we can gain nothing by refuting it.” The “obvious correction”  is tethneoton, printed in the Oxford Classical Texts of Gilbert Murray  and James Diggle and ascribed by them to Reiske rather than  Macauley’s cited authorities, thneton being the reading of manu-
scripts L and P, and therefore of some earlier editions. Professor  Christopher Collard (Oxford) kindly informs me that thneton makes  no good sense and that the “correction” suits the dactylic metre.
Returning to the Latin fray, Croker challenged the ascription of the "poor and obscure" couplet addressed to Richard Savage, being "reluctant to believe that Johnson wrote this sad stuff."

Humani studium generis cui pectore fervet,
O! colat humanum te foveatque genus.

See my edition (pp. 444-45) for full discussion of authenticity and language. No phrase has a better classical pedigree than "humanum genus": for easy examples, Horace, Virgil, Suetonius, Tacitus, and funereal epitaphs. In Tom Brown's Schooldays, Tom always added to his verse productions the same extra couplet for (as he hoped) extra credit, relying on the master's failure to remember its previous appearances. It began "O genus humanum!" This light joke perhaps implies the tedious frequency of such phrases in Neo-Latin verses of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. If so, Croker may have slight justification, until we point to Johnson's neat antithesis of the same sentiment. "Pectore fervet" clearly echoes Horace's "fervet...pectus" (Epistles 1.1.33). In Virgil, there are at least seventy cases of _pectore_ in the fifth foot of a hexameter, often followed by a verb of high emotion. And, given that his words here describe Savage, is there a chance that Johnson intended a quietly comic reminiscence of Congreve's "soothe the savage breast"?

Another Johnsonian couplet, the one on Banks's goat, is dismissed by Croker for its "particularly stiff and poor Latin." The real goat is Croker. Johnson's distich is a neat combination of Horace, Virgil, Crinagoras (in the Greek Anthology), and the myth of Princess Amalthaea suckling the infant Zeus on Crete with goat's milk (see my edition, pp. 70-71). In a variant, Amalthaea is the goat itself, subsequently raised to the heavens as a star in the constellation Auriga, something that leads me to wonder if Johnson's second line may imply that this was actually the name of Banks' caprine mascot?

Croker shows up to rather better critical advantage on Johnson's Scottish odes, questioning editorial alterations and printing lapses, plus a personal broadside: "It is wonderful that Mr. Murphy (who was himself a Latin poet) and the late Oxford editor should have overlooked these errors." I have not here the space to go into Croker's many textual minutiae, so make do with his generalizing remarks on the development of Johnson's Latin verse skills: "The classical reader will not have failed to observe how much his taste, and perhaps his Latinity, had improved since the days of the ode Ad Urbanum and the epitgrams to Savage and Eliza. His verses In Theatro, and those in Sky and Inchkenneth, and this ode to Mrs.
Notes and Queries

Thrale, are, though still liable to many criticisms, more natural in their thoughts, and more easy in their expressions, than his earlier attempts in this line.” Croker’s verdict was cited and endorsed by Leicester Bradner himself (Musae Anglicanae: A History of Anglo-Latin Poetry 1500-1925 [1940]; rpt. 1966, p. 251).

Reverting briefly to Croker’s ad hominem gibe at Murphy, he too had his scholarly failures, being (so, too, Malone) unable to trace the verse “solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris,” in fact no further away than Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus, V.i.45. Croker’s relatively high opinion of Johnson’s Scottish poems extends to one indigenous Latin bard, but emphatically not to another. He thought well of John McPherson’s “Ode from Barra” (Johnson himself had approved his earlier published paraphrase of the Song of Moses: “It does him honour; he has a great deal of Latin, and good Latin”): “It is very poetical . . . my readers will probably not be displeased to have a specimen of this ode.”

Alas, though, for Alexander MacDonald’s Latin verses presented to Johnson at Armidale on Skye: “I really do not profess to understand more than the first stanza. It seems hard to guess what Sir Alexander could have meant by presenting Dr. Johnson with such lines; which are really not much better than the nonsense verses of a schoolboy”—by comparison, Johnson got off lightly!

Croker’s damnation was echoed by an anonymous note in the Gentleman’s Magazine 59 (1786), p. 388: “I heartily wish Mr. Boswell would get this Latin poem translated.” Bradner’s verdict (p. 251, quoting the last three stanzas) seems ironic: “The conclusion of this ode should, however, have satisfied their (Boswell and Johnson’s) desire for romantic atmosphere.”

Whatever one’s view of their (de)merits, we can be grateful to MacDonald if his effort prompted Johnson to his “Ode on Skye.” I have not space to give the poem in full—apart from Croker, it is a mouse-click away on the internet. Suffice it here to say—Experto Credite!—that MacDonald’s verses, while no great shakes as poetry goes, are (to borrow Croker’s favorite adverb here) really not that hard to understand, being also quite appropriate to the occasion. As Bradner pointed out, MacDonald’s Latin verses elsewhere enjoyed some éclat, five of them having been chosen for the 1795 Musae Etonenses. Croker’s sneer at “the nonsense verses of some schoolboy” is a reminder that not all classical luminaries approved of what has been called (see my edition, p. 1, for references) “that peculiarly English phenomenon, Latin and Greek verse composition.” The great classical scholar Richard Porson (Alexander Dyce, Porsoniana [1887], p. 345) was even more starkly dismissive than Croker: “For all modern Greek and Latin poetry, he had the pro-
foundest contempt. When Herbert published the *Musa Etoniensis*, Porson said, after looking over one of the volumes, 'here is trash, fit only to be put behind the fire.'” —BARRY BALDWIN

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Some Neglected Classicists

Our own great age of scholarship, begun in 1691 by Bentley's *Epistola ad Millium*, was ended by the successive strokes of doom which consigned Dobree and Elmsely to the grave and Blomfield to the bishopric of Chester. —A. E. Housman

I dealt with Bentley in my chapter on Scholarship in *Samuel Johnson in Context* (ed. Jack Lynch, 2012). The other big names are not presently relevant. In cause here are a number of classical scholars, long obscured and made more so by their exclusion from the *Dictionary of British Classicists* (2004), which includes Johnson himself.

Baxter, William (1650-1723). Johnson owned the 1725 reprint of his edition of Horace (1701), in which Bentley is roughly treated. At stake, though, here is his reputation-making edition of Anacreon (1695). Its revised version (1705) incurred charges of plagiarism, later retracted, by Joshua Barnes. Both when inspecting his father's library at Auchinleck and in a letter to Boswell (*Life*, 4.163, 241; 5.376), Johnson claimed he had long been unable to find a copy in London, even suspecting it did not exist. Two puzzles here. First, Baxter's Anacreon was readily available in the capital, being frequently mentioned in booksellers' catalogues. Second, according to Aleyn Reade's inventory (*Johnsonian Gleanings*, 5.213-227), it was actually in the undergraduate Johnson's library, albeit not in Fleeman's edition of his *Sale Catalogue*. Finding it hard to believe Johnson had forgotten this youthful ownership, Reade speculated that it was merely a "particular edition" that eluded Johnson, an explanation that does not really explain.

Burton, John (1696-1771). Mentioned in a long Boswellian list (*Life*, 3:174, n. 3) of clergymen memorialized in the *Biographica Britannica*. Johnson in his Life of Smith (Yale, 22:530) praises Burton as "a man eminent for literature." One possible classical
connection might have been Xenophon, on whom Burton lectured twice weekly at Oxford during Johnson’s time there, and whose *Cyropaedia* was “the only author which he fairly red (sic) thro’, & that was for the sake of the language” (*Life*, 4:524).

Cooke, Thomas (1701-1756). Often nicknamed “Hesiod Cooke” for his alleged groundbreaking translation of that author. Presumably a tribute to his adroit promotion thereof. It has deceived moderns from Wikipedia to Edith Hall’s otherwise superlative *The Return of Ulysses: A Cultural History of Homer’s Odyssey* (2008; rpt. 2012; cf. my review article in the on-line *Ready Steady Book*). In fact, George Chapman had beaten Cooke to it back in 1618. There is no sign of Hesiod in any language in the lists of Fleeman or Reade. Johnson knew about Cooke and his translations (*Life*, 5:37), adding some disobliging remarks about his character, his attitude doubtless colored by Cooke’s malevolent verses on Richard Savage in the second edition of his *The Battle of the Poets*.

Cunningham (or Cuninghame), Alexander (1655?-1730). Another individual whose edition of Horace and separate commentary (1721) were animated by dislike of Bentley. James Henry Monk (Richard Bentley’s biographer) describes the latter (*Animadversiones in Richardi Bentleii Notas et Emendationes ad Q. Horatium Flaccum*) as “one continued objurgation, delivered in dry and bitter terms, unvaried by the least humour or playfulness.” Boswell speaks of “the learned Cuninghame, the opponent of Bentley as a critick upon Horace” (*Life*, 5:373). Johnson seems not to have owned his Horace, but did possess a copy of his posthumously published edition of Virgil.

Edwards, Edward (c. 1726-1783). A friend of and correspondent of Johnson, who dubbed him “my convivial friend” and lodged with him at Jesus College during his 1783 visit to Oxford. As with Burton, Xenophon provided the classical link, Edwards being an editor of and essayist upon him, albeit his own misgivings about premature publication of his edition “urged on by the importunate solicitations of my thoughts, without having the collation of the Parisian MSS” were endorsed by Johnson, “very much out of order” at that time.

Grierson, Constantia (1706?-1733). Had she lived longer and been better known in London, Grierson might have rivaled Elizabeth Carter in classical reputation. Boswell’s praise of her son George as “a gentleman of uncommon learning, and great wit and vivacity” is supplemented by reference to “the learned Mrs. Grierson, who was patronised by the late Lord Grenville, and was the editor of several of the classicks” (*Life*, 3:116, n.1). Her editions, published by her husband, included Terence and Tacitus, the latter
described as "one of the best edited books ever delivered to the world" by classical bibliographer Edward Harwood (1729-1794), whose "fantastical translation of the New Testament, in modern phrase" provoked Johnson into flinging it down with the expostulation, "Puppy!" (Life, 3:39). I fancy he'd have reacted the same way to many New Testament versions of our own day. Death aborted Grierson's planned edition of Sallust, a translation of whose Bellum Catilinae Johnson would complete late in life (see the 1993 edition by David L. Vander Meulen and G. Thomas Tanselle).

Jodrell, Richard Paul (1745-1831). Though best known as a playwright, Jodrell also published Illustrations of Euripides, on the Ion and the Bacchae and the Alcestis. He was a founding member of the Essex Club, and on at least one occasion entertained Johnson to dinner (Life, 4:272).

Morell, Thomas (1703-1784). I have written at length about his career and writings (Vates, 4 [2011], 37-39), which are more substantial than the Hill-Powell note on him suggests (Life, 5:350). His substantial bibliography can be read in the on-line edition of the Bibliotheca Britannica. His classical lexicography should have been of interest to Johnson, as also his expansions and revisions to that amateur Latin verse-maker's bible, the Gradus ad Parnassum. Before he started the Gentleman's Magazine in 1731, Edward Cave also worked on the Gradus, so we can see why his most famous publication was so hospitable to Latin verses from the pens of Johnson and others.¹

In a letter to Boswell, David Garrick wrote, "Shall I recommend to you a play of Eschylus (Prometheus) published and translated by poor old Morell, who is a good scholar and an acquaintance of mine?" Did this acquaintance extend to Johnson? I leave it to more seasoned Garrickians to explain why the great thespian should dub him "poor old Morell."

Wasse, Joseph (1672-1738). Johnson owned his edition of Sallust, also his collaborative one with Ludolph Küster of the Byzantine dictionary-cum-encyclopaedia Suidas (now commonly called Suda, meaning fortress; cf. my comprehensive account in Byzantion 76 [2006], 11-31), which earned them both a jab in Pope's Dunciad ("Are things which Küster, Burmann, Wasse shall see/ When Man's whole frame is obvious to a flea" [IV.237-38]). Presumably short of reading matter, Johnson spent the morning of 10 August 1774, at Lloyds of Macemunnion in Scotland reading Wasse's Greek

¹ Although the fact that Cave worked on the 1729 edition of the Gradus has long been known, David Butterfield speculates that his contribution was the full numerical and titular citations (Classical Dictionaries: Past, Present and Future, ed. Christopher Stray [2010], pp. 71-83).
Notes and Queries

trochaics and concomitant Latin verses extolling Bentley. These were the other half of a mutual admiration society, Bentley having pronounced, “When I am dead, Wasse will be the most learned man in England.” Johnson could hardly have disagreed more. The Greek verses “appeared inelegant and made with difficulty. The Latin Elegy contains only common places harshly expressed so far as I have read, for it is long.” After questioning the meaning of some of the Greek, Johnson concluded that “Wasse was an unpolished scholar, who with much literature had no art of elegance or diction” (Life, 5:445). Bentley’s biographer Monk was less damning but tepid on Wasse’s poetic effort: “All that can be said in their favour is that they are tolerably better than the generality of laudatory verses prefixed to books” (2nd ed., 1883: 2.170). They had appeared in volume six of the short-lived Bibliotheca Literaria (1722-1724), edited by Samuel Jebb, with Wasse both the chief contributor and author of its downfall, ruined (said Bowyer) by the length of his articles. What would Bowyer have thought of the New Yorker?

Johnson over the next few days disconsolately browsed through its pages, concluding that it “was so little supplied with papers that could interest curiosity, that it could not hope for long continuance.” One suspects many modern journals would have elicited the same verdict.

—BARRY BALDWIN

Topping Up the Tankard

ike Paul Tankard (JNL, March 2013, p. 47), I have not been able to Google my way to the author of “Good and Original.” My website perusing showed an equal division between persisting in and doubting Johnsonian pedigree. Tankard’s proposed solution is plausible. I wish here only to subjoin that such cutting remarks were characteristic of the eighteenth century. A few easily found examples: Gibbon in a footnote to chapter 28 of Decline & Fall remarked of Augustine’s City of God, “His learning is too often borrowed, and his arguments are too often his own.” Classical scholar Richard Porson, when pressed to approve some new Latin verses, replied, “I see a great deal of Horace and a great deal of Virgil, but nothing Horatian and nothing
Johnsonian News Letter


—BARRY BALDWIN

Broadview Edition of
The Life of Richard Savage

A new edition of Samuel Johnson’s *Account of the Life of Mr. Richard Savage, Son of the Earl Rivers* is currently under development for Broadview Press and should be available in 2016. Edited by Dr. Nicholas Seager, Keele University, United Kingdom, and Dr. Lance Wilcox, Elmhurst College, Illinois, the volume is primarily intended for the classroom. It will, however, be appropriate for scholarly use as well, retaining the work’s original typography and spelling, with the exception of the long s. The edition is based on the 1744 first edition, corrected in the light of the 1748 second.

Besides the *Life* itself, the volume will feature an introduction, a chronology of the lives of Savage and Johnson, supplementary texts, and a bibliography of primary and secondary sources. Footnotes will identify persons and places in the main and supplementary texts, define unusual words, and point out discrepancies between Johnson’s account of Savage’s life and accounts by others.

A tentative list of the supplementary texts includes the following: the “Newgate Biography” published anonymously at the time of Savage’s murder trial; Johnson’s written and oral pronouncements on the art of biography; passages from Boswell and Hawkins on Johnson’s friendship with Savage; extensive selections from Savage’s own writings, especially “The Bastard,” “The Wanderer,” and “An Author to be Lett”; and contemporary reactions to the *Life*.

The editors welcome comments, suggestions, and inquiries. We can be reached at either n.p.seager@keele.ac.uk or wilcoxl@elmhurst.edu.

—LANCE WILCOX

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ACROSS
1. n.s. [—__________, French.] A waiting servant. (5)
4. n.s. 1. An insect that squeaks or chirps about ovens and fireplaces. 2. A sport, at which contenders drive a ball with sticks in opposition to each other. (7)
9. The preterite of To BE. (3)
11. v.n. To desire to come together. Used of deer. (3)
13. n.s. It has no singular. Those people who, living on the other side of the globe, have their feet directly opposite to ours. (9)
14. n.s. Anger; fury; rage. (5)
15. v.a. 1. To bind; to fasten with a knot... (3)
16. *n.s.* A writer of glosses; a commentator. (9)

17. *n.s.* A thin watery matter oozing through the glands, chiefly about the mouth. Quincy. (5)

19. *v.a.* To break at once into many pieces; to break so as to scatter the parts. 2. To dissipate; to make incapable of close and continued attention. (7)

20. *n.s.* The loadstone; the stone that attracts iron. (6)

24. *n.s.* The pavement of a room on which a fire is made; the ground under the chimney. (6)

27. *n.s.* 1. Food; the act of feeding. 2. Ground on which cattle feed. 3. Human culture; education. Not used. (7)

29. *n.s.* 1. A man below the common size of men. 2. Any animal or plant below its natural bulk. 3. An attendant on a lady or knight in romances.... (5)

32. *n.s.* A tall foot-soldier, of whom there is one company in every regiment: such men being employed to throw grenades. (9)

33. *adj.* 1. Not high.... (3)

34. *n.s.* In anatomy, a round soft spongy body, suspended from the palate near the foramina of the nostrils over the glottis. *Dict.* (5)

36. *adj.* That which has the quality of opening the excrementitious passages of the body. (9)

38. *v.n.* To putrify; to lose the cohesion of its parts. (3)

39. *n.s.* A long pole with a broad end, by which vessels are driven in the water, the resistance made by the water to the — pushing on the vessel. (3)

40. *adj.* Rich; opulent; abundant. (7)

41. *prep.* A word used in the Scotch dialect. 1. Concerning; about; as, *he said nothing — this particular.* 2. Over against; opposite to; as, *he lives — the market-house.*

**DOWN**

1. *n.s.* 1. The front of an army; the first line.... (3)

2. *n.s.* 1. An instrument chiefly used for taking the altitude of the pole, the sun, or stars, at sea. 2. A stereographick projection of the circles of the sphere upon the plain of some great circle. *Chambers.* (9)

3. *n.s.* Explainer; expounder; interpreter. (9)

5. *n.s.* [Latin.] 1. The beak of a bird. 2. The beak of a ship. 3. The scaffold whence orators harangued.... (7)

6. *v.n.* To sink by bending the knees; to stoop; to shrink. (5)

7. *v.a.* 1. To destroy; to excisind. 2. To expunge; to rub out. (5)
8. interj. A particle noting contempt. (3)
9. adj. Knavishly merry; merrily mischievous; frolicksome. (7)
10. n.s. Publisher; he that revises or prepares any work for publication. (6)
12. n.s. A hard heavy dead dull blow with something blunt. (5)
18. n.s. The female of a house-cock. 2. The female of any land fowl. (3)
21. n.s. The act of bearing the young in the womb. (9)
22. n.s. Learning; knowledge obtained by study and instruction. (9)
23. n.s. 1. A dog that follows his game under ground... (7)
25. n.s. 1. The element encompassing the terraqueous globe... (3)
26. n.s. The draff which is given to swine. (7)
27. n.s. [A y]oung [chicken] just breaking the shell. (6)
28. n.s. 1. Scent, whether good or bad. 2. Fragrance; perfume; sweet scent. (5)
30. adj. 1. Sharp, ending in a point; opposed to obtuse or blunt. 2. In a figurative sense applied to men; ingenious; penetrating; opposed to dull or stupid. ... (5)
31. n.s. The instrument with which grain is beaten out of the ear; the tool of the thresher. (5)
35. v.a. 1. To consecrate by a solemn dedication; to give to a divine power. 2. To devote: a ceremonial phrase. (3)
37. n.s. A vessel in which liquors are kept in the immature state. (3)

Solution is on page 64.


This genetic transcription of the manuscript of Boswell’s Life of Johnson, covering the years 1776-1780, is, like its predecessors, a major work of scholarship. It is the sequel to volumes edited by Marshall Waingrow (1994), covering the years 1709-1765, and by Bruce Redford with Elizabeth Goldring (1998), covering the years 1766-1776. Its editor, Thomas Bonnell, is now at work on the fourth and final volume of the series, covering the years 1781-1784. The series is in parallel with the first four volumes of the monumental Hill-Powell edition of the Life, with running heads usefully keyed to the corresponding page numbers of that edition. To appreciate Bonnell’s outstanding editorial work, readers should be equipped with, at the least, volume three of Hill-Powell, as well, of course, as the previous two volumes of the manuscript edition.

Almost ninety years have elapsed since, in 1927, the first few leaves (sixteen, with a four-leaf “paper apart,” all covering March 1766) made their way from the fabled ebony cabinet at Malahide Castle, Dublin, to the incipient Boswell collection of Colonel Ralph Isham. At the time, it was thought that the remainder of the manuscript, 1046 pages in all, as well as a similar number of the papers apart, had succumbed to damp and, in Geoffrey Scott’s words, “perished to powder.” The astonishing story of how first a croquet box and then a grain loft at Malahide eventually yielded almost all of the manuscript of the Life, as well as numerous other Boswellian manuscripts, was told first by David Buchanan (The Treasure of
Auchinleck: The Story of the Boswell Papers, 1974) and then by Frederick Pottle (Pride and Negligence: The History of the Boswell Papers, 1982). In 1950, happily, the lion's share of the manuscript was bought by Yale University, where it is now housed at the Beinecke Library; most of the remainder, formerly in the Hyde Collection, is now at Harvard's Houghton Library. Also now at the Houghton is a complete set of the revised proofs of the Life and fragments of the first proofs.

The first scholar to devote sustained attention to all this newly available material was Marshall Waingrow. In 1969, his magisterial edition of Boswell's correspondence and papers related to the Life was published as the second volume of the Research Edition of the Yale Boswell, with a revised second edition in 2001. It contains a comprehensive "Chronology of the Making of the Life," beginning with a conversation between Boswell and Johnson of May 1768 ("Nay, Sir, when I am dead, you may do as you will") and ending in May 1799, four years after Boswell's death, with the publication of the third edition of the Life, edited by Edmond Malone. In 1994, Waingrow initiated the publication of Boswell's manuscript of the Life, with its plethora of obliterations, insertions, revisions, and cases in which Boswell did not indicate which one of two or more alternative readings was to stand. To do so, he devised an ingenious system of transcription. With the help of a series of sigla, usefully summarized in Bonnell's volume (xix), Waingrow was able to illuminate what Bonnell terms "previously hidden aspects of the work's composition and typesetting," while "following Boswell from his first drafts through multiple layers of revision and beyond—to last-minute printing-house decisions in both style and content" (xv). Waingrow also devised for the edition a dual system of annotation, in which the most important part of the commentary appears in the form of footnotes, while more technical matters are relegated to endnotes. Since there are ninety closely-printed pages of endnotes in Bonnell's volume, as well as a dense layer of footnotes on almost every page and a text bristling with sigla, a good deal of effort is demanded of the reader, but the rewards make this effort worthwhile. Thanks to the painstaking editorial work of Bonnell and his predecessors we can now see clearly what took place at Henry Baldwin's press, where Boswell delivered his gigantic manuscript on 1 January 1790, and the role played by both the compositor, John Plymsell, and the corrector, Mr Selfe. Their vital contributions to the Life form the subject of a chapter, "Imprinting Johnson," in Bruce Redford's brilliant Lyell Lectures, published as Designing the Life of Johnson (2002), and with the Yale Edition of the manuscript Life now well on its way to comple-
tion, other such studies are sure to follow. They will replace earlier works written without the benefit of the Yale Edition, such as Geoffrey Scott’s pioneering *The Making of the Life of Johnson* (1929), published as the sixth volume of *The Private Papers of James Boswell*.

Despite their heroic efforts, Plymsell and Selfe inevitably made errors of various kinds as they grappled with Boswell’s unwieldy manuscript. Two of these are noted by Bonnell in his brief but incisive preface (xviii). Boswell’s celebrated remark about Johnson’s “buffeting his books” stems from a misreading of his hand in the phrase “bustling among his books,” itself a revision of what was originally “battling with his books” (52). A larger printer’s error was the omission of an entire paragraph, containing General Paoli’s odd regret “that the genius of Sir Joshua Reynolds had not been exercised in Statuary by which it would have been much longer perpetuated,” as well as Johnson’s reply: “True Sir . . . but portrait painting gets him present money” (46).

In Bonnell’s volume, we can also see Boswell wrestling with particular words and phrases in search of the *mot juste*. In 1778, for example, Johnson talks about Lord Orrery’s account of “a pamphlet written against Sir Robert Walpole the whole of which was an allegory on the phallick obscenity.” Boswell originally wrote “Penis” and then, as Bonnell notes, changed his mind three times: “After thoroughly crossing out ‘Penis’ and writing ‘the phallick obscenity’ above it, he then scored through his revision, only to recopy it on the facing page” (170, n. 9). In 1778, during a celebrated conversation with Boswell, Johnson “expressed a particular enthusiasm with respect to visiting the Wall of China.” In Bonnell’s volume, we find that Boswell added a concluding phrase to this sentence, “as perhaps one of the most magnificent instances of human industry,” with the qualifying “perhaps” an additional insertion. The phrase was, however, omitted in the revises and thus appears in none of the published editions of the *Life*. As Bonnell observes, “the compositor possibly overlooked it, for JB left no caret to mark its insertion” (192, n. 4).

Bonnell’s edition also permits us to see Boswell at work on the revised proofs of the *Life*, both adding and deleting material even at this late stage. In 1778, Boswell records, as an example of Johnson’s occasional ill-temper, his spurning an offer from Lord Marchmont to pay a visit in which he would furnish information on the life of Pope. In the manuscript, Boswell attributes Johnson’s churlishness here to “something morbid in his constitution”; the revises, however, contain another sentence, in Boswell’s characteristically tendentious style:

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Let the most censorious of my readers suppose himself to have a violent fit of the tooth-ach, or to have received a severe stroke on the shin-bone, and when in such a state to be asked a question; and if he has any, candour, he will not be surprized at the answers which Johnson sometimes gave in moments of irritation, which let me assure them, is exquisitely painful. (253, n. 2)

Conversely, the manuscript contains a lengthy account of Johnson’s observations on gunpowder, followed by Boswell’s note: “Although there is it seems a defect in point of experimental science . . . they are so ingenious and shew such a vigorous aptitude of research that I should be sorry to omit them” (268). As Bonnell remarks, however, “omit them he did ... by the time the revises were printed.” Their deletion makes for a smoother narrative in the Life, but it is a delight for readers of this edition to encounter Johnson’s quirky remarks on gunpowder for the first time.

Volume one of the manuscript edition contains a four-page list of abbreviations and short titles used in the annotations. The same abbreviations are used by Bonnell, but, regrettably, readers must refer to Waingrow’s original list, as well as to further abbreviations added in Redford and Goldring’s volume and to a third supplement in the present volume (xx); this causes needless difficulties in making sense of an already complex commentary. It is also regrettable that not a single facsimile of the manuscript is provided; readers wishing to see examples of what lies behind the printed pages here have no opportunities to do so. There are two such facsimiles in Waingrow’s volume, while Redford’s Designing the Life of Johnson provides five more, including the page that contains the book “bustling” (not “buffeting”) passage. The final volume of the edition will, I hope, contain illustrations, as well as a master-list of the abbreviations used in all four volumes. It should also provide an index to the series as a whole, gathering together the superbly detailed indices provided for each of the first three volumes. Scholars of Boswell and of Johnson are deeply indebted to Thomas Bonnell for taking on, in medias res, responsibility for this edition, under the sage general editorship of Gordon Turnbull, and for bringing it to what promises to be a triumphant conclusion.

—Peter Sabor
The aim of this book,” says Paul Tankard in his Preface, “is to present to a modern readership a large sample of a fascinating and overlooked body of writing by a major canonical author” (xvii). It is difficult to imagine a more profound recommendation of a new book, and Tankard achieves his lofty goal by presenting 133 pieces of journalism by Boswell which few readers—even specialists—have ever seen before. As a publication complementary to the Yale Boswell Editions, which are concerned with Boswell’s private papers, Tankard’s edition expands our knowledge of Boswell as a writer. Adding these pieces to the canon increases one’s appreciation of Boswell’s versatility, the fertility of his imagination, and his mastery of the public media of his day, often for the very modern purposes of self-promotion. The pieces are organized into chapters and accompanied by journalistic headlines, ample introductions, and extensive explanatory notes.

The book is so newly arrived on my desk, however, that instead of a proper review (which has been solicited for the September issue), I offer herewith merely a preview, some excerpts from the chapter devoted to Boswell’s journalistic publications relevant to his Life of Johnson.

1785

Boswell Honored to Be Recommended as Johnson’s Biographer

To the PRINTER of the St. J. CHRONICLE.

Sir,

I Read in your Paper with the highest Satisfaction a Character of my illustrious Friend Dr. Samuel Johnson, by a Writer who does me the Honour to pay me distinguished Compliments, as the intended Biographer of that great and good Man. I am only afraid, that while he animates my Mind to its best Exertions, he may teach the Publick to expect too much from me. Upon my Honour I have not the least Notion who this Writer is. But his Knowledge of the Intimacy between Dr.
Johnson and me, and of my Means of obtaining Information for writing his Life, is so particular, that were it not expressed with more Elegance than I am Master of, I should almost believe that his Essay was written by myself. If the Writer will have the Generosity to avow himself in your Paper, I shall be very much obliged to him. But if he has any Objection to a publick Discovery, I entreat he may be kind enough to let me know by a private Note to whom I am indebted for such encouraging Notice, that I may testify my Gratitude, and may be further indebted to him for his Advice in the Progress of my Labours.

And as my Name has, upon the late much lamented Occasion been often mentioned in the News-Papers, I think it proper solemnly to declare, that I have not sent a single Article, nor shall I send one, without being signed with my Name.

JAMES BOSWELL.

Tankard reveals that the anonymous author was Johnson’s friend and collaborator, George Stevens, and that, not surprisingly, Boswell did not adhere to his vow in the last sentence. For example, see the following three pieces on another of his competitors for the title of Johnson’s official or best biographer:

Mrs. Piozzi’s Nerves Shaken by Prospect of Boswell’s Book
“Star, 3 March 1790”

The frayeur of Madam Piozzi for the appearance of Mr. Boswell’s book, still continues, with unabated force. She takes sedative and anodyne medicines, but with little effect. Her nerves, shaken by a perturbed spirit, cannot be composed.

Boswell has even been tampered with to expunge every passage concerning her. His good nature we know is great, but we hope his integrity, his inflexible love of truth, and his veneration for the memory of a friend, by her made to stink in the public nose, will render him callous to every such application.

Boswell to Spare Mrs. Piozzi
The Diary; or, Woodfall’s Register, September 21, 1790

Mr. Boswell has erased from his intended biography of Johnson, whatever was calculated to wound the feelings of Mrs. Piozzi, of whose character he had been induced to form such unfavourable ideas, as a short intercourse with that lady cannot fail to obliterate. There are indeed, few persons
Johnsonian News Letter

more aspersed with less reason than Mrs. Piozzi, whose talents, and moral qualities are conspicuous within her sphere of action.

Boswell Will Not Spare Mrs. Piozzi

"Morning Post, 1790"

Boswell has been assailed by much importunity, to expunge from his intended Life of Johnson, all that may be unfavourable to Mrs. Piozzi; but Boswell’s zeal for the honour of his departed friend, renders him on that point inflexible.

Recalling his vow not to publish anonymously Boswell returned to the St. James Chronicle, and in the issue of October 16-19, 1790 published this disavowal, which Tankard heads with the slug, "Boswell to Send News of Johnson’s Life to the Press":

To the PRINTER of the St. J. CHRONICLE

Sir,

A Considerable time ago I wrote you a letter, which appeared in your Paper, declaring that I would publish no paragraph whatever concerning my Life of Dr. Johnson, without putting my name to it.

Since that time there have been such a number written by friends, foes, and correspondents of all descriptions (of none of which I know or even suspect who the authours are) that I find it hard to be precluded from availing myself of any fair opportunity to meet them in their own way. I therefore intimate that this restraint is to last no longer, and that I hold myself at full liberty to throw into the prints whatever fancy may prompt.

I am, Sir, your most humble servant,
London, Oct. 18. JAMES BOSWELL.

"Whatever fancy may prompt” would not be a bad sub-sub-title for this whole wonderful collection, which will surely heighten—if not always raise—everyone’s estimation of Boswell, who is now more clearly than ever recognized as a major literary figure in the second half of the eighteenth century.

—ROBERT DEMARIA, JR.
James Gray (1923-2012)

In the March 2013 issue of the Johnsonian News Letter, Robert DeMaria, Jr. provided an appreciative summary of James Gray's life. Here he noted his World War II military service; his education at Oxford and the University of Montreal; his scholarly career initially at Bishop's University and later at Dalhousie University where he became chair of the English Department and later dean of arts and sciences before assuming the Thomas McCulloch Professor of English chair in 1980. DeMaria also noted Gray's centrality in Johnsonian scholarship in essays and longer texts and his major contributions both editorially and administratively to the Yale Johnson. I am happy to comment further on Jim's (always his preferred manner of address) scholarly achievement as well as our friendship for half a century.

Chronological lines of demarcation may offer more convenience than real clarity to historians, but for the generation which participated in World War II and those thereafter there remains a distinct divide between life before and after the war. A generation of eighteenth-century scholars was directly affected, necessarily postponing the pacific terrain of scholarship for military service direct or indirect. Figures like Paul Fussell and Ian Watt could speak as few others to the real dimensions of the war, the former in combat, the latter as a survivor of the construction of the infamous Bridge on the River Kwai. Donald Greene came somewhat late to a distinguished career, which was postponed by service as lieutenant and captain, Royal Canadian Artillery. Jim Gray's service from 1943 to 1946 with the British and Indian Armies in India and Burma reflects the global nature of the war. He emerged with distinction as a major as later he would distinguish himself in his productive scholarly life.

In some ways World War II represented a line of demarcation in Johnsonian scholarship. While Johnson received critical attention during his lifetime and ever after, the scholarly scrutiny he received after the war generated numerous works, biographical,
textual, and critical, that confirmed his status as the major author of the period. James Clifford's early and later biographical treatments come to mind; Donald Greene demanded a more subtle review of his politics; David Fleeman produced a definitive record of Johnson's complicated canon and publishing history; and Arthur Sherbo redefined one of the great associations in literary history in assessing Johnson's edition of Shakespeare. Perhaps at first glance, Jim Gray's *Johnson's Sermons: A Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) might not seem an obvious companion for the work just mentioned. But modest title aside, on examination it does deserve to join studies of this era that remain definitive. It also joins Gray, though not as an obvious partisan, in an approach to Johnson that was initiated and remained centered for decades in the special advocacy of Donald Greene.

Greene argued with real passion for what some felt to be a literary heresy—the eradication of the greatest ligature in literary history in the persons of Boswell and Johnson. Put simply, Greene insisted that while only a vestige of a literary Boswell would remain without Johnson, the reverse would not be the case. In fact, eliminating the Boswellian lens that caused an initial, even a lasting focus, on Johnson as celebrity more than writer was a distortion best discarded; even more to be desired was the elimination of Johnson as the master of pithy sayings, some manufactured, some of dubious authenticity. Best stick to authorship, to a canon of such riches that the details of Johnson's life, however fascinating, remained superfluous.

Even a serious student of Johnson might be perplexed if asked categorically to select his greatest work or to attempt some rank ordering of the variety that awaits any reader. There is no more eclectic writer during this period, yet one not easily attached to a great fable as in the case of Swift or the essential genres of novel, poetry, and theater. Johnson's sermons would seem to remain well outside the typical undergraduate canon—the *Rambler*, *Rasselas*, or *Vanity*—and equally distant from such central enterprises as his edition of Shakespeare and his critical biographies of English poets. In his study of Johnson's sermons, though without Greene's incendiary enthusiasm, Gray recentered the sermons as an essential literary component of the canon in his critical study and later in his Yale Edition of these writings.

In moving Johnson's sermons more to the canonical center, Gray might be seen to anticipate by some years more recent claims that his *Dictionary* deserves for all its generic exceptionalism, even pragmatism, both literary and intellectual consideration. Gray's task in recentering his sermons was, on the surface, even more dif-
Remembrance

ficult: the back story of the composition of the Dictionary, largely Boswellian, was ample and engaging; however collaborative, Johnson's role remained central and earned him distinction ever after as "Dictionary Johnson." By contrast, Johnson's collaboration, even essential authorship, in some forty sermons, many for, arguably, his closest friend, the Rev. Dr. John Taylor, lacked authorship's clear signature. Even more compromising, the subject matter seemed almost egregiously sectarian in an age given up almost exclusively to a new marketplace of interests that Johnson otherwise served. Gray, however, reclaims the sermons with two principles he illuminates throughout his study: (1) that Johnson considered the sermon another emanation of English literature, therefore stylistically significant; and (2) that the sermons, though shaped by the homeletic tradition Johnson knew so well remained platforms for the moral and summational content seen throughout his most famous works. In short, another version of his Rambler essays as these are seen as the essential Johnson.

Scholars no less than butchers are probably always tempted to put their thumb on the scales to adorn a critical point; while Gray doesn't make the case that follows, his study supports it at the same time that it sustains Donald Greene's belief that in consideration of the canon, any work (even sermons) increases our appreciation of Johnson.

The Life is laced with Johnson's comments on marriage—some quite attenuated. Collectively, they display Johnson's wit and wisdom on a subject of almost universal interest. Many would cite as his most famous his response to Boswell noting the remarriage of a man in an unhappy marriage immediately after his wife died—that "it was a triumph of hope over experience." By contrast, one can compare this utterance to a portion of his commentary in his first sermon in the Taylor Collection where he notes: "... Offenses against Society in its greatest extent are recognizable by human laws. No man can invade the property, or disturb the quiet of his Neighbour, without subjecting himself to penalties, and suffering in proportion to the injuries he has offered. But cruelty and pride, oppression and partiality, may tyrannize in private families without controul; meekness may be trampled on, and Piety insulted without any appeal, but to conscience and to Heaven. A thousand methods of torture may be invented, a thousand acts of unkindness, or disregard, may be committed, a thousand innocent gratifications may be denied, and a thousand hardships imposed, without any violations of national law." While this is possibly a direct address to Taylor's miserable marriage, Johnson has universalized and rendered painfully contemporary the married state that
stands in stark contrast to the memorable witicism cited above. Both are useful, though the moral weight of the latter, seen in fact throughout his sermons, testifies to the importance of canon material however peripheral it may appear at first glance. The lasting contribution of Gray’s study and edition of the sermons calls permanent attention to this fact and remains his central scholarly accomplishment.

Scholarly enterprise aside, it is a fact that over the years many have enjoyed the special relationships the Johnsonian community has provided. For many, Jim Gray enriched this community in gestures as much personal as professional, the former giving a focus in one instance I have reflected on many times since the mid-twentieth century. Jim and I would on occasion leave the old British Museum Reading Room or the North Library for lunch and long walks on terrain we knew Johnson and Boswell once enjoyed. At one point, he observed, “you know, we are among the luckiest of people,” meaning, quite clearly, that it would be hard to improve on a calling where one can continue in his or her own way in the life and work of Samuel Johnson. And beyond that, those who knew Jim personally or indirectly through his scholarship can consider themselves, too, to be among the very lucky.

—JOHN ABBOTT

Solution to puzzle on page 51.

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VALET  CRICKET
WAS XEOORUT
ANTEODWRATH
GROITIESU
GLOSSATORRHEUM
ILIOVEP
SHATTERMAGNET
HBOERT
HEARTHPASTURE
OIOETDR
DWARFGRENADIER
CLOPPTTI
UVULAAPERTIVE
ROISROORAR
WEALTHYANENT
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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 1 December; those for the September issue are due 1 June.
June 30th the digital version of the Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson was opened to the public. It can be found at www.YaleJohnson.com. Thanks to the National Endowment for the Humanities, Vassar College, and the editorial board of the Yale Johnson, this resource is free to all, at least for the time being. All twenty-one volumes of the print edition are included, and the remaining two volumes of the series will be added, once they are published. Volume 19, Biographical Writings: Soldiers, Scholars, and Friends is making its way through the press, while volume 20, an as yet unnamed collection of occasional pieces, is gradually shaping up. Both volumes were drafted by the late O M Brack, Jr. and rely heavily on his work.

The last two volumes of the Yale Edition are works in progress, but the digital edition has in some very useful ways returned the whole project to that status. There are errors, of course, in the digital edition, but digitizing has also revealed many errors in the printed edition. One of the great advantages of the digital edition is that it can be emended at the stroke of a pen, so to speak, whereas opportunities to make changes in the print edition are rare. Moreover, this particular digital edition encourages the participation of readers. Once registered, readers of the digital edition can join discussions and forums, make comments, or add tags (subject headings) or notes to the documents. None of this has to impinge on other readers, but it will be available to them if they are interested. Those maintaining the site, in consultation with me, will be able to correct errors that are spotted or make helpful additions. The real advantage of this interactivity, however, is that it makes the site a meeting place for Johnsonians around the world. The News Letter is not absent from this virtual Johnsonian club. Under "Additional Resources" all the back issues of the JNL are available in one place. Using my own collection and Vassar College's, with some additions generously sent in by Paul Ruxin and Paul Tankard, the run seems to be complete. In fact, it is the only complete run of which I know.

For all its utility the Johnson website will not, I suspect, be the place where many of us have the pleasure of reading Johnson (or the News Letter) at length. Most readers will continue to find the printed page the best venue for experiencing Johnson's prose and
From the Editor

poetry. Searching and scrolling through his works online we will, however, encounter “snippets” that we want to read. Some of these will be “discoveries,” and we will take them in with pleasure. Johnson, after all, is very good at the snippet. But the best encounters online are likely to be with parts of the works we already know, but have perhaps misplaced or forgotten. Finding them again will be the greatest pleasure the database affords. In that very literal sense at least the digital Johnson provides a re-vision of his works and launches a new stage in their ongoing life.

For those who prefer their encounters with the Johnsonian world live, there will be a conference at Pembroke College, Oxford, 7-9 August 2015, to mark the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary (the quarter millennial) of the publication of Johnson’s edition of the plays of Shakespeare. The plenary speakers will be Joseph Roach, Jenny Davidson, and Henry Woudhuysen. Other speakers will include Michael Caines, Robert DeMaria, Jr., Jack Lynch, Fiona Ritchie, Adam Rounce, John Richetti, Peter Sabor, Philip Smallwood, Marcus Walsh, and Howard Weinbrot. Lectures and panels will be supported by the performance of a play in Wadham College Garden, exhibitions in the Bodleian and Pembroke College Libraries, a tour of Johnsonian Oxford, an informal reading performance of Irene, and a concert of eighteenth-century music. The organizing committee (Michael Bundock, John Church, Robert DeMaria, Jr., James McLaverty, Lynda Mugglestone, and Tiffany Stern) can be contacted by emailing Lynda Mugglestone (lynda.mugglestone@pmb.ox.ac.uk Mugglestone). For further details, including registration materials, see the conference website, http://www.pmb.ox.ac.uk/content/johnson-and-shakespeare.

Robert DeMaria, Jr.
Evidence of Johnson's early reception in Spain is notoriously scarce. His name is not known to have appeared in print in Spanish in his own lifetime: the earliest reference, in 1786, appears in a review of a French-language collection of travel books (of which Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands* comprises one volume).\(^1\) Most of the scattered references published over the following decades, before the debacle of 1808, occur incidentally in extracts from or discussions of other writers (e.g. James Beattie\(^2\) and Henry James Pye\(^3\)), in works translated from French\(^4\) or Italian,\(^5\) and in a bilingual dictionary compiled by two Irish churchmen resident in Spain.\(^6\) Lexicography apart, there is no sign of engagement with Johnson as an essayist or critic in Spanish periodicals from the period, and the only substantial work of Johnson's to appear in Spanish, Inés Joyes y Blake's 1798 translation of *Rasselas*, was published without mention of the author's name.\(^7\)

---

3 See the translated review of Pye's edition of Aristotle's *Poetics* which appeared in *Espíritu de los mejores diarios literarios que se publican en Europa* 258 (8 November 1790), with mention of Johnson on p. 226; and the continuation of the same in *Espíritu* 267 (10 January 1791), with mention of Johnson and the *Rambler* on p. 26. *The Monthly Review* is given as the source.
4 For example, *Clartes*, published in a Spanish translation based on the French of *Le Tourneur* in 1794-1796, retains the "Notice historique sur Richardson," which paraphrases Johnson's observations on the genealogy of Lovelace as a character in the *Life of Rowe*; see "Noticia historica de Richardson," *Clara Harlowe*. *Novela traducida del ingles al francés por Mr. Le Tourneur*. Vol. 1. Madrid: Benito Cano, 1794, p. XXXIV.
7 *El principe de Abisinia*, novela. Traducida del ingles por Inés Joyes y Blake. *Va inserta a continuacion una Apologia de las mugeres en carta original de la traductora a sus hijas* (Madrid: Imprenta de Sancha, 1798).
It comes as some surprise, then, to chance upon a twenty-page piece on the verisimilitude of drama in performance, published in late Enlightenment Spain's journal of literary record, which opens with a reference to Johnson's edition of Shakespeare, in which the Preface is subsequently much paraphrased and Johnson on Shakespeare twice quoted. No note informs the reader of Johnson's stature among English-speaking readers; no contextualizing asides write the Preface into the history of Shakespeare criticism. It is as if the reader were expected to be familiar with Johnson's name, and with the work: "El Dr. Johnson, en su prólogo á Shakespear," the piece begins, "disculpa á est gran poeta de haber violaldo las unidades dramáticas." Johnson on Shakespeare, one could conclude, was not wholly peripheral to contemporary Spanish discussion of drama.

The journal in which this appeared, the monthly Memorial Literario, began its run in 1784, one of many new periodicals founded in a decade which saw a relaxation of censorship. A miscellany of papers read at academies, theatrical criticism, book reviews, and glosses of foreign scholarly and scientific publications, the Memorial was staid by comparison to such titles as El Censor and El Correo de los ciegos de Madrid, which sometimes featured critical comment on policy or literary satire. The 20 January 1805 number opened with a discourse on patriotic duty, followed by a note on nitric acid: the discussion of Johnson on Shakespeare is headed "De la impresion de realidad que causan las representaciones dramáticas"; a note indicates, rather ambiguously, the author's inclination to follow in the footsteps of "el Dr. ingles Aikin," and this ambiguity is reinforced by the author's or compositor's choice to mark off the first paragraph as a quotation (presumably from Aikin on Johnson on Shakespeare). Presumably, then, every paragraph that follows is not a quotation; and some of the content—references to productions and actors—is wholly specific to a Spanish context.

Dr. Aikin—John Aikin, M. D., Laetitia Barbauld's brother—had seen his "On the Impression of Reality attending Dramatic Repre-

8 The quoted passages are "[the extrusion of Gloster's eyes] seems an act too horrid to be endured in dramatic exhibition, and such as much always compel the mind to relieve its distress by incredulity" (Yale, VIII. 703) and "the delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more" (VII. 78).
9 "De la impresion de realidad que causan las representaciones dramáticas," Memorial literario: Biblioteca periódica de ciencias y artes 2 (20 January 1805), pp. 75-94.
11 Cf. the author's use of Miquel's performance in the role of Othello as an example of acting of such power that spectators are not always in their senses and truly forget that the stage is a stage and the players only players (Memorial literario, pp. 85-87).
sentations” published in the Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester in 1793; it would be reprinted in The New Annual Register\textsuperscript{12} and Kentish Register,\textsuperscript{13} reviewed favorably in The Monthly Review,\textsuperscript{14} European Magazine\textsuperscript{15} and British Review;\textsuperscript{16} and extracted in The Scots Magazine\textsuperscript{17} and Critical Review.\textsuperscript{18} It was not, however, from any of these that the Spanish Memorial writer gleaned knowledge of Aikin’s objections to Johnson, nor is the first paragraph a direct translation of Aikin’s, nor is the rest of “De la impresion” predominantly a gloss of Aikin’s text in the Memoirs. The immediate source for the Memorial text is French, “ON THE IMPRESSION OF REALITY, etc. De l’impression de la Réalité que nous éprouvon aux representations Dramatiques, par le Dr. AIKIN,” published in the Genevan Bibliotheque Britannique in 1797.\textsuperscript{19} The French translator is generally faithful to the source text: some phrases are expanded and some abbreviated; some sentence breaks are added; and some of Aikin’s paragraphs are fused, but Aikin’s text is never elided, Aikin’s closing quotation from Horace is kept, and his final note on Erasmus Darwin’s Loves of the Plants, Reynolds, and Johnson translated. Though the Spanish text at times departs from the French, adding, altering and omitting passages, the very high probability that the Bibliotheque Britannique is the Memorial writer’s source is easy to demonstrate. The French translator’s less literal renderings of Aikin are either mimicked or altered in the Spanish text (when not occurring in a few omitted passages). It is never, in such cases, closer to the English than to the French. A representative sample will serve to illustrate this pattern:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memoirs ... of Manchester</th>
<th>Bibliotheque Britannique</th>
<th>Memorial literario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Johnson [...] argues against the law by which [the unities] have been enjoined [...] . (p. 96)</td>
<td>Le Dr. Johnson ... raisonne contre le principe que les a fait adopter [...] . (p. 302)</td>
<td>El Dr. Johnson [...] racioncina contra los principios que han ocasionado que se adopten [...] . (p. 75)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{12} 1793, pp. 102-108.  
\textsuperscript{13} Vol. 1 (April 1795), pp. 136-141.  
\textsuperscript{14} Vol. 13 (February 1794), 184-185.  
\textsuperscript{15} Vol. 24 (December 1793), 433-436.  
\textsuperscript{16} Vol. 3 (January 1794), 62-63.  
\textsuperscript{17} Vol. 56 (1794), 19-21.  
\textsuperscript{18} Vol. 9 (1794), 5-6.  
\textsuperscript{19} Bibliotheque Britannique ou recueil extrait des ouvrages anglais périodiques, Vol. 5 (1797), 302-15.
### Memoirs ... of Manchester

... the critic has taken a very narrow survey of the human mind [...] (p. 96)

I behold a person suffering under the extremity of torture [...] (p. 97)

It is now over, and that portion of human misery has no longer an existence. Still, the scene recurs in my mind [...] . (p. 97)

... [Johnson's] error consists in confounding with proper belief, that impression of reality, or temporary illusion [...] . (p. 98)

Dr. Johnson ... says, that it “seems an act too horrid to be endured [...]” (p. 99)

But, says the critic, “the delight of tragedy proceeds from a consciousness of fiction [...].” (p. 104)

### Bibliothèque britannique

... le critique n'a pas suffisamment examiné les ressorts du cœur humain. (p. 303)

Je vois un homme qui éprouve les tourmens de la torture. (p. 304)

Cette scène s'est terminée ; mais elle existe dans mon souvenir; toutes les fois que l'image s'en renouvelle [...] . (p. 304)

Voici son erreur : il confond la foi à la réalité, avec l'impression de réalité, ou l'illusion temporaire [...]. (p. 305)

Le Dr Johnson dit [...] que « c'est un acte trop horrible pour être supporté sur la scène [... ].» (pp. 302-305)

« Mais , » objecte-t-on encore, « le plaisir de la tragédie dépend de la conscience de la fiction [...]. » (p. 311)

### Memorial literario

 [...] haya el critic examinado atentamente los resortes del corazon humano. (p. 76)

Vemos un desgraciado que padece los tormentos de la tortura.

Esta funesta escena se termina, y no obstante existe en nuestra memoria [...] siempre que la imagen se renueva [...] (pp. 77-78)

He aquí el error de Johnson. Confunde la fe de realidad, con la impresión de realidad, con la ilusión temporaria [...] (p. 79)

El Dr. Johnson dice [...] "que este acto es en extremo horrible para que pueda sufrirse en el teatro [...] ." (p. 80)

Pero nos objeterán: “el placer que la tragedia nos ocasiona depende de que sabemos que es una ficción [...].” (p. 89)
There are a few changes here: in the third example the English “person” becomes “desgraciado” (wretch) in Spanish, and in the same example the Spanish shifts from a first-person singular (which the English and French texts share) to a first-person plural, while the Memorial writer sprinkles the text with adjectives (e.g. “funesta”) to which the more terse French translator has not resorted. Such changes reflect an attitude toward translation rather than toward Aikin, Johnson, Shakespeare, or English culture in general. Elsewhere, the Memorial writer strains to de-anglicize the text, stripping it of specifically English cultural or political references with which a Spanish readership might not have been familiar, or which might have both offended readers and implicitly betrayed the unstated status of the text as a translation.

Aikin’s middle section furnishes a number of good examples of this tendency. In it, he sets about tracing “the progress of the imagination from the instances in which it is least assisted by external objects, to those in which it is most so.”

21 Ibid., p. 100.
22 Bibliotheque, p. 307.
26 Memorial, pp. 83-84.
Aikin has “Every awful and terrific scene, from an eruption of Etna, or an attack on Gibraltar [...] or a boxing-match, is gazed at by assembled multitudes,”\textsuperscript{27} the Spanish is more generic: “Un erupción del etna (sic), una batalla ... una muerte, son objetos que atraen la curiosidad de la multitud” [an eruption of Etna, a battle [...] a death, are objects which attract the curiosity of the multitude].\textsuperscript{28} Whether the reference to Gibraltar was dropped merely to dodge the censors is anyone’s guess, but West, Siddons, Otway, Addison, and pugilism are doubtless absent as part of a strategy of adaptation of Aikin’s message to a readership to which they were so unfamiliar as to fail as examples.

This returns us to the question of the translator’s decision to keep Johnson in the discursive spotlight and quote from the 1765 Shakespeare edition; and, thus, to a litmus test for a highly cultured (and admittedly tiny) readership’s familiarity with Johnson’s criticism in late Enlightenment Spain. Were Johnson wholly unknown, the translator might have opted for “un crítico” or “un crítico inglés” throughout without diluting the substance of Aikin’s case. Were he little known, a contextualising strategy—a note to remind some and alert others—might be expected. In this one regard, then, Johnson’s name was of some currency; and indeed its evolving currency, linked to Shakespeare’s name, may be traced over the preceding decade, though not in the periodical press. Johnson on Shakespeare had already been quoted in Spanish in Leandro Fernández de Moratin’s 1798 Hamlet. The translated notes to Moratin’s translation of Hamlet (to which he also appended his own notes as well) are taken from an English edition: Johnson and Steeven’s of 1773, Bell’s edition of 1788, or Malone’s of 1790, which retained the short critical strictures which followed each play under the title “General Observations.” Moratin quotes these approvingly on minor gaps in Shakespeare’s plotting and characterization\textsuperscript{29} and the expedients by which the dramatic problems are resolved.\textsuperscript{30} Of Johnson’s original notes to the play,

\textsuperscript{28} Memorial, p. 90.
\textsuperscript{29} “Johnson dice: que no se ve que esta locura esté bien fundada, pues nada hace Hamlet con ella, que no pudiese hacer igualmente estando en juicio” Johnson says that it is not clear that this madness is justified, for Hamlet does nothing while mad that he would not do in his right mind! (Leandro Fernández de Moratin, Obras de Moratin [Barcelona: A. Bergnes y Comp., 1834], p. 396, n. 4); “Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity” (Yale, VIII.1011).

\textsuperscript{30} “[N]i se alcanza cómo pudo verificarse naturalmente el trueque de las espadas, lo cual (como observa Johnson) más parece un recurso de la necesidad, que un rasgo de arte” (Moratin, Obras, p 403, n. 13); “The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art” (Yale VIII., 1011).
which number fewer than twenty, Moratin reproduces but one; it is however, among the most celebrated of all his comments on a Shakespearean passage, in which Johnson "endeavours to discover the train" of Hamlet's famous soliloquy, "and to shew how one sentiment produces another" (Yale, VIII.981). Later critics would remove questions of duty, action, and the risk of being killed from the import of the soliloquy, emphasizing instead, often in response to Johnson, the chance that a melancholy prince might kill himself.\(^{31}\) Moratin, having translated the whole of Johnson's note with some small modifications, likewise objects that "un alma grande [...] animado de tal impulso" [a great soul ... moved by such an impulse], should neither fear failure in his undertakings nor the nature of a future existence. What Moratin approves of in the passage—"uno de los pasajes más aplaudidos de esta Tragedia, y merece serlo" [one of the most lauded passages in this tragedy, and deservedly so]—he approves of in terms distinctly reminiscent of Johnson's famous formulation of Shakespeare as the poet of general nature in the Preface: "Las bellezas que en él se contienen no son de aquellas que se pierden en la traducción, no son locales, no son propias de tal o tal siglo, son perceptibles a todos los hombres, porque se apoyan en la verdad" [The beauties contained here are not of the sort that will be lost in translation, nor are they local, nor specific to this or that century, but may be perceived by all men, for they are founded on truth].\(^{32}\) Such is the proximity of criteria that Regalado Kerson considers Johnson Moratin's foremost source, despite the greater frequency with which he cites Warburton, Hanmer, and Steevens.\(^{34}\)

Very little praise was forthcoming from Moratin's close contemporary Cristobal or Cristófol Cladera, a Mallorcan who juggled careers as a publisher, functionary, politician, and churchman. His Exámen de la tragedia intitulada Hamlet was published in 1800; it takes Moratin to task for plagiarism, poor scholarship, and careless translation in an unrelentingly aggressive manner reminiscent of Giuseppe Baretti. Cladera cites over twenty English sources, some primary (among them three sixteenth-century plays), some works of criticism, others of theatrical history, approached critically. Cladera most often accuses Moratin of having taken biographical details from Nicholas Rowe's life of Shakespeare, yet:

\(^{32}\) Moratin, Obras, p. 398, n. 2.  
\(^{33}\) Ibid.  
\(^{34}\) Regalado Kerson, Pilar. "Moratin y Shakespeare: un ilustrado español ante el drámaturo inglés" in IX Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, ed. Sebastian Neumeister (1986), p. 82, n. 11.
la misma edición de Shakespeare por Johnson y Steevens que tengo sobre la mesa, en muchas partes habla del infeliz estado del Teatro en Inglaterra, en lo que gasta el Traductor algunas páginas, que no tienen otro mérito que el de haberlas copiado con cuatro preceptos que nos repite, y que todos se evitan con decir que Shakespeare no tuvo otro maestro que su ingenio, según lo confiesan todos los ingleses, y se decía aun viviendo él mismo.

[the very edition of Shakespeare as edited by Johnson and Steevens which lies on my table refers, repeatedly, to the poverty of English drama; and to this topic the translator devotes several pages which have no greater value than that of being copied together with the four precepts which he repeats, all of which he could omit if he said that Shakespeare had no master but his wit, which the English themselves admit, and have admitted since Shakespeare's day.]

Whether Cladera is correct in his identification of Moratin's immediate source is inconsequential; of greater import is Cladera's self-description as a man seated before the Johnson-Steevens Shakespeare—a claim approaching the self-righteous amidst so many accusations ("Yo me canso de ir apuntando tanto robo"; [I grow tired of noting so much theft]). The claim is a cosmopolitan one, an ability to supersede dependence on French mediation by close attention to English textual commentary, in opposition to Moratin's reliance on Le Tourneur's translation. Cladera, in his notes on particular passages, documents this reliance, and the frequency with which it produces cribs. This is often tantamount to an

35 A minor point makes it possible to identify which of the Johnson-Steevens editions Cladera possessed. Moratin had reproduced the story of Shakespeare's first finding work in London holding play-goers' horses during performances, which Cladera rightly traces to Cibber's Lives of the Poets. On earlier oral authorities, Cladera writes, "El Señor Guillermo Davenant lo contó a Mr. Betterton, quien lo comunicó a Rowe, y este (según el Doctor Johnson) lo refirió a Pope" (1800, XXVIII) [Mr. William Davenant told Mr. Betterton, who told Rowe, and Rowe (according to Dr. Johnson) told Pope]. Johnson's "An Addition to Rowe's Account of Shakespeare," the source for the last link in the chain of transmission, was signed by him in a single edition, that of 1773, and never subsequently reproduced as his until the publication of the two-volume Yale edition of Johnson on Shakespeare in 1968 (Yale, VII. 115-16). In all probability, then, Cladera owned the 1773 Johnson-Steevens, and it is noteworthy that he nowhere cites Malone's edition of 1790.

36 [Cristóbal Cladera], Examen de la tragedia intitulada Hamlet, escrita en ingles por Guillermo Shakespeare, y traducida al castellano por Inarco Celentio (Madrid: la Imprenta de la viuda de Ibarra, 1800), p. XXI.

37 Ibid., p. XXI.
accusation of want of English or want of care. One example should suffice. Cladera is objecting to Moratin’s rendering of Hamlet IV.v.161-62 as “pero la naturaleza es muy fina en amor, y cuando este llega al exceso, el alma se desprende tal vez de alguna preciosa parte de sí misma, par ofrecérsela en don al objeto amado” [but Nature is very fine in love, and when love comes to be excessive, the soul gives up a precious part of itself, to be offered as a gift to the object of that love]:

Aprenda Inarco [Moratín] lo que dice aquí Laertes: La naturaleza se afina por el amor; y do quiera que esto se verifica, envía alguna preciosa parte de sí misma en pos de la cosa que ama: así lo entiende cualquiera que sabe el Inglés; y así se deduce de la explicacion de Johnson; pero Celenio [Moratín] aquí se ha acogido á Le Tourneur, y ha copiado un disparate. Todo esta algarabía se debe á la ignorancia del Inglés [...].

[May Inarco learn just what Laertes says here: “Nature is improved by love; and wherever this fact is proven, nature sends a precious part of itself after the thing it loves”: anyone who knows English understands it; and one deduces as much from Johnson’s explanation; but Celenio has taken up Le Tourneur here, and has copied rubbish. Such is the gibberish that comes from not knowing English . . .]

“ ‘Love,’ says Laertes,” Johnson had written, “is the passion by which ‘nature is most’ exalted and ‘refined,’ and as substances ‘refined’ and subtilised, easily obey any impulse, or follow any attraction, some part of nature, so purified and ‘refined,’ flies off after the attracting object, after the thing it loves” (Yale, VIII.998). What Cladera neglects to report is Johnson’s opinion that the passage is “obscure and affected,” requiring a gloss, though not emendation. “Asi lo entiende cualquiera que sabe el Inglés” is an empty boast.

Perhaps the standards of scholarly reporting have changed beyond recognition over the past two hundred years, but I am inclined to think that Cladera should not have cast the first stone, for he appropriates a long passage from Dryden’s Essay of Dramatic Poesy as reproduced in Johnson’s Preface without

38 Ibid, p. LXXI.
acknowledging his intermediate source. Elsewhere, he shows that the range of material he had gathered from Johnson and Johnsoniana was very wide indeed. A footnote to the disputed question of eighteenth-century England’s most-acted play (Moratin had so deemed Hamlet) affirms of Rowe’s Jane Shore that “Johnson dice que se representa con tanta frecuencia, y siempre con el mayor aplauso, que es inútil hablar; sin que por esto dexe de tener alguna impropiedad” [Johnson says it is performed so often, and to such applause, as to make further comment useless; though its popularity does not mean that it is free from improprieties], summarising two passages from the Lives of the Poets (Yale, XXII.583-84, 593-94). Johnson is, together with Pope, Addison, and Blair, cited as an example of English respect for classical models, and a passage from the Prefacio á las obras de Shakespeare is translated in a note. Robert Shiels, one of Johnson’s Dictionary amanuenses, is identified as the ghost author of Cibber’s Lives in a lengthy anecdote whose ultimate source is not Johnson but his early biographer John Hawkins, whose account of Johnson’s life and writings was published as the first volume of the first edition of Johnson’s Works. A criticism of Moratin’s translation of “Contagious blastments are

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39 Here is the passage as quoted by Johnson: “that Shakespeare was the man, who, of all modern and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily: When he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned: he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat and insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenchs, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him. No man can say, he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets, Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi. (Yale, VII. 112)

And as quoted and translated by Cladera: “entre todos los Poetas modernos y quizás de la antigüedad, ninguno manifestó mayor talento y extensión: porque jamás perdió de vista las imágenes de la Naturaleza, que pintó no trabajaosamente, y sí con felicidad: porque cuando describe alguna cosa, más bien se toca que se ve. Los que le acusan de falta de instrucción, hacen su mayor enemicio: Shakespeare supo naturalmente; no necesitó de los libros para leer en la Naturaleza; observó su corazón, y en él la encontró. No es esto decir que siempre es igual; si lo fuera, le injuriaría comparándole con los mayores ingenios; en muchas ocasiones es banal e insipido; en lo cómico se dexa llevar de los equivocos, y de la hinchazon en lo serio; pero siempre que se le presenta un motivo grande, lo es: en una palabra, nadie puede decir que cuando tuvo un asunto adecuado á su ingenio, no descolgó tanto sobre los demás Poetas Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.” (Examen, X-XI)

Cladera regularly furnishes page and volume numbers for his sources, distinguishing between editions whenever necessary. In this case, his note cites “Dryden, Ensayo sobre la Poesía Dramática”. I find it improbable that Cladera would have dropped the first four and final one hundred words of Dryden’s paragraph without Johnson’s example, and improbable that he knew the passage in any form other than the one it took in Johnson’s Preface.

40 [Cladera], Examen, p. XIV.
41 Ibid., p. XIV-XV, n. 4.
42 Ibid., pp. XXVIII-XXIX.
most imminent” employs Johnson’s Dictionary as an authority supporting Cladera’s alternate translation, whose basis is “como lo enseña Johnson en la palabra blast” [what Johnson shows it to be under the word blast]. Cladera may have been relying on his memory of reading the Dictionary, for it is naturally under blastment that Johnson provides this very line from Hamlet as an illustrative example. In any case, it is an unabridged edition that Cladera cites. He goes on to quote Johnson’s definition of the noun stop as “an instrument by which the sounds of wind musick are regulated” in disputing Moratín’s translation of “Look you, these are the stops” (III.ii.345-46); again, one of the Dictionary quotations under the relevant sense is drawn from Hamlet. Perhaps, though, Cladera’s most weighty use of Johnson is evident in the hundreds of textual-critical decisions underlying the Shakespearean text cited on nearly every page, and it is Johnson’s text of Hamlet’s soliloquy that Cladera reproduces in full, in English, less emended by far than Warburton’s, though in one instance favoring decorum over Shakespeare. Though never mentioning Cladera, Moratín seems to have responded to some of his criticisms in later editions of his Hamlet: the derivative “Vida de Guillermo Shakespeare” was dropped; an “Advertencia” replacing the 1798 “Prólogo” gave over five paragraphs to the history of Le Tourneur’s translation and Moratín’s reasons for sometimes following it; and readers were warned against “los que han querido mejorar á Shakespeare con el pretexto de interpretarle” [those who have sought to improve Shakespeare while ostensibly interpreting him].

As I hope this excursus on Moratín’s dispute with Cladera will have demonstrated, the Memorial writer’s use of Aikin on Johnson on Shakespeare is but one moment in a process of engagement with the playwright which would span twenty years of Spanish intellectual history in discussions of the stage and decorum in journals and, more significantly, in the works of the German-born Cadiz merchant Johann Nikolaus Böhl von Faber, who first brought German Romantic thought to Spain in systematic form. Fourteen

44 [Cladera], Examen, p. XXXIX.
45 Ibid., p. LXI and LVII
46 Johnson gives “to groan and swear under a weary life,” while admitting that “All the old copies have, to grunt and sweat. It is undoubtedly the true reading, but can scarcely be borne by modern ears” (Yale, VIII. 982).
47 To Cladera’s elaborately documented charge that Hamlet was not, as Moratín had claimed, England’s most popular play, he did not respond.
48 Moratín, Obras, p. 475.
49 See, for example G. Romo, “Paralelo entre Shakespeare y Corneille,” Memorial literario: biblioteca periódica de ciencias y artes 5 (1806), pp. 221-228 and J. S. C., “Reflexiones acerca del paralelo entre Shakespeare y Corneille, inserto en el Nº 5 de este Periódico,” Memorial literario: biblioteca periódica de ciencias y artes 9 (1808), pp. 385-94.
years after the *Memorial* writer, Böhl von Faber would feature a translation of ten key paragraphs of the Preface in his third *Pasatiempo crítico*, part of an ongoing effort to justify the ways of Shakespeare to Spanish theatre-goers and literatos. After Böhl von Faber, though, Johnson on Shakespeare drops from sight until the twentieth century and the coming of English studies as a discipline in Spanish universities.

—JOHN STONE

50 [Johann Nikolaus Bohl von Faber], “Número XXVII: ‘De las unidades de tiempo y lugar, según Samuel Johnson, Londres, 1765,’” in *Tercera parte del pasatiempo crítico en defensa de Calderón y del teatro antiguo español* (Cadiz: Carrero, [1819]), pp. 11-17.
In Distant Intimacy: A Friendship in the Age of the Internet (2013), Frederic Raphael makes a couple of interesting comments on Johnson. In a discussion of death, Raphael interrogates Johnson’s famous bon mot concerning the prospect of hanging:

Dr. Johnson’s mot, re one Dr. Dodd (wasn’t it?), that knowing you’re going to be hanged in a fortnight ‘concentrates a man’s mind wonderfully’ is one of those straight-camp, slick pseudo-aristocratico-dandyesque remarks that have no observed content at all. I have no idea of what it would be like to be in the condemned cell, but then, in some sense (ah there’s the key that unlocks it!), that’s where we are, and I don’t think it leads to concentration at all; anything but. (15-16)

In another letter Raphael alludes to Johnson’s views on hereditary aristocracy:

Dr. Johnson, everyone’s favourite Englishman it seems, said (más o menos) that the great thing about hereditary aristocracy was that it ensured that pure chance governed who was the nobleman and who the poor man at his gate, hence resentment of social superiority was vacuous. I’m sure he expressed it more trenchantly than I can contrive on a Saturday morning, but that was his drift. Johnson was ugly and self-made and, I suppose, must have been enchanting in person, even though he doesn’t look as if he washed a lot. (95)

I am not sure, but I think, perhaps, Raphael had in mind the following discussion from Boswell’s Life:
Mr. Dempster having endeavored to maintain that intrinsic merit ought to make the only distinction amongst mankind:—JOHNSON: “Why, Sir, mankind have found that this cannot be. How shall we determine the proportion of intrinsic merit? Were that to be the only distinction amongst mankind, we should soon quarrel about the degrees of it. Were all distinctions abolished, the strongest would not long acquiesce, but would endeavour to obtain a superiority by their bodily strength. But, Sir, as subordination is very necessary for society, and contentions for superiority very dangerous, mankind, that is to say, all civilized nations, have settled it upon a plan invariable in principle. A man is born to hereditary rank; or his being appointed to certain offices, gives him a certain rank. Subordination tends greatly to human happiness. Were we all upon an equality, we should have no other enjoyment than mere animal pleasure.” Life, I.442.

—SUBMITTED BY MATTHEW DAVIS

Seen on a Teabag Tag

“The true measure of a man is how he treats someone who can do him absolutely no good.”—Samuel Johnson

—SUBMITTED BY GARY HOHENBERGER

Four Odd Finds

A Greeting Card

“Marriage has many pains, but celibacy has no pleasure.” Dr. Samuel Johnson, with an illustration by Chester L. Garde from Life, 22 January 1914 (Archelaus, 2009).

Did you Know . . .

. . . that the flowers of the common Persian Speedwell (Veronica persica) are always turned to face Perth Amboy, New Jersey?
. . . that Marie Antoinette spent the entire French budget for the month of July 1782 on wig powder?
. . . that Samuel Johnson deliberately left the word wombat out of his dictionary because he had a morbid fear of the creatures?

. . . Dr. Boli’s Gift Horse: A Choice Collection from the Pages of Dr. Boli’s Celebrated Magazine

(Pittsburgh: Dr. Boli’s Celebrated Publishing Empire, 2013)
January 1940

Swift had pains in his head.
Johnson dying in bed
Tapped the dropsy himself.
Blake saw a flea and an elf.
Tennyson could hear the shriek
Of a bat. Pope was a freak.
Emily Dickinson stayed
Indoors for a decade.
Water inflated the belly
Of Hart Crane, and of Shelley.
Coleridge was a dope.
Southwell died on a rope.
Byron had a round white foot.
Smart and Cowper were put
Away. Lawrence was a fidget.
Keats was almost a midget.
Donne, alive in his shroud,
Shakespeare in the coil of a cloud,
Saw death very well as he
Came crab-wise, dark and massy.
I envy not only their talents
And fertile lack of balance
But the appearance of choice
In their sad and fatal voice.

Roy Fuller in A Little Treasury of Modern Poetry (1952)

The Catholic Novelist in the Protestant South

My own approach to fiction, at least when I have to talk about it, is very like the one Dr. Johnson’s blind housekeeper used when she poured tea. She put her finger inside the cup. I think that if there is any value in hearing writers talk, it would be in hearing what they can witness to, and not what they can theorize about. I think it would be hearing what some of their larger concerns are—the really important things that make the details fall into place without too much sinister calculation on the writer’s part.

Flannery O’Connor in Collected Works,
Library of America Edition

—Submitted by James Kinsley
Johnsoniana

Georgical Dictionary

The New England Farmer; or Georgical Dictionary by Samuel Deane, D.D., Vice President of Bowdoin College, second edition, was published by Isaiah Thomas in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1797. (The first edition was in 1790, when Deane was only A.M.) The subtitle describes the book as A Compendious Account of the Ways and Methods in which the Important Art of Husbandry, in All its Various Branches, Is, or May Be, Practised, to the Greatest Advantage. The entry for X shows that Deane had a copy of Johnson’s Dictionary to hand: “X, as Dr. Johnson observes, begins no word in the English language. How then can it be expected to begin any article in this volume?” Deane then moves on to Y, beginning with Yard, “a measure of three feet,” Johnson’s second definition.
X.

X, as Dr. Johnson observes, begins no word in the English language. How then can it be expected to begin any article in this volume?

Y.

YARD, a measure of three feet. YARD, a small enclosure for cattle. See the article Barn Yard. YEAR, the time the sun takes to go through the twelve signs of the zodiac.

—SUBMITTED BY DRU GRANT

“Ink-Stained Kvetches”

In the Wall Street Journal for 18 June 2014 D.J. Taylor reviews a book by James Ley entitled The Critic in the Modern World. The title of the review reveals his response to the book and, apparently, its subject. In an “attempt to authenticate the position played by the critic in modern life” Ley “devotes a decent-sized essay to . . . Samuel Johnson, William Hazlitt, Matthew Arnold, Eliot, Lionel Trilling and James Wood . . .” We don’t learn much about the essay on Johnson from the review, except that Ley evidently thinks, “Johnson, born into a more confident age [than the others?], believed in truth and its connection to virtue and reason . . . .” The last three words of the review, applied to Ley’s exposition of James Wood on fiction, might be relevant to his essay on Johnson as well: “a tiny bit obvious.”

—SUBMITTED BY ROY W. MENNINGER
Edinburgh University Press, the UK publisher of the Yale Boswell Editions research volumes (co-published by Yale University Press in the USA), has entered into a non-exclusive agreement with Oxford University Press to make its critical editions available through Oxford Scholarly Editions Online. In the words of EUP, “OSEO offers us the opportunity to market and sell our editions in an impressive searchable online format (the functionality of cross-references and the presentation of footnotes are particularly appealing features).” EUP aims to have the Boswell volumes, along with others in its category of “critical editions,” on the OSEO platform within the next two years. All yet-to-be-published titles “will be added to OSEO about 18 months after print publication and made available to existing customers via regular new releases.”

The fourth annual Boswell Book Festival at Auchinleck, held 9-11 May 2014, featuring authors who work in the core Boswellian modes of autobiographical memoir and biography, was the most successful yet. Organizers report, after assessing ticket sales, that some 2900 people attended talks and presentations over the three-day period, an increase of 12% over the previous year. A further 1800 participated in its Ayrshire schools and community outreach events (“Bozzy’s Book Buzz”). The Festival’s emphases broadened this year to address another of the genres inspired by Boswell’s writing, the travel diary/narrative, especially as it relates to questions of personhood and national identity — a matter of particular and controversial urgency in the run-up to the Scottish Independence Referendum, set for 18 September 2014. A BBC camera crew was on hand, filming for Andrew Marr, who, as the author of these Yale Boswell Editions Notes was to learn, is a celebrity journalist and BBC TV presenter, at work on a series of three programs (being produced in the context of the debates on the Independence Referendum) on Scottish writers. Glasgow-born Marr is devoting the
first of the hour-long programs entirely to Boswell. (The second involves Burns and Sir Walter Scott, and the third, “Hugh MacDiarmid” [Christopher Grieve].) Marr’s program on Boswell was set to screen, after a preview at the Edinburgh Festival on 14 August, on BBC 2 on 16 August.

This Festival, among its other beneficial effects, has contributed to greater recognition of Boswell, his ancestors, his descendants, and his works, in the county (Ayrshire) of his ancestral estate. A new “£4.9 million Community Centre and Resource Facility” opened in Well Street, Auchinleck, in October 2013, and was named “The Boswell Centre.” Full details of what The Boswell Centre offers the Auchinleck community can be found on the East Ayrshire Council website www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk (a goldmine of miscellaneous information, from which we learn for example that there were 1395 births registered in East Ayrshire in 2012: the most common girls’ name was Lily, and the most common name for boys was Jack.) The community news website www.slauchinleck.com reports that the “new centre is named after famous author and diarist James Boswell, 9th Laird of Auchinleck (1740-1795), best known for his biography of English literary figure Samuel Johnson. James Boswell’s father Alexander Boswell, 8th Laird of Auchinleck, built Auchinleck House c. 1760.” This same website, in what was plainly a brisk news day, informs us in other headlines that “Auchinleck Academy pupils enjoy ‘zombie science’ fun,” and “Escaped ferret found hiding under Auchinleck garden shed.”

In the “NB” column of the TLS of 2 May 2014, p. 32, “J.C.” offered opinions on how four Scottish writers from the past would vote in the Scottish Independence Referendum. Boswell, who “loved London and its chief literary representative, Samuel Johnson,” was “a Tory and an upholder of the status quo,” and “would be a certain No.” Henry Cockburn (whose Memorials of his Time is “unjustly neglected”) would have “ticked the Yes box.” Jane Carlyle “would be more likely to follow Boswell.” Robert Louis Stevenson would have voted “Yes.” “J.C.”’s account of Boswell was disputed in a letter published in the TLS of 23 May by David McNair, of University College London’s Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies, who thinks Boswell’s vote would have been “dëna ken” or “more appropriately, Not Proven, as most of his working life was spent at the Scottish Bar.” Boswell’s “early attachments” to what McNair terms “the Catholic and Jacobite faiths” do not “suggest a commitment to the Hanoverian court,” and Boswell’s “first cause célèbre as a writer was for the independence of a small nation from its immediate neighbour,” a cause [i.e. that of Corsica] “he pursued for over thirty years.” Boswell gave support to “the Irish and the Americans in
their attempts to gain independence from Britain.” David McNair concludes that Boswell had “love” for “the company of Samuel Johnson” and for “the underdog.”


Readers of Boswell’s posthumously recovered journals and letters know that his general nineteenth-century reputation for celebrity-collection forms only one part of the story, and he inscribed into his self-record the high and the low, the abject, and the merely ordinary, as well as the eminent and the accomplished. Several of the other figures Boswell met, and named in his Swiss journals, have descendants still living, and well-known in the Val de Travers region. In emails thanking the Yale Boswell Editions for assisting him in the preparation of his talk, Eric Christen referred also to the extensive use he had made of James Boswell: The Journal of his Swiss and German Travels, 1764 (2008) edited for the Yale Research Series by Marlies K. Danziger, a “masterpiece” of “scrupulous and intelligent academic work.” Indeed so.

In “Dead Man Talking: James Boswell, Ghostwriting, and the Dying Speech of John Reid,” Shirley F. Tung, doctoral candidate in English at UCLA, contends that Boswell’s anonymously published broadside, The Mournful Case of Poor Misfortunate and Unhappy John Reid (1774), both draws on and subverts the conventions of the criminal’s “dying speech” to reveal “the limitations and complacencies of eighteenth-century criminal literature and its connection with legal practice” (Huntington Library Quarterly, Vol. 27, No. 1 [Spring 2014], 59-78.)

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Community Libraries ("Connecting Readers in the Atlantic World, c. 1650-c.1850") held the second of a planned three colloquia at Chicago's Newberry Library May 30-June 1, on “Digital Approaches to Library History.” (The first colloquium, “Libraries and the Atlantic World,” took place at the University of Liverpool, UK, in January.) In a panel on “Works in Progress: Holdings,” Terry Seymour and James J. Caudle spoke on the topic of the holdings accumulated by successive Lairds of Auchinleck for the library of Auchinleck House. On the same panel, a former Yale Boswell Editions Warnock intern, Brian Davidson, now a graduate assistant at the Rare Book and Manuscript Library of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, offered “From Puritan to Pluralist: Anglican Influences on College Libraries in Colonial New England.” (More information on the UK’s AHRC-funded “Community Libraries” can be seen at: http://communitylibraries.net/about/.)

The knowledgeable and enthusiastic Boswell fan in Denmark, Thomas Frandzen, celebrating the tenth anniversary of his website, www.jamesboswell.info, has now activated a more “responsive” version of his site, and a new “jamesboswellinfo” Facebook page, “to facilitate increased interaction and visibility.”

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John Abbott’s eloquent, affectionate, learned, and richly deserved obituary tribute to the late James Gray in the last JNL issue (Vol. LXV, No. 1 [March 2014], 61-64) offered a careful and thoroughly convincing alignment of James Gray’s scholarly achievement, especially in repositioning Johnson’s sermons as “an essential literary component” of the Johnsonian canon, with the larger endeavor associated most commonly but by no means exclusively with the polemical agenda of Donald Greene, “the eradication of the greatest ligature in literary history in the persons of Boswell and Johnson” (p. 62). Gray set about his work without (in John Abbott’s wryly tactful and almost euphemistic expression) Greene’s “incendiary enthusiasm.” With the aims of this general endeavor, the Yale Boswell Editions, like all right-thinking people, are in perfect agreement. Where the complex and disparate œuvre of Johnson is the object of study, no writings of Boswell (or any other contemporary recorder of his life and conversation) should substitute for it, or be taken as equivalent to it. But we venture one gentle admonition and correction, with some wider implications beyond its local one. In explaining — rightly — that Johnson’s considered and distilled views on the important topic of marriage should better be assessed from work such as his first sermon in the
Taylor Collection, rather than from something like endlessly quoted “pithy sayings,” John Abbott writes: “Many would cite as his most famous response to Boswell noting the remarriage of a man in an unhappy marriage immediately after his wife died—that ‘it was triumph of hope over experience’” (p. 63.)

It was not a “response to Boswell.” The remark on second marriages was never attributed by Boswell to Johnson, but was recorded, and provided to Boswell, by the Irish clergyman William Maxwell, D.D., a moment in Maxwell’s several pages of “Collecteana” used by Boswell to fill a gap in his own records of the year 1770. The fascinating exchanges of 1787-1793 between Boswell and the generous Maxwell (who sent multiple shipments of his Johnsoniana to Boswell, and laments that he lost Johnson’s letters to him, along with £300 worth of goods, in the capture of the vessel carrying them from London to Dublin by John Paul Jones in one of his raids in Irish waters) can be found in Marshall Waingrow’s Correspondence... Relating to the Making of the “Life of Johnson” (2nd ed., 2001). From this same source come others of the most popular Johnsonian zingers: “That fellow seems to me to possess but one idea, and that is a wrong one”; Jonas Hanway “acquired some reputation by travelling abroad, but lost it all by travelling at home”; and the one that always brings the house down with eruptions of knowing laughter in gatherings where numbers of lawyers are in attendance (such as, we have noticed, Johnson dinners and conferences), or indeed at gatherings of any people who have had dealings with lawyers: “Johnson observed, that ‘he did not care to speak ill of any man behind his back, but he believed the gentleman was an attorney.’”

Even in its original source, the remark about second marriages does not stand alone, but is the first in a sequence of three on con­nubial topics. The second of them, characteristically Johnsonian, stresses the need in companionate marriage of intellectual, conversational, and educational parity between woman and man: “He observed, that a man of sense and education should meet a suitable companion in a wife. It was a miserable thing when the conversation could only be such as, whether the mutton should be boiled or roasted, and probably a dispute about that.” The third reports Johnson’s view, in a dislike of the pain of “cheerless celibacy,” of the undesirability of delaying marriage till late, “observing, that more was lost in point of time, than compensated for by any possible advantages. Even ill assorted marriages were preferable to cheerless celibacy.” Even here, as delivered in recorded conversation (by someone other than Boswell), and though such ana should not, as John Abbott notes, be seen as definitive, or a replacement for
Johnson's own writings, Johnson's thoughts on matrimony are more complex and nuanced than the snappy one-liner which, through no fault of Maxwell or Boswell, is the one most commonly quoted in decontextualized form by people who imagine themselves to be remarkably witty or talented after-dinner speakers and the like.

Dr. Maxwell (who wrote from Ireland in high admiration of Boswell's *Life* when it was published [Waingrow, p. 382]), met Johnson first in 1754, nine years before Boswell did, and did not meet Boswell until 1786, a year and a half after Johnson's death, but his own remarks on recording Johnson's conversation have a striking overlap with Boswell's, and thus should go some way to dissolving Boswellian exceptionalism: "What pity it is, that so much wit and good sense as he continually exhibited in conversation, should perish unrecorded! Few persons quitted his company without perceiving themselves wiser and better than they were before." Boswell referred in the first paragraph of the "Advertisement" to his first edition of the *Life* to the "extraordinary zeal which has been shewn by distinguished persons in all quarters to supply me with additional information concerning its illustrious subject; resembling in this the grateful tribes of ancient nations, of which every individual was eager to throw a stone upon the grave of the departed Hero, and thus to share in the pious office of erecting an honourable monument to his memory." Marshall Waingrow's scholarship established that Boswell's diary-as-revised actually "constitutes less than half" of the *Life* ("Introduction," p. xxvi). The term "monumental" is applied habitually to the Johnson of Boswell's depiction, but it has never been accurate. The Boswellian Johnson, scattered and dispersed across many scenes of social self-articulation, is far more elusive, internally various, discontinuous, and even damaged, than he is monolithic. John Abbott in the exercise of his own "pious office" noted the delicacy of James Gray's task, given that Johnson's work as the writer of sermons to be delivered in and by the voice of another (John Taylor) was a "collaboration," one that "lacked authorship's clear signature" (p. 62). The recovery of Boswell's working papers has brought a focus to the stones that make up the monument rather than to "the monument," and to the ways in which their joins and alignments and misalignments, and the processes of contribution and accumulation, are on view, along with the collaborative efforts of the grateful contributory tribes.

—GORDON TURNBULL
his year represents the twentieth anniversary of the Johnson Society of Australia, which was formed in October 1993. As the Society has always understood the need for regular events and communications to maintain interest and impetus, this year also sees the society's 20th Annual Seminar, the 20th David Fleeman Memorial Lecture, and volume 20 of our newsletter, *The Southern Johnsonian*.

The seminar was held in Melbourne on Saturday 6 July. Eight presenters gave us the fruit of their reading, research and wisdom this year, with three full-length papers and five "stubs," or shorter presentations. It must be admitted that the line between these categories is now rather blurry, but no one is complaining. In between the presentations there was plenty of time for conviviality.

Johnson would have been surprised, I think, to learn that a society established in his memory would hear papers on painting, music, chemistry, book collecting, Frederick the Great and Elizabeth Craven. On the other hand, there is no doubt he would have found them all interesting.

The closest we got to Johnson was in a talk by Bryan Reid, the founder, long-time secretary and now *éminence grise* of the JSA, on Boswell, Johnson, and the demon drink. It must be admitted that Boswell emerged less well from this entertaining and mainly anecdotal survey than Johnson. At the other end of the cultural continuum was the thought-provoking and illuminating paper by Barrie Sheppard on the key ideas in Edmund Burke's treatise on the *Sublime and the Beautiful*, generously illustrated by contemporary paintings and poetry.

Painting was also to the fore in John Wiltshire's talk, in which he continued his exploration of the career of the painter Joseph Wright of Derby, particularly his relationship with the Whig historian Catharine Macaulay, and hers with Johnson. John was able to show that Johnson was much more democratic in his practice than in his frequent assertions about hierarchy and subordination. The president of the JSA, John Byrne, is a renowned collector of Johnsoniana, and gave a talk illustrated by a great many books and
artifacts from his own collection about the doyens of American Johnson collectors, Donald and Mary Hyde, and his dealings with them over the years. A more dynamic visual aid was deployed by Geoff Brand, who used a picturesque scientific device called a Kipp's apparatus to generate "fixed air" or carbon dioxide, a process that was described in the lectures on chemistry by Hermann Boerhaave, which were "Englished by a Gentleman of the University of Oxford" who may have been (but probably wasn't) Samuel Johnson.

In a day of talks characterized by the use of audio-visual aids, Barbara Niven played music by Frederick the Great to illustrate the talents of the Prussian king who was a writer, musician and hero, and with whom Boswell on his grand tour did not manage to gain an audience, to his immense annoyance. Bronwen Hickman read reminiscences of Johnson that were new to all of us, from the memoirs of socialite and traveller Elizabeth, Lady Craven, later the Margravine of Anspach. The beautiful and naughty noblewoman remarked on Johnson's silence, as well as his energy in comic satire. The program was rounded off by the most traditional of the day's offerings, a talk by lexicographer Nicholas Hudson, on what we could learn about eighteenth-century domestic arrangements from Johnson's Dictionary. Having last year showed that Johnson never did the washing up, this year he showed that he never made his bed.

As always, it was good to be reunited with old friends, and to meet new-comers. Every time the JSA gets some publicity in the media, some new people contact us. Against the odds, our Society enters its third decade in good heart.

—PAUL TANKARD

The English department at my own alma mater, in suburban Melbourne, is being (yet again) unamalgamated and re-amalgamated, and it was with a certain wistfulness that I accepted the kind offer from a friend there of some cast-offs from the soon-to-be further down-sized departmental (section, or programme's) library — in this case, a run of JNL from 1965-80. Pleased as I am to have them, I'm sad at how sidelined literate culture is in this country. The English program was sheltered for a while among Film, Media and Theatre — I understand it is now to be moved in with French, German and other languages. Yes, in contemporary Australia, English is another language.
When I was a teenager, both Mad magazine and my English teachers at school agreed on the need for young people to view commercial advertising critically and skeptically. Since the advent of that convenient doctrine postmodernism, we seldom hear complaints about the mendaciousness, materialism, and vulgarity of advertising from intellectuals and commentators. If my own students today don’t actually believe advertisements, it is less likely to be as a result of critical intelligence, than because they don’t exactly believe or disbelieve anything. It’s all just text.

We should not be surprised that Samuel Johnson should have cast a wry and critical eye upon advertising in his own time. This was the subject of the JSA’s twentieth annual Fleeman Memorial Lecture, on 5 October 2013, given a witty and scholarly treatment by Professor Kate Burridge of Monash University.

Although some authorities date the first advertisements to the early 1600s, according to Professor Burridge, readily identifiable advertisements were printed by Caxton, making the practice in England as old as printing itself. But the growth of consumerism and of newspapers in the eighteenth century meant that the number and range of advertisements grew rapidly over Johnson’s lifetime.

Johnson was a keen observer of — and sometime contributor to—newspapers, and devoted his Idler essay No. 40 (20 January 1759) to surveying a range of eleven or so advertisements, the originals of which Burridge tracked down in contemporary newspapers, and displayed for her audience on slides.

She highlighted the advertisements for a washball, duvets, cosmetics (“beautifying liquid”), and in particular the anodyne
necklace, a teething implement for young children, advertised with the shameless assertion that a mother "would never forgive herself" if her child were to perish without it.

All the techniques used by advertisers today were familiar to eighteenth-century readers. Advertisers would use language to bamboozle or mislead (puffery): "large promise," Johnson says, "is the soul of an advertisement." Word choice is important: products are not made, but "crafted," not "mixed" but "blended." The adjective "new" began at this time always to imply "improved." "Original" and "authentic" were also words of strong recommendation. Advertisers then as now would deploy pseudo-scientific language, and they were far more forthright in criticising their competitors. Even the practices of celebrity endorsement and product placement were pioneered in eighteenth-century newspapers.

Johnson would have approved of modern laws that restrain false advertising, but of course they simply make advertisers sneakier. Rather than make claims that could be falsified, they make claims that are literally true, but strongly imply something which is not: to say "doctors recommend XX" only requires two doctors, though it suggests all doctors. Products are described as better or faster or cleaner or crunchier: "than the relevant competing product" is the implied conclusion, but the true point of comparison is not mentioned. Abandoning grammar is not just dumbing-down: by leaving out verbs, for instance, advertisers can make their points without making assertions that can invite doubt or contradiction.

Admirers of Johnson enjoy his prose and conversation as a refuge from the cynically manipulative and degraded language of public discourse, crafted as it is by ever more expert and pervasive advertising professionals and spin doctors. Kate's Fleeman lecture was itself an illustration of language used for better purposes: to inform and entertain and give us tools for wide-ranging cultural criticism.

—Paul Tankard
Readers of this issue should enjoy a rare spate of color: photographs of two Johnsonian scenes executed as fore-edge paintings. Apparently, despite the relatively wide appeal of such performances during the nineteenth century, not many Johnsonian examples are known. Loren Rothschild could not recall ever seeing one. The Hyde Collection at Houghton holds only one book with a fore-edge painting of a Johnsonian scene: in this case, a pleasant view of Lichfield from afar. The book is a T. Procter 1835 printing of Johnson’s Sermons.

A fore-edge painting is executed by slightly fanning the pages of a book, painting the scene and then gilding the page edges once the book is squared to its original position. Thus it is only possible to see the painting by fanning the pages again in the exact position that the artist used. One of the difficulties in collecting such paintings is that, while they were never part of the original book, collectors like to find paintings that are roughly contemporary with the original book. Most of us cannot make even a guess at the age of such a painting. Hence I would not presume to become a fore-edge collector. Both paintings shown herewith, however, appear well-matched to the age of the books.
I acquired my own Johnsonian fore-edge painting simply because I enjoy looking at it. It is applied to an 1862 edition of *The Life of Johnson*, published by Griffin, Bohn, and Company. The edition itself is not notable in any respect. On the front flyleaf is a presentation to “Charles Hoare from his affectionate cousin, Arthur Kinaird, on his leaving Eton, July, 1862.” The book is in full red morocco binding with gilt decorations and blind tooling. It seems entirely reasonable that the fore-edge painting may have been commissioned as part of the gift.

The scene is of Johnson’s house with large portraits of Boswell and Johnson superimposed on the London buildings. Had Johnson been asked to select only two scenes of significance to him, he could hardly have chosen better.

—TERRY SEYMOUR
Bozzy’s Grand Metaphor

Samuel Parr, the irascible school teacher known as the Whig Dr. Johnson, planned for years a biography of his (loosely speaking) Tory friend and counterpart. He wrote Johnson’s epitaph for the monument in St. Paul’s but never wrote a word of his biography. Nevertheless, he had ideas about how it should be written, and he thought he was the only man learned enough to do it. Despite his low opinion of Boswell’s intellect, Parr found something to like in his Life of Johnson. He wrote to his friend James McIntosh:

yesterday evening I began Bozzy’s bulky book . . . . The book far surpasses my expectations & it is not dull where Bozzy prates of himself, & when he writes about the man his facts are most captivating, & even interesting. The comparison between the gladiator in the Coliseum at Rome driving back the wild beasts to their dens without destroying them, & the mind of Johnson struggling with passions, which being repelled but not extinguished, return to the attack is just, Dear Sir, is happy, is eminently grand & entirely new. But where did he find it? for without inspiration it could not be his own. I scent the charming manner and the high powers of Sir Joshua Reynolds. . . .

Parr was eager to praise Reynolds, but the source of Boswell’s metaphor may have been a little older and, at the same time, closer to home. In his edition of Sir Thomas Browne’s Christian Morals (1756), Johnson glossed several words in the following passage:

To well manage our affections, and wild horses of Plato, are the highest circenses: and the noblest digladiation is in the theatre of ourselves; for therein our inward antagonists, not only like common gladiators, with ordinary weapons and down-right blows make at us, but also, like

1 British Library Archives and Manuscripts, Add MS 78763, fols. 8-9; 12 November 1791. For more on Parr’s planned biography, see Robert DeMaria, Jr., “Samuel Parr’s Epitaph for Johnson, His Library, and His Unwritten Biography,” Editing Lives: Essays in Contemporary and Biographical Studies in Honor of OM Brack, Jr., ed. Jesse G. Swan (2014), pp. 67-92, where I have also quoted this passage.
retiary and laqueary combatants, with nets frauds and entanglements fall upon us. Weapons for such combats, are not to be forged at Lipara: Vulcan's art doth nothing in this internal militia; wherein not the armour of Achilles, but the armature of St. Paul, gives the glorious day, and triumphs not leading up into capitols, but up into the highest heavens. (pp. 33-34)

Johnson defines *digladiation* as "fencing-match" in his edition of Browne, but in his *Dictionary* he defines it as "A combat with swords; any quarrel or contest." Circenses are "roman horse-races"; "retiary and laqueary combatants" use nets; and Lipara was "fabled to contain the forges of the Cyclops." Hence, Boswell may have got the general idea of his grand metaphor from Browne via Johnson himself.

—ROBERT DE MARIA, JR.

**Addenda: Two Notes on Johnson**

In my "Classic-al Comments" (JNL, LVII.1 [March 2006], 45-46), I displayed the Latin sources of some of Johnson's best-known English aphorisms. I don't doubt there are many more, discoverable by industrious reading or chance spotting. In the latter vein, I recently noticed a passage in *Rambler* 4 beginning, "That the highest reverence should be paid to youth. . . ."

Johnson signals this paragraph as drawn "from an ancient writer, by no means eminent for chastity of thought." He means Juvenal. In his Penguin selection of Johnson's essays, David Womersley quotes the rest of the passage from Juvenal, indicating the specific Satire (14) though not the verses (1-4), and ignores the "highest reverence . . ." opening.

Johnson is here exactly Englishing Juvenal 14.47: *maxima debetur puero reverentia*. Although I am not suggesting it as an intermediary source, it is worth noticing that Bartolomé de Las Casas (c. 1484-1566) did the same in his Third Letter: "Gran reverencia se le debe a un niño."

* * *
In my 1995 edition of Johnson’s Latin and Greek poems (1995: pp. 195-97), I gave reasons for thinking that the “Verses Wrote on a Window at an Inn at Calais” might be authentic, against the doubts and flat denial of the Oxford and Yale editors. Since then, Niall Rudd in his edition of Johnson’s Latin poems (2005: p. 141) has registered his doubts. I should have adduced “On Seeing Verses Written upon Windows in Inns,” attributed to Swift. The on-line “Literature Network” collects eleven such squibs, with the lemma “Several of Them Written in 1726.” Pat Rogers, in his superlative edition of Swift’s poetry (1983), accepts only four as genuine, declining to print the others, and regarding the given date as “probably no more than an approximation” (p. 763).

Rather ironically, one of the rejected pieces is a lament over being delayed by bad weather at Holyhead, its subject identical with the disputed Johnson Calais poem. The “Literature Network” compiler supports the attribution by referring to Swift’s “Journal of 1727, in Craik’s Life of Swift, vol. ii.”

Apropos Swift’s “windows in his breast,” Rogers’s bare allusion to Lucian (p. 764) as the source might have added the precise reference (Hermodimus, 20), also Pope’s facetious suggestion in a letter to Lady Mary (18 August 1716) that these windows should be turned into casements (Correspondence, ed. Sherburn [1956], I.353); cf. E. Bensly, whose prolific contributions to Notes & Queries included the first doubts cast on the authenticity of the Holyhead poem, N & Q, S10-XII, (18 December 1909), p. 497.

Beginning with Smollet’s claim in Humphrey Clinker that “From Doncaster northwards, all the windows of all the inns are scrawled with doggerel rhimes,” Mary Claire Randolph (“Diamond-Satires in the Eighteenth Century,” N & Q, 185 [31 July 1943], pp. 62-65) assembled a huge collection of these effusions, including some of those ascribed to Swift, also noting without comment Hendriks’s attribution of the Calais poem to Johnson. As instanced by Swift (“And fairly bid he devil take / The diamond and the lover”) and annotated by Rogers, the diamond is the poet’s instrument of incision too; hence M. C. Randolph’s title.

Though worth knowing and reporting for its own sake, none of this (obviously) proves Johnsonian authorship of the Calais poem. But, it does show that whoever incised it was in good company, part of a rich tradition of literary fenestration that might be seen as prefiguring our century’s Tweets and Twitters (“a low word,” Dictionary).

—BARRY BALDWIN
Johnsonian News Letter

Johnson on Classical Pastoral: Two Modern Intimations

1. "If we except Calpurnius (sic), an obscure writer of the lower ages, I know not that a single pastoral was written after him by any poet, till the revival of literature" (Adventurer 92, 22 September 1753). By "lower ages" Johnson must mean what we now dub late(r) antiquity. In his Edial prospectus for teaching the Classics, he included Phaedrus (c. 15 BC- c. 50 AD), a near contemporary of Calpurnius as a Latin writer "of the purest ages."

Beginning in 1978, there has been a flurry of articles shifting the date of Calpurnius Siculus from his "traditional" Neronian (54-68 AD) one to the third century. When itemizing, discussing, and agreeing with these against reactionary defenders of the earlier chronology (Illinois Classical Studies, 20 [1995], 157-67), I observed that by inadvertence or design, none of these revolutionaries had noticed their pre-emption by Johnson, with whom Edward Gibbon would later be in rare harmony (Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, chs. 11 & 12, detecting various specific allusions to the reigns of Aurelian, Probus, and Carus).

Thus, in this Calpurnian version of the Re-Dating Game, Johnson was (to adapt the title of the Shangri-las pop song) one of the "Leaders of the Pack."

2. In the aforementioned Adventurer article, Johnson surveys each of Virgil's Eclogues (or Bucolics). After commending the content and style of the Fourth, he subjoins: "That the golden age should return because Pollio had a son, appears so wild a fiction, that I am ready to suspect the poet of having written for some other purpose, what he took this opportunity of producing to the public."

Johnson offers no precise speculations. Like the dog in Sherlock Holmes who did not bark in the night, there is a notable absence of the Messianic theory, originated by the first Christian emperor, Constantine in a speech (cf. my "Vergilius Graecus," American Journal of Philology, 97 [1976], 361-68), perpetuated in the eighteenth century by Pope's advertisement for his Messiah (famously Latinized by Johnson at Oxford) and by the Reverend Robert Lowth (1710-1787) in his Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews (tr. George Gregory [1787], p. 241), Lowth also being
Notes and Queries

deed by both Johnson and Gibbon to have had the better of Warburton in their celebrated Dispute.

The history of the Messianic theory was painstakingly traced both in *Virgil’s Messianic Eclogue: Its Meaning, Occasion & Sources: Three Studies by Joseph B. Mayor, W. Warde Fowler [and] R. S. Conway. With the text of the Eclogue, and a Verse translation by R. S. Conway* (1907), and by Ella Bourne’s “The Messianic Prophecy in Vergil’s Fourth Eclogue,” *Classical Journal*, 11 (1916), 390-400. Few Virgilians now take this seriously, though I imagine there are Internet loyalists, and ex-pope Benedict (writing as Joseph Ratzinger) is tempted by it in the third volume of his *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infant Narratives* (2013). More to the present point is to observe the Johnsonian cadences of the subject’s doyen, Sir Ronald Syme (*The Roman Revolution* [1939], pp. 218-19): “The most famous and enigmatic of his pastoral poems. . . . The child itself appears to be something more than a personification of an era in its infancy, its parents are neither celestial nor apocalyptic. The identification of the child of destiny is a task that has exercised the ingenuity — and revealed the credulity or ignorance — of scholars and visionaries for two thousand years; it has been aggravated by a hazard to which prophetic literature by its very nature is peculiarly liable, that of subsequent manipulation when exact fulfillment has been frustrated or postponed.”

—BARRY BALDWIN

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JNLKAD
ACROSS

1. n.s. 1. A small slice of meat. 2. A piece of any animal. 3. In burlesque language, a child. (6)

5. adj. 1. Lying with the face upward: opposed to prone. 2. Leaning backwards with exposure to the sun. 3. N negligent; careless; indolent; drowsy; thoughtless; inattentive. (6)

8. n.s. 1. Trouble, difficulty. 2. Bustle; tumult; business; sometimes with the particle about. 3. It has a light and ludicrous sense, implying more tumult and show of business, than the affair is worth: in this sense it is of late generally used. (3)

9. n.s. 1. The fruit of the ——— tree. 2. The tree that bears ——— s. (5)

12. adj. Unsubstantial; having only appearance. (6)
13. adj. 1. Relating to love. 2. Consisting of copper, called *venus* by chemists. (8)

15. n.s. A coin struck by dukes: in silver, valued at about four shillings and six pence; in gold, at nine shillings and six pence. (5)

16. adj. Wonderful; amazing; astonishing. (10)

19. n.s. A quick sprightly motion. A cant word among women. (10)

20. v.a. 1. To block up; to stop the passage. 2. To place in ambush. (5)

21. v.a. To open the closed hand. (8)

25. n.s. 1. A small crustaceous vermiculated fish. 2. A little wrinkled man; a dwarf. In contempt. (6)

26. n.s. 1. A shrub of low stature; the leaves are small, and abide green all the year. Miller. 2. A place overgrown with ———. 3. A place covered with shrubs of whatever kind. (5)

27. n.s. A poem written to be sung to musick; a lyric poem; the ——— is either of the greater or less kind. The less is characterised by sweetness and ease; the greater by sublimity, rapture, and quickness of transition. (3)

28. n.s. 1. The border; the brink; the edge; the verge. 2. The edge of a page left blank, or filled with a short note.... (6).

29. n.s. 1. Any thing curled or twisted. 2. A garland; a chaplet. (6)

**DOWN**

2. v.a. To view with side glances, as in fondness; or with a design not to be heeded. (4)

3. adj. 1. Crippled; disabled in the limbs. 2. Hobbling; not smooth: alluding to the feet of a verse. 3. Imperfect; unsatisfactory. (4)

4. n.s. 1. A square of glass. 2. A piece mixed in variegated works with other pieces. (5)

5. n.s. 1. The immaterial and immortal spirit of man.... (4)

6. adj. Having small spiracles or passages. (6)

7. n.s. [French.] Splendour; show; lustre. Not English. (5)

10. v.n. 1. To follow as a consequence to premises. 2. To succeed in a train of events, or course of time. (5)

11. adj. 1. Methodical; regular. 2. Observant of method. 3. Not tumultuous; well regulated. 4. According with established method. (7)

13. adj. 1. Large; great. 2. Viciously great; enormously extensive or capacious. (4)

14. n.s. Irons at the end of a
15. *adj.* 1. Lasting; having the quality of long continuance.
2. Having successive existence. (7)

17. *n.s.* A man of size above the ordinary rate of men; a man unnaturally large. It is observable, that the idea of a ——— is always associated with pride, brutality, and wickedness. (5)

18. *n.s.* A measure of length supposed equal to three grains of barley laid end to end; the twelfth part of a foot. 2. A proverbial name for a small quantity. 3. A nice point of time. (4)

19. *n.s.* An ornamental covering; that which is put on the outside of any thing by way of decoration. (6)

20. *n.s.* 1. The embrace of the arms holding any thing to the breast. 2. The breast; the heart. 3. The folds of the dress that cover the breast.... (5)

21. *prep.* 1. Not under; noting being on the top.... (4)

22. *v.a.* 1. To grind with the teeth; to masticate. 2. To meditate; or ruminate in the thoughts.... (4)

23. *n.s.* 1. Quiet; rest; undisturbed tranquillity; not solicitude.... (4)

24. *v.n.* To prate; to talk idly; to prattle; to cackle; to chatter; to converse at ease. (4)

Solution is on page 64.
Catherine M. Parisian: 
Frances Burney’s Cecilia: A Publishing History


Frances Burney is best known as the author of Evelina, or the History of a Young Lady’s Entrance into the World (1778), a novel that she wrote in secret and submitted in a disguised hand. Evelina raced through four London editions by the end of 1779 and garnered high praise from literary luminaries such as Elizabeth Montagu and Hester Thrale, as well as Samuel Johnson himself. Expectations ran high for the publication of Burney’s second novel, Cecilia, Or Memoirs of an Heiress, which first appeared on 12 July 1782 and was one of the most popular novels of the latter half of the eighteenth century. Catherine M. Parisian’s book Frances Burney’s Cecilia: A Publishing History (2012) carefully traces the novel’s progress through print to the present day in England and abroad, supplying reproductions of 74 illustrations and bibliographic descriptions of 51 editions. Arguing that “more may be known about [Cecilia] than any other [novel] of the eighteenth century” (1), Parisian’s study combines methodologies in book history and bibliography, unveiling the “intersections between the intellectual content of this book and the physical forms in which it existed” (xx).

Parisian’s book has five chapters. The first examines Cecilia’s inception, especially Burney’s negotiations with her publishers Thomas Payne and Thomas Cadell from the novel’s first publication to the “eight additional editions while under its initial period of copyright protection” (26). The second chapter continues in the same vein to survey the English-language post-copyright editions of Cecilia up through the 1998 re-issue of the Oxford World’s Classics edition. This section contains keen observations regarding the novel’s later reception and readership, including the contention that “Cecilia became part of the packaging and marketing of English culture” in the nineteenth century (34). The third chapter
traces *Cecilia*’s travels abroad, mainly to America, Ireland, France, and Germany, while the fourth centers on *Cecilia*’s illustrations, pinpointing changing themes and popular scenes, such as the masquerade and Cecilia’s interactions with her lover’s dog Fidel. The final chapter gives a descriptive bibliography of the 51 editions discussed in Parisian’s book.

This is an impressively researched text that bears the fruit of Parisian’s travel to at least ten discrete archives. Parisian is able to make a number of key observations about the novel and its readership based on her extensive archival investigations. For instance, she has discovered that *Cecilia* was published serially in the early decades of the nineteenth century (37-38) and persuasively argues that this demonstrates the novel’s changing readership: “Although the total cost for *Cecilia* in parts would have been slightly higher...1 to 2s a month would have been much easier for a working-class reader to manage.” (39). Similarly, Parisian posits that abridged French translations of the novel purposely removed passages containing distinctive English humor which “may have been lost to a French audience” (83). Her fourth chapter performs convincing interpretive work on *Cecilia*’s illustrations, arguing that they demonstrate “how readings of *Cecilia* have moved away from an emphasis on its sentimentality...towards an interest in the dynamics of the characters and plot” (94). Such overarching analyses are largely absent from the first three chapters of the book, which, though they display remarkable breadth, are often disjointed and enumerative.

While Frances Burney’s *Cecilia* is an unprecedented survey of the novel’s appearances in print, Parisian’s study is somewhat misleading in its declared focus on versions of *Cecilia* that predate the first edition. The short summary of the book, which appears among the paratextual material, states that “Catherine Parisian mines an extensive archival record that includes portions of the original manuscript, annotated page proofs, legal records relative to its copyright, and an abundance of letters, to chronicle the novel’s composition, printing, and publication from its first edition in 1782 to the present-day Oxford World’s Classics paperback.” (i.) This advertisement is inaccurate. While there is an excellent selection of letters related to Burney’s composition of *Cecilia* and careful documentation of Burney’s transactions with her publishers, very little attention is given to the original manuscript and annotated page proofs. The page proofs of *Cecilia* offer rich interpretive potential, as is shown in Janice Farrar Thaddeus’s essay “Sharpening *Cecilia*: Frances Burney as a Professional Writer” (2001). Parisian treats them cursorily, commenting only on the addition of press figures.
Even more significantly, no “portions” of the “five hundred and forty pages of a manuscript of *Cecilia* surviving” in the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection at the New York Public Library” are directly cited (1). Parisian does mention the manuscript’s circulation “amongst [Burney’s] coterie of readers prior to publication” (7) and conjectures that Burney may have made many changes to the manuscript based on the responses of her early readers (10). But no effort has been made to describe and interpret changes that are apparent on the manuscript itself or those that can be discerned in a comparison with the published text.

In a work of this complexity, it is inevitable that errors will creep in. The most noticeable of these is Parisian’s uncertainty, based on an email from 2004, whether Oxford will change Burney’s name from “Fanny” to “Frances” on the cover of its next re-issue of *Cecilia*: “Oxford has changed its position on the matter [whether to use “Fanny” or “Frances”] as well; their most recent impressions of Burney’s *Wanderer* and *Evelina* name Frances Burney as the author on the cover, and, if costs allow, it plans to use ‘Frances’ on the cover of its next printing of *Cecilia*” (63-64). This uncertainty is solved within the text on page 163, where the cover from Oxford’s 2008 reprint of *Cecilia* is displayed with “Frances Burney” clearly featured as the author. There is also a discrepancy in the number of surviving proof copy volumes at the Houghton: they are given initially and incorrectly as “Volumes II-IV” (1) and are corrected ten pages later as “Volumes II-V” (11). Additionally, on page 24, dashes are inadvertently replaced with underscores in the first passage from Burney’s *Early Journals and Letters* (which is erroneously abbreviated as *ELJ*).

Ultimately, this is all minor in comparison with the substantial, wide-ranging knowledge that Parisian’s book displays. *Frances Burney’s Cecilia* provides a comprehensive account of *Cecilia* in print, and its depictions of the novel’s nineteenth-century reception open up new avenues in Burney scholarship. While the book should be essential reading for eighteenth-century book historians and bibliographers, the collection of illustrations and descriptive bibliography will be particularly useful for scholars of *Cecilia* and Burney.

—HILARY HAVENS
In a talk I gave recently to a group of amateur Johnso­nians, I observed—without much premeditation—that it is not surprising that Boswell’s *Life of Johnson* should stimulate and sustain friendships because it is in many ways a book about friendship. The audience agreed strongly: if the book were a novel, we would have no hesitation in identifying friendship as one of its major themes. The movement of the narrative—moment by moment, when Boswell is in Johnson’s company and contributes to the conversation, and year by year, as Boswell goes annually to London to again pick up the friendship—is powered by the dynamics of the relationship between the two men.

There have been earlier books about Johnson and Boswell, such as the joint biography *Johnson and Boswell* by Hesketh Pearson (1958), and Pat Rogers’s *Transit of Caledonia* (1995) about the Hebrides trip, but the purpose of this book is something more subtle and abstract. If this book is a “biography of [a] friendship,” it is more about the inner life of that friendship than its outer and public life. John Radner has had at his disposal far more resources than were available to Pearson, in particular the “Private Papers”—the voluminous letters and journals—of Boswell, which enable him to plot the dynamics of the friendship in great detail. With almost infinite patience, he has teased out patterns over the twenty-eight years between when the two men met, and when the relationship ended, not with Johnson’s death in 1784, but seven years later with the publication of the great book.

Lives have circumstances that can be narrated, but a friend­ship—if it can be said to have a life—does not experience events. As Radner depicts it, this friendship does not (as the *Life* makes it appear) have “continuity and coherence” (4), but changes and evolves, sometimes dramatically, but more often slightly and subtly. To examine such a thing as a friendship, it must be located and its outline plotted. There have been a number of attempts to come up
with a precise account of the days that Johnson and Boswell passed in each other's company, and Radner adds to this in an Appendix (420-26+ days is his tally). But he also considers many other passages of time: years, months, days and hours, in an effort to discern patterns and if possible to derive meanings from them. At times the arithmetic becomes almost overwhelming, as there are lengthy passages in which we are told that at a certain period over X days they met Y times for Z hours, and Y+2 times for Z-3 hours, or that they exchanged X letters in Z years, as against the following period in which they exchanged X+2 letters in Z-2 years. I sometimes felt that this was the author's "working out," and that however necessary it was as part of his research it was not necessarily important as part of the book.

Bringing such a delicate and abstract thing as a friendship into the spotlight is risky. Friendship seems to us the least demonstrative of loves, but this was less the case in other times and places. Johnson and Boswell are frequently explicit about the importance of each to the other; Johnson knows how reliant Boswell is on him, and often in response to his neediness, Johnson affirms, "I do love thee" (84), "I hold you . . . 'in my heart of hearts'" (171), "I very highly esteem and very cordially love you" (203), "I love you better than I ever did" (231). Radner convincingly depicts the two men working on the friendship as a project, although it may not be that we can agree that meaning is always to be found in such circumstances as hiatuses in their correspondence, the frequency or length of their meetings, etc. Relationships are as much governed by accident as human willfulness. Johnson and Boswell's friendship is often depicted as competitive, and as clearly sometimes collaborative; more often than not it seems that Johnson is in control, but Boswell often resists and sometimes takes charge—particularly after it is established—increasingly explicitly—between the two men that he is to be Johnson's biographer. His status as biographer gave Boswell some authority, and a right to be informed and consulted. Johnson saw that in order to control his image, he needed to cooperate with Boswell. As Radner observes, "[n]one other of Johnson's friends wrote" to him as Boswell could (192). The friendship changed, and it changed both Johnson and Boswell.

But Radner understands that, no matter how elaborately any friendship may be chronicled, speculation is inevitable, because no relationship is a scientific process, and even those inside do not necessarily understand it. All that can be observed are outside circumstances, in this case including the participants' writings, which are so ambiguous as to mean anything or nothing. In one paragraph (53), there are four "probably's", two "might have's", a "would
surely,” a “perhaps,” and a “would have”; and Radner frequently deploys this register. There are circumstances, and sometimes there are patterns of circumstances, but to take the next step and say what they amount to is hardly possible. Radner observes at one point that “there is no evidence of what Johnson thought and felt about Boswell, or of how often he had Boswell in mind” (31), and one wants to ask what constitutes evidence of how anyone thinks or feels about anything, or how we count events in the mind. Sometimes when Johnson fails to answer Boswell’s letters, or to address some issues raised, there is the temptation to use the lack of evidence to draw some conclusion. There is a tone of uncertainty that pervades the book, which may not have been the case had the subject been in the hands of a less subtle or thoughtful writer.

In some ways the book is more satisfactory when there are fewer obviously personal materials, and the author has recourse to mere narration. The tour of Scotland and the Hebrides almost overwhelms the book: with the two published accounts, Johnson’s many letters to Hester Thrale, Boswell’s journal, Johnson’s (speculative) notebook, and negotiation about the tour before and afterwards (over the writing up of it), it seems that this passage of the friendship is gone over again and again. Here and at other places, the narrative slips through the cracks, perhaps because the author presumes his readers will be as familiar as he is with its details. When he mentions Boswell asking Johnson for an epitaph on Mary Queen of Scots (150), giving Johnson “a chance to correct a shocking story” (202-3), or having “choreographed a dance of reconciliation” between Johnson and Thomas Percy (209), or “all the insults he [Boswell] omitted from the Tour and the Life” (210), or of the two friends “laughing heartily” at the “peculiarities” of a friend (211), but without giving the epitaph, telling the story, describing the dance, repeating the insults, etc., he over-estimates the reader’s knowledge or memory, and underestimates the pleasure and power of familiar stories. The subtlety and hesitance with which Radner approaches his task has the result that this reader at least often felt disoriented, and rather missed the familiar but rich layer of narrative and anecdote which is the substratum of this particular friendship, but which here is too seldom exposed above the surface of the discourse.

We are on more firm ground when he investigates how the friendship affected the work of the two friends. Boswell invited Johnson’s collaboration by having him read the journal he kept in the Hebrides, and Johnson expected that Boswell would be on hand after the trip to assist with his own Journey; this did not eventuate, but Boswell is written into the book as “the intended
primary audience” of many passages. Radner finds much autobiography too in the Lives of the Poets, and says Johnson “often seems . . . surely imagined . . . must have been thinking” (233) of his biographer. Radner artfully depicts the Life of Johnson itself as a collaboration, as Johnson increasingly invited Boswell to join him in revisiting his old haunts, shared anecdotes of his past, and performed for him in conversation. The Life gives us Boswell’s perspective on Johnson and the friendship, and we clearly see the older man’s influence on the younger. Radner makes clearer the reverse of this: Johnson’s perspective, and Boswell’s influence on him and his writings.

Perhaps the main argument of Radner’s book is where he tells us that Boswell “decided to become Johnson’s biographer primarily to connect with him more fully” (165). It has frequently been imagined that it was the other way around: that Boswell became Johnson’s friend in order to become his biographer. Radner shows clearly the strands of mutual dependence and influence, of admiration and affection, that bound the two men to each other. Friendship is not a form of relationship that thrives under modern conditions; too many people mistake commonality of interest, and friendliness, for friendship, and never experience a relationship as deep, complex, warm and frank as that depicted here. I remember some years ago hearing on the radio a biographer being interviewed about the challenges of biography writing, one of which was to depict—alongside the narrative of events—the subject’s lifelong friendships. With regard to this friendship we have a unique quality and quantity of material, and Radner has deployed it not to retell the things done, said and written by his subjects, but to directly address this challenge.

—PAUL TANKARD

Marcel Theroux: Strange Bodies

Marcel Theroux’s new novel Strange Bodies might have originated with an idea, one afternoon in London, a rainy day, on Fleet Street, near Gough Square. Theroux, apparently, wanted to write something about Samuel Johnson and the 21st Century. And so we have it: a book about Samuel Johnson in the 21st Century.

The narrator is Nicholas Slopen, a depressed professor of
eighteenth-century British literature (aren't they all?). Shortly before his wife and two children leave him, he realizes he's made no money as an academic; after his wife and two children leave him it's too late, but in a last-ditch attempt to get some cash Slopen colludes with a music executive alleging to possess some previously unknown letters by Doctor Johnson himself. If real, they are worth a fortune, both on the auction block and in the literary critical marketplace.

Slopen's quest for authorial authenticity twists into a kind of techno-monster-thriller; soon the Russians are entangled, as part of a resurrection scheme, the inspiration for which they found in Milton's *Areopagitica*: “For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life....” Johnson, having put so much of his life down on paper, is the ideal subject, and the ensuing doppelgänger challenges Slopen's—and indeed our own—notions of soul and body, or “soul and carcass,” as Slopen prefers to say.

There are more parts Shelley than Doyle in Theroux's golem-novel, and so many paroxysms of plot that a review could hardly summarize, let alone spoil them. Slopen, it should be noted, is dead by the first chapter: “I was born in Singapore City on April 10, 1970. I died on September 28, 2008, crushed in the wheel arch of a lorry outside Oval tube station” (17). The Gothic aspects of his work should have obliged Theroux to withhold the facts in order to create tension; but this initial revelation guts the book, and Theroux spends the next 200 pages bandaging his bleeding ideas—always, the question is less how will he put this together than how did this fall apart?

*Strange Bodies* is genre fiction disembodied of its fiction: at times, as when Slopen “fell hard against the doorknob” to enable his capture by Russians, Theroux's solutions are so anti-ingenious that they become anti-realistic and anti-imaginary. Life, we know, isn't asked for, but what is this Frankensteinnian version of it, that doesn't “ring the real,” but is forced upon Dr. Slopen, Samuel Johnson, then the reader?

The book succeeds where it sets out. As a kind of sitcom, as *A Doctor in Millennial London*, *Strange Bodies* is good fun. We get Johnson, or his spirit, hating *Lycidas* all over again, a “chthonic rumble in his vast chest” bubbling up at the poem's mention. We get Johnson eating pizza: “Depend upon it, sir, many a rich man dining tonight upon roast swan would as lief exchange his vittles for a plate of this cooked cheese!” We get Johnson returning to Fleet Street and Johnson making friends: “To Dr. Slopen,” writes the Doctor, in Theroux's best imitation, “I find Hesiod's maxim holds: that the evil of the worst times has some good mingled with it. A
rational man may not doubt it. Your concern and gentleness have mitigated my discomfort and lightened my misery.”

Yet it is ironic that a novel so “postmodern,” so concerned with identity and its fragments, should encourage us to imagine the author behind the text. Biographical continuities aside—Slopen and Theroux were each born in Singapore, educated at Cambridge and Yale, and acquainted with Russian—the book’s contortions make more conspicuous the strange body that wrote them. There’s the plot; then there’s the language: Slopen’s fondness for the word “perfunctory” (see pp. 348-49), and, at the end of sentences, a terminal case of cluttered phrases: “incestuous subjectivities,” “increasing facility,” “unlettered Eloi.” These are the author’s signatures, we sense, because they are Slopen’s failures. And it is an irony of Milton’s thesis that the work’s “life” should entail a refined version of the author’s. In this way, “Strange Bodies” is also a parable. The life of Theroux’s errors means the death of his book.

—ALEXANDER BUE

Dustin Griffin:
Authorship in the Long Eighteenth Century

The just-released Authorship in the Long Eighteenth Century leaves mostly untouched the basic narrative that there was a major change in the material conditions of the English culture of letters in the period 1660-1800. In this tradition, the heart of writing had become a matter of trade rather than aristocratic prerogative by the end of the eighteenth century, in a process loosely denominated professionalization. Writers in the eighteenth century begin to write about writing more than ever before, and to regulate the profession they were inventing. They also became both the generators and subjects of new forms, especially biography and the periodical essay. Dustin Griffin’s intervention comes less at the end points of this old story than in its interior. According to Authorship in the Long Eighteenth Century, the narrative that has long been used to explain this shift, best symbolized in the traditional reading of Johnson’s letter to Chesterfield as the death-blow to the patronage system, is, at the very least,
“imprecise and misleading” (172). Change in authorship, and to how authors, booksellers, and the others who created their profession understood authorship, came slowly and gradually, in jagged waves rather than straight lines. Indeed, the emergence of the “author by profession,” Griffin takes pains to show, is not quite the same thing as an unambiguously professional author, and was greeted with caution even by the authors-by-profession themselves.

There is definitely something distinctly “modern” about the English author whom Griffin sees first emerging between the Restoration and the death of Anne, yet the nature of this modernity is not easily defined. It cannot be reduced to pat terms rejecting past practices, such as “professional.” And modern as they are—in the sense of different to what came before them—eighteenth-century authors retained practices and allegiances very alien to today’s mythos of writing as a creative, inspiration-driven process. Chief among Griffin’s contentions is that most writing remained occasional throughout the eighteenth century; that is, it was stirred by real-life events, by controversy, or by commission; and authorship, like reading, was much more a socially complex than a solitary or individualized practice. Still, the public side of life is not everything to the writer, and Habermas is treated skeptically; coffee houses are addressed as clubbish places more than true ancestors of a public sphere, particularly after 1688. Lipking’s Life of the Poet (1981), and the genealogical arc it describes for major poets, is likewise critiqued for paying too little attention to what Griffin coins an “outer career” in which poets must cope with “booksellers, contracts, the book trade, ordinary readers, or the practical pressures” of both occasional writing and financial need (83).

As this description of the book’s main through lines should suggest, Griffin’s text is not so much about the radically new than a meditation upon the arc of a career. This meditation applies to two valences at once: the eighteenth-century author, and the modern eighteenth-centuryist. In the first case, in striving to define what exactly makes a career writer different from an amateur one, Griffin ultimately decides that the core issue is not canonicity or the magnum opus, but instead and literally the entire life of writing: “the career is located in the doing, not in the having done” (105). In the case of the eighteenth-centuryist, we see Griffin reconsidering and sometimes revising his own past scholarship, not as a side-task but as a major underlying feature of the book. Versions or portions of seven of the eleven chapters presented of the book were published previously, the earliest in 1976. Despite being familiar with some of this work, I found the experience of
reading the full volume rewarding; the mix of large pronouncements with dedicated close readings that the varied, differently composed chapters create provides an interesting illustration of how many years and many different methods of scholarship may eventually create, for those dedicated to the study of the eighteenth century, a particularized understanding that moves from individuals to the whole of our period.

The common thread holding together what would seem to be disparate parts is Griffin’s desire to resist a set of interrelated conventional wisdoms, most created in the eighteenth century itself but still exercising significant hold over modern minds: the simplistic account of the rise of writing as a profession, the danger to High Culture supposedly posed by hacks (the “Dunciadic myth”), the usefulness of “public sphere” and “literary marketplace” paradigms, and so forth. Some of these received wisdoms are addressed through individual canonized figures. Milton’s journey to Italy, for example, may have been important, but not in the way it’s usually claimed: “we cannot conclude that the alleged discovery and confirmation of his vocation in Italy led directly to any solid literary results”; rather, it led at least in part to a more fully “mature and developed sense of his role as a writer,” one that did not correspond simply to the genteel Italianate ideal (21, 22). Dryden, meanwhile, is presented as an author who enthusiastically sought out his own fame and lasting reputation without any incumbent shame about it (27). He “seems to have seen no inconsistency in combining the two roles of gentleman author and what has been called the ‘professional writer,’” no contradiction in courting aristocratic admiration while also devoting plenty of personal energy to driving the hardest bargains he could with publishers like Tonson (29). And unsurprisingly, Samuel Johnson is everywhere in the book, sometimes, as we might expect, as an exemplar of the transition between older and newer models of authorship, but sometimes more pointedly as a means of seeing continuity between the Renaissance (its scholars more than courtly poets) and the end of the eighteenth century. “Johnson,” notes Griffin, “was one of the last English poets to write occasionally in Latin” (120).

Griffin’s true interest is in what he calls “the writing life”: how authors in the eighteenth century interacted with buyers, sellers, readers, and other writers in the literary marketplace (“literary marketplace” being a term the author approaches only with considerable cautions) across their careers (10). One of the most interesting contentions about this “writing life” is that however much it registered as a social matter (and it did), “A writer’s most
important collaborator was often a bookseller,” for the kinds of writers who hold Griffin’s attention almost always wrote to publish (55). At the same time, Griffin is uninterested in narratives that glorify single authors as valiant and unique individuals pursuing heaven-sent inspirations. Instead, we are reminded that “with surprising frequency, the early modern writer did not appear before the public as a single author, but in the company of fellow writers”: contributors, co-authors, co-translators, and the like (56).

In engaging the topic of networks, social and economic, that form writing lives, scholars will now grant that in the eighteenth century such networks were to some new degree co-ed. And indeed, the expanding presence of women writers within the English literary scene is readily acknowledged in Authorship in the Long Eighteenth Century, but women writers as individuals play little role here compared to the great men: Dryden, Swift, Pope, and Johnson. Aphra Behn, Delarivier Manley, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu are discussed only briefly; some other major career writers who were women, such as Eliza Haywood, Sarah Fielding, and Charlotte Lennox, appear not at all. This will irritate some readers profoundly; others will accept it just as readily. In some spots, such as Chapter 5’s discussion of collaborative writing practices, clubs, and “loose epistolary networks,” women writers are weighed as presenting a special case, one with much in common but also some differences from that of their male counterparts (67).

More often, the situations of male and female writers are treated with a sort of argumentative coverture: “He,” writes Griffin, describing the general case of the eighteenth-century author, “(by which I mean he or she) is an occasional writer in the best sense of the term” (84). Griffin also states that the rare author who sees writing as a true vocation, a “quasi-religious calling” (think Milton), is without exception male (85).

For the most part, however, it is not such men, “truly called” authors, that concern Authorship in the Long Eighteenth Century. Instead it is the authors who spent lifetimes writing for all manner of miscellaneous reasons who dominate, although what to call them is a matter of some difficulty. In general, the book prefers “author by profession” in place of “professional author” or even “professed author,” for only the former was actually employed by self-conscious career writers in the eighteenth century. Yet even this term is qualified, for a self-professed author by profession did not think of him or herself as a professional in the modern sense, or as belonging to the same kind of vocation as a clergyman, soldier, or doctor (144). To make this point, Griffin
turns to three surprising case studies: William Oldys, Thomas Birch, and James Ralph; such men, not well remembered today, were "different from Pope and Johnson in degree but not in kind" (160). The world of the "author by profession" was small and intimately interconnected, but even so, "there were many more laborers in the vineyard than we remember to notice" (159). The eighteenth-century literary marketplace was small, but not that small. Authors by profession worked with patrons and booksellers alike; they might write pastoral verse and vitriol for political parties in turn. Most importantly, not all authors by profession were enslaved hacks; in men like Oldys, Birch, and Ralph we see a reasonably prosperous middle path between drudgery and immortality. At the same time, Chapter 10, on Thomas Gray, admits that some men pursued the reputation of a disinterested gentleman amateur as a means of insulating themselves from an often unkind (however necessary) reading public. The importance of this pose is somewhat underemphasized, though Griffin does acknowledge that the model was commonly aspirational (183).

There is a difference charted here, but not a stark one, between the career author and the career scholar of the seventeenth or eighteenth century (a figure also known as the "man of learning" or "man of letters"), one mostly teased out in Chapter 8. Further, Griffin contends that matters for the career author progress differently in eighteenth-century England from the rest of Europe, for in England the "Republic of Letters" comprising men like Locke, Hume, and Gibbon was seen less as antiestablishment than as a positive expression of national potential. Relatedly, as authority for writers was on the rise, for scholars it was on the decline: learned men (learned women are unmentioned) no longer received nor, importantly, granted even to each other, the awe and respect of ages past, and increasingly opened themselves to the common critiques of being dull, useless, or simply obsessive. The eighteenth century in England was very much instead the age of the gentleman author and gentleman scholar: "polite learning" increasingly became a prerequisite for a respectable public voice (132). By the end of the century, the Republic of Letters was not a network of learned men, but one of public authors, a dynamic but unruly crowd who often alarmed their contemporaries as no very progressive sign of things to come (141). The fall of the career scholar may also be related to the importance of occasional writing, for occasional writers are by definition creatures of wide-ranging taste and subject, not specialists but generalists.

A final arc worth charting through this treatment of the eighteenth century "life of writing" is the overlap between taking up
writing as a career and thinking about that career through the metaphor of human life, as something that is born, matures, and will die. The early chapters, 3 and 4 especially, are not only about the beginnings of authorship, but together form an interesting meditation on the relationship between authors and death, culminating in a sustained reading of Dryden's "To the Memory of Mr. Oldham" in which Oldham is at once a *memento mori* and also an encouragement to the surviving Dryden, who, in 1684, argues Griffin, had much to be proud about, even sanguine in his future reputation (48). Later we return to this sense that an interest in ends and failures is of major importance to eighteenth-century career writers, who saw not only the inevitability of death, but also, with age, "the natural decay of poetic powers," which always progress, given time, from ripening to overripe (98). This meditation on death and decay is not, or not only, a matter to be dreaded; it is an inspiration as well, a fruitful means of spurring serious career writers to, paraphrasing Addison, print themselves out while they still could.

Samuel Johnson, whose relationship to class status was certainly complex, has long been used to tell the story of the rise of the author who found independence, not wage slavery, from the booksellers (5). Griffin resists both this story and Johnson's role in it, championing instead the examples of some career authors who have not come to rest securely inside the canon, and arguing that Johnson, and others like him, did not so much dismiss patronage as wish that it worked better, and that the eighteenth-century evolution past the patronage system that dominated courtly production in earlier eras, towards a new and respectable professionalism, was "slow and incomplete" (6). Griffin has come to the conclusion that patronage in various forms lasted quite a bit longer into the century than is generally supposed, and that writing as a solid profession was likewise less in evidence in the eighteenth century proper than is commonly remembered (6). The old ways of scribal writing persisted alongside the patronage culture well into the late eighteenth century; time and again, simple binaries where one model thoroughly replaces another are disrupted and disputed here. Authors like Dryden and Pope, and their contemporaries, were absolutely interested in and pursued various forms of patronage, but this is not to say that they made no plays for their own independence, authority, or professionally-garnered profits at the same time. Quite the opposite was true. Finally, in a revision that works well with the current fondness for cultural scholarship, Griffin will have it that almost all eighteenth-century writing is to a greater or lesser degree occasional,
though it has cost him some pains to come to this determination: "Two and a half decades of thinking further about the topic of literary careers has led me to conclude that my early distinction between the planned and the occasional career was drawn much too sharply" (85).

—MANUSHAG POWELL

Kate Chisholm:
_Wits & Wives: Dr. Johnson in the Company of Women_


Kate Chisholm’s book, _Wits & Wives_, gives us the lives of some of the talented and fascinating women who figured prominently in the life of Samuel Johnson. They are (in their order in the book): Sarah Johnson, Elizabeth Porter, Elizabeth Carter, Hill Boothby, Charlotte Lennox, Hester Thrale, Frances Reynolds, and Hannah More. Each receives her own chapter (with the exception of Boothby and Lennox, who share one). Other women make appearances, notably Frances Burney (too sparingly for this reviewer) and Mary Wollstonecraft (whose story begins and ends the book).

Gathered together in one volume, the lives touch and resonate with each other; we see many interesting relations, such as the contrast between Hill Boothby’s selflessness and Charlotte Lennox’s driving ambition. Taken together, the lives present a full and moving picture of the courage and sacrifice it took for women in eighteenth-century England to make their way in the public world.

Upon reading the book’s subtitle, the reader might ask: will these lives shed new light on Samuel Johnson? Chisholm writes early on about the possibility, in studying the lives, of discovering “a different Johnson, or rather gain[ing] access to a truer, richer, deeper portrait of the man.” Her book succeeds in providing a fuller picture. The lives that shed the most light on Johnson are those of his mother, his wife, and his friend, Hester Thrale. Unfortunately, the light they throw is not always a flattering one. Johnson is at his worst when he abandons or neglects his mother
or wife. His neglect of his mother after he moved away from Lichfield is almost unfathomable. He did not visit or see her for the last nineteen years of her life, including 1759, even after he learned that she was deathly ill. He always claimed that he was too poor, or busy with work, or concerned with Tetty, to visit. But such claims wore awfully thin over a period of nineteen years. (And it is telling, and indicting, that after his mother died, Johnson returned to Lichfield in the winter of 1761/62 and almost every year thereafter.)

Most readers of this newsletter will be familiar with Johnson’s disagreements with his wife, Tetty, and with the long stretches of time when he left her alone in Lichfield, or among strangers in London. Johnson, such a lover of truth and vigorous opponent of hypocrisy, is at his most hypocritical when he makes excuses for not being able to see his mother or wife (and, later, when they are gone, when he mourns their loss). His friend, Reverend John Taylor, seemed to believe this: he refused to deliver the sermon that Johnson wrote for Tetty’s funeral. In any event, Johnson did not attend Tetty’s funeral. We learn from Chisholm that Tetty was buried “far from home and family” in “a church far from the city, where she was laid to rest among strangers and without any of her family present.” Johnson also did not attend his mother’s funeral (“It is not of any use for me now to come down,” he told his stepdaughter Lucy).

Chisholm goes to great lengths to show Tetty’s importance to Johnson’s “slow rise to worth.” She argues that Tetty helped Johnson overcome his depression (at least while they were married), realize his early literary ambitions, and feel more socially accepted. She also shows Johnson’s mother, Sarah, as a brave, patient and insightful parent. (The title of her chapter on Sarah is “Here’s a Brave Mother,” a spot-on joke that I am gambling doesn’t need to be explained to readers of this journal.) When Sam was just a small boy, and when Sarah was pregnant, she took her son on a long and uncomfortable wagon ride to London in search of a cure for his scrofula. When he was slightly older, Sarah had the prescience to give Sam exercises to improve and train his memory, and to give him very good religious writing to read. When, back from Oxford, Sam was a restless and resentful young man, Sarah gave him the room he needed to read and lounge about. She was a patient mother who seemed instinctively to understand that her unusual son needed intellectual nourishment and plenty of space. Because Sarah, in most books about Johnson, gets even less notice and respect than Tetty, the picture Chisholm provides of her is all the more welcome and valuable.
Of course, everywhere and often we see Johnson befriending, advising and championing the women thinkers and writers around him. At times he could be cool to them and at times patronizing (for example, when he celebrated the translator and poet Elizabeth Carter for her puddings), but this is behavior that we will find in many people, of either gender, in any age. Johnson was, all in all, a tremendous supporter of women's dignity and ability. He introduced the women writers he knew to his influential male friends and gave them constant encouragement, assistance, and advice.

The lives in Chisholm’s book are valuable not only for the light they shed on Johnson; they are entertaining and instructive lives in themselves. I was especially struck by the devoutness and selflessness of Hill Boothby and fascinated by the hesitating, apologetic nature of Frances Reynolds, who suffered under her (otherwise suave) brother’s scorn, but who seemed, in her passive aggressive way, to dish it out pretty well, too. In her chapter on Hester Thrale, Chisholm provides a full picture of the heavy weight that Hester must have felt while keeping house for her husband Henry and for their frequent and demanding house guest; and the reader also comes to appreciate that Hester’s second marriage, to her daughter’s music teacher, must have been a wonderfully liberating act for her.

An important character that emerges from Wits & Wives is the city of London. London attracted the brightest and boldest. It attracted the then-unknown duo of Samuel Johnson and David Garrick in 1737. It also attracted some of the most talented women of the age, who went to London to test their mettle, to find publishers and careers, and to make money. But these women had complicated relationships with London. The city inspired them and gave them creative outlets, but it also cast a bright public eye on them that tended to demand conformity to accepted standards of feminine behavior. Elizabeth Carter left the city in 1739, probably, Chisholm suggests, because she could not write and publish freely in London as long as she was unmarried. Charlotte Lennox did not leave London, but she moved constantly within it, hanging her hat at twenty different residences between 1751 and 1802. And Hannah More “retreated from London, as if scared of the consequences of her success.” The city was an enabler but also a revealer at a time when women needed to stay properly covered up. This was true in a literal sense: Chisholm argues that one of the reasons that Fanny Burney’s play, The Witlings, was not performed in public during her lifetime was that the opening scene is set in a
milliner’s shop, and that Fanny’s father “feared the audience might be shocked, and titillated” by such a setting, with its lace frills and petticoats. (Interestingly, Frances Reynolds worked for a time as a milliner, “one of the few ‘creative’ professions open to working women,” Chisholm tells us, although it came with “the whiff of the brothel.”)

The major fault of the book, to this reader, was the lack of a chapter devoted to Fanny Burney. Burney makes occasional appearances throughout the book, but we don’t get a fully formed picture of her interesting life, or of her entertaining observations on Johnson. True, there are book length biographies of Burney readily available (one written by Kate Chisholm), but Wits & Wives wants a life of Burney on the same compact and handy scale as the other lives, both for convenience and completeness.

Chisholm’s book begins with Mary Wollstonecraft, then a young school teacher, visiting Johnson in the spring of 1784 (an attention-catching year to begin a book about Johnson) to get his advice on how to become a professional writer. In relating this story, Chisholm examines a number of Johnson’s writings on women to explain why Wollstonecraft would have expected the famous writer to give her a sympathetic ear (which he did). This is a smart way to orient a reader who might be new to Johnson (or who might assume that Johnson — the famous conservative — would be regressive in his thinking about women’s rights). When we meet Wollstonecraft again at the end of the book, she has lived a complicated life — intellectually and romantically — that Johnson likely would have censured. In her, we find a new, freer, and bolder way of thinking and living that the women we have just read about may have been moving towards. We come more clearly to see these women as pioneers, searching for ways to express and assert themselves in a society that wanted to keep them safely restrained.

The title of the book, Wits & Wives, packs its own little surprise, at least for this reader. At the end of the book, Chisholm asks: “When Elizabeth Carter was praised for making such good puddings, was she pleased, or annoyed that she was being patronised? Were her endeavors to improve her domestic skills an attempt by her to compensate for the hours she spent as a scholar? Will it always be necessary for women to prove that they can be both homemakers and muses, wits and wives?” Until this point, I had taken the title “Wits & Wives” to mean “Wits Or Wives,” thinking that the lives I was reading fell into one category or the other. But at this point I came to understand that these women were, individually, wits and wives: that they performed
under the double burden of having to excel both as scholars and as homemakers. Too often these women had to struggle to find the right setting in which to exercise and profit from their talents; too often they were judged as much for their puddings as for their poetry.

—Peter Kanter


"Be not solitary, be not idle"—these words from the close of Robert Burton’s Anatomy of Melancholy will be familiar to Johnsonians. Few scholars and students of Johnson, however, have taken them as literally as O M “Skip” Brack, Jr., to whose life and works this volume pays tribute. Its biographical foreword, by Jerry Beasley, testifies to Brack’s generosity as a collaborator and mentor; its bibliographical “Coda” lists 120 items published by Brack, ranging from edited volumes to keepsakes for Johnsonian meetings. One can scarcely conceive of a scholarly life less solitary or less idle.

Each of the essays in Editing Lives bears witness in its own way to Brack’s intellectual gifts and influence. Two testimonials come from beyond the walls of the university: an engaging personal essay on book collecting from Loren Rothschild and a timely reflection on the future of the book in the age of the digital humanities from Brack’s son Matthew. The volume’s editor, Jesse G. Swan, wrote his dissertation under Brack, and the book is enriched by three further contributions from former students. These chapters, which run chronologically from the 1710s (Walter H. Keithley on John Arbuthnot), through the 1740s (Leslie Chilton on Smollett as librettist), to the 1820s (Jennifer M. Santos on James Robinson Planché), serve as reminders of the breadth of Brack’s own scholarly interests. Each in its own way makes a case for the critical importance of a neglected author or text. This theme—uncovering or reconstructing the significance of so-called “minor” texts, figures, or genres—connects the essays by Brack’s students to those of several other contributors. Martine W. Brownley offers a
persuasive political reading, informed by a modern feminist perspective, of the funeral sermons that mourned Mary II when she died of smallpox in 1692. Christopher D. Johnson situates Oliver Goldsmith's *Life of Richard Nash* in the historical context of professional authorship in the mid-eighteenth century. Michael Bundock, meanwhile, contributes a learned and poignant reflection on what now cannot be known about Samuel Johnson's servant Francis Barber, a figure whose voice and experience as an eighteenth-century black Briton was silenced in its own time and is now accessible to us only through the imaginative reconstructions of drama and prose fiction.

*Editing Lives* also includes essays that engage with major figures and canonical texts in the eighteenth-century literary tradition. James E. May summarizes the results of a characteristically painstaking and thorough investigation of compositorial practice in eighteenth-century printing houses, attending in particular to Swift, Young, and Smollett. May reminds editors that even non-authorial editions can yield significant textual variants. The JNL's own Robert DeMaria, Jr. contributes an erudite and wide-ranging history of the controversy over Samuel Johnson's epitaph in St. Paul's Cathedral, deploying archival material to reconstruct not only the cut and thrust of Samuel Parr's negotiations with Edmond Malone and others about the epitaph's wording, but also to imagine the form that Parr's projected biography of Johnson might have taken, had he completed it. This essay, which includes an annotated bibliography of the books Parr claims to have read while preparing to write Johnson's life, will be very useful to Johnsonians interested in the neglected subject of Johnson's Latin learning and eighteenth-century erudition more generally. It is a fitting tribute to Brack, whose edition of Hawkins's *Life of Samuel Johnson*, like DeMaria's essay, recovers a stream of Johnson reception independent of or even opposed to Boswell's massively influential biography.

Likewise attuned to the complexity and diversity of Johnson's legacy is Gordon Turnbull, whose eloquent essay reads the biographical record of Johnson's final days alongside Shakespeare, the Bible, and eighteenth-century theology. Reflecting on the affinities between moral "amendment" and textual "emendation," Turnbull's essay proposes a compelling synthesis between Johnson's deeply held Christian piety and his equally profound commitment to learning and scholarship. Johnson's death recalls those of the Shakespearean protagonists whose words he edited; it also contains the suggestion that editing can take the form of a moral or pious act.
Perhaps the most ambitious essay in the collection is Thomas Kaminski’s “Swift’s Politics Reconsidered,” which builds on a range of recent scholarship to assemble a nuanced and convincing account of Swift’s political views in their late Stuart and early Hanoverian context. Swift has traditionally been described as a Tory, but Kaminski demonstrates that Swift’s allegiance to the Revolution settlement of 1688 and his rejection of the doctrine of passive obedience mean that he should be taken at his word when he describes himself as a “Whig in politics.” Among the strengths of this essay is the care with which it locates Swift in his wider political context, one in which party labels were contested and changed over time.

Finally, Editing Lives closes with a tribute to Brack’s prolific textual and editorial work, printing Peter Sabor’s annotated translation of an autobiographical essay written in French by Frances Burney. This “petite histoire,” written for her husband, recounts Burney’s intense and at times tumultuous relationship with Hester Thrale Piozzi. The essay makes rewarding reading and sheds light on both Burney and Piozzi; of particular value are Sabor’s introduction and notes, which correct Burney’s chronology and supplement her judgments where other records are available.

The Festschrift, with its mix of biographical recollection and scholarly engagement, is a fitting genre with which to celebrate a life dedicated in large part to biography and life writing. It is my loss that my own life did not intersect with Brack’s before his death in 2012, but in reading Editing Lives I was struck by how many of its authors have been mentors and influences in my own work: Gordon Turnbull offered crucial early suggestions and an infectious sense of intellectual possibility as I was developing a dissertation topic and interning at the Yale Boswell Editions in the summer of 2007, Bob DeMaria generously read a draft of my chapter on Johnson in 2010, and I have benefited from Jim May’s knowledge of Edward Young—and his selfless editorial work on the Eighteenth-Century Intelligencer—both as a graduate student and as an assistant professor. Critics and literary historians rely on scrupulous and intelligent textual editors, and the scholarly community thrives on generous mentors and colleagues. Editing Lives testifies to O M Brack’s excellence in both of these spheres, and his legacy lives on in its contributors.

—JACOB SIDER JOST
DICKINSON COLLEGE
Solution to puzzle on page 40.

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C O L L O P   S U P I N E
G A A D O O  O C
L E M O N   U N R E A L
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A S D N   D U C A T
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