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SAMUEL JOHNSON'S CHRISTIAN HUMANISM
AND THE FUNCTION OF LITERATURE*

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Almost sixty years ago, Professor Walter Raleigh, in delivering at Cambridge University the first Leslie Stephen Lecture, remarked that "Johnson has come to be regarded as a kind of Chairman to humanity, whose business it is to cry 'Order, Order,' an embodiment of corporate tradition and the settled wisdom of the ages."¹ In this pronouncement, a tribute was accorded to Johnson which must not be overlooked; for however crabbed and dogmatic Johnson's critical decisions may at times seem, there resides "a vital humanistic principle at the heart of his creed."² Assuredly, that part of his creed, as recorded by Mrs. Thrale, which expresses his view of the human function of literature is not without comfort and dignity: "Books without the knowledge of life are useless; for what should books teach but the art of living?"³

As many scholars have already shown, Johnson looks at literature primarily in its relation to man; and his "practical" approach neither enlightens nor satisfies those individuals whose preference is grounded in romanticism or in purely aesthetic theory. Johnson is never done with reminding his audience that literature is a serious force which can redirect human conduct and thereby work for man's moral and spiritual betterment, that it is an uplifting power which can make a very intense contribution to what he calls "the art of living." And although the scholars who have studied Johnson's literary theory have been careful to emphasise the close relationship between it and life itself, their findings are incomplete. None of them has pursued at any length an identification of influences in Johnson's background, besides his classical learning, that

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are responsible for his theory. It may be worthwhile, then, to attempt to identify more specifically Johnson's "vital humanistic principle"; to show how this principle bears upon Johnson's use of a didactic aesthetic as a factor of central importance in his literary theory; and to recognise a source of literary pleasure hardly touched upon by earlier scholarship, namely, the possibility of concrete human achievement and betterment.

(1)

Wherever Johnson the critic is the subject of discussion, those who are fair and knowledgeable are sure to mention, among his most noteworthy characteristics, his strong, unfailing common sense; his love of truth; his intimate as well as incisive knowledge of human nature; his passionate interest in the science of human life; his firm grounding in the classics; and the pronounced didactic direction that marks almost every page that he wrote. His position in the eighteenth century has been described as being "to a considerable extent that of the humanist recognising in the accumulated experience of the past the best foundation for a judgment of the present...."⁴ His conscious and strict adherence to reason, nature, and truth⁵ in the way that he lived and in much that he wrote is well known, as is his belief that wisdom must include experience because "wisdom is concerned with dynamics of life, with conduct."⁶ These characteristics comprise, certainly, a constituent portion of Johnson's humanism; yet, by themselves they cannot account for his humanistic view of literature because they do not consider the deep religious convictions which colour so strongly Johnson's outlook upon life and letters.

Joseph Epes Brown has briefly mentioned the pertinence of a consideration of Johnson's religion to any attempt at understanding his criticism. Brown believes that Johnson's fundamental critical tenets are the logical outgrowth of his moral or religious principles and that anyone who finds Johnson's critical theories to stem only from reason and common sense, nature and truth, is but half stating the case. Hence he describes Johnson as a Christian humanist; and he feels that Johnson's view of the moral function of art, an intrinsic feature of his theory of literature, sprang "from his intense religious convictions."⁷

It is true that Johnson's religion was a vital part of his being, of his very existence, and not something taken for granted or a factor merely extraneous to the normal progress of life. He once wrote: "Christianity is the highest perfection of humanity; and as no man is good but as he wishes the good of others, no man can be good in the highest degree, who wishes not to others the largest measures of the greatest good."⁸ Johnson's description of Christianity as "the highest perfection of humanity" provides the key to the basic nature of his humanism, which, briefly stated, is essentially the belief that man's fundamental business is to lead his life in such a way as to make the best of the gifts which God has given him - that is, to perfect what is characteristic of, peculiar to, and highest in human nature. It is an intensely personal humanism which expresses concern for man's moral success and self-realisation in this world as a prelude to eternal happiness and peace. The classical concept of humanism and morality is much less personal and considerably less warm.

Even in his early days Johnson took his self-appointed task of moral censorship with deep seriousness; and as Percy Hazen Houston notes, "His reflections in the periodicals were always sincere, revealing as they do a sombre nature looking upon the tragedy of this life as something to be endured with fortitude and finding relief for the spirit in Christian revelation. It is for this reason, I think, that he finds Christian morality superior to pagan teachings, for we find him saying that the ancient poets, wanting the light of Revelation, were very unskilful teachers of virtue...."⁹ Houston adds that Johnson's Christian humanism and his genuine piety induce him to promote literary art as a positive means of influencing human conduct.

Although Johnson intermittently relapsed, his religion was nevertheless the constantly recurring subject of his daily thought and contemplation. It was to him "a divine code of conduct always in his sight, and Johnson, being but human, frequently transgressed it, and was therefore constantly repenting of his shortcomings and making good resolutions for the future."¹⁰ His prayers and meditations clearly reveal the strength and the dedication of his religious outlook. His persevering insistence on morality is by no means just an intellectual prejudice: it is, rather, associated with his personal character as a man. H.S. Robinson

has seen a connection between Johnson's views of morality, religion, and literature and has stated it as follows: "It is a question of deep religious feeling, influencing not only his own conduct, but also his views on all subjects. Johnson does not confine his religion to morality and ethics - the commonly accepted spheres to which religion belongs - but brings it into the field of art and literature. In other words, Johnson's morality is rooted in religion, and his application of moral standards is independent of his belief in the moral purpose of art as a principle of 'classicism.'" ¹¹ His religion is applied in both life and literature. When Johnson's criticism is viewed in this light, then his theory of literature as a criticism of life, as a revelation of the nature of human existence, as "a form of knowledge, valuable for its illustration and illumination of human nature," is more readily understandable.

It has been suggested that Christian humility is one of the prime qualifications enabling Johnson to treat, in his works, relatively simple and very human themes. ¹² His humble spirit, a part of Johnson, alas, which many never know, led him to a dramatic recognition of his own failings; and through this recognition, he conceived a strong sympathy which excluded lengthy and pronounced indignation at the follies and weakness of others. Though Johnson's two most famous poems are imitations of Juvenal, his essential humanity preserved him from the savage indignation of the Latin poet. Houston describes the difference between the two poets in this way: "Juvenal's spirit as it descended upon Johnson was softened and made endurable in a mind accustomed to find an explanation and reconciliation of man's lot in the loftier purposes of the Divine Will." ¹³ Johnson's consistent endeavour is not to indict, as those readers who are familiar with only his conversation might believe; it is, instead, to aid men to live better and to realise their potential as rational human beings. Johnson at one time voiced his concern for man in this description of an author's purpose: "The author is not wholly useless, who provides innocent amusements for minds like these (minds seeking a refuge from vacuity). There are in the present state of things so many more instigations to evil, than incitements to good, that he who keeps men in a neutral state, may be justly considered as a benefactor to life." ¹⁴ But it can hardly be said that Johnson was for keeping man in a neutral state. He was for seeing man advance and realise and achieve. Johnson's outlook is a

Christian outlook; but it envisions no easy way, no cheap panacea.

Johnson was thoroughly convinced not only that life should be viewed from the moralistic side but also that man's knowledge should be applied to life. Once when he was comparing reading and conversation as sources of knowledge, he remarked that "the foundation (of knowledge) must be had from books, which, however, must be brought to the test of real life. In conversation you never get a system. What is said upon a subject is to be gathered from a hundred people. The parts of a truth, which a man gets thus, are at such a distance from each other, that he never attains to a full view."¹⁵ And just as he believed in the application of ideas to life, he believed the province of literature to consist in ideas which could be applied to human conduct. Hence Martha Pike Conant comments that in his own works Johnson "inculcates employment as the best cure for sorrow; (and) perseverance, courage, and honesty as essentials of character."¹⁶ His philosophising continually points to the division of speculation and conduct. His conception of the use which he should make of his craft emphasises primarily his kinship with and his closeness to his fellow human beings; it does not stress cold, speculative philosophy. His eye was on human life. Bertrand Bronson has pointed out that Johnson "could not look upon a metaphysical system, no matter how pretty the structure, as a desirable exchange for the rich irrelevancies and contradictions by which men live," for "the farthest one could go in philosophy was not far enough to penetrate ultimate obscurities or make any practical difference to humanity. Metaphysical systems existed in a vacuum; while the tremendous mysteries of life and death beat, every hour, inexorably at man's door."¹⁷ In Rasselas, the deepest note stressed is that of human affection, the inspiration of Johnson's search for a world of more permanent values than he himself had found in the world that he knew.¹⁸

Houston's description of the relationship between Johnson's personal background and his feeling for his fellow men is significant here:

That he did rise from his early miserable existence with as tolerant a view of human nature as he had reflects a world of credit on his innate sense of values. But the iron had entered his soul, and he approached questions of human conduct in the light

of a terrible experience, which enabled him to penetrate into human motives with sureness and understanding. Vividly conscious of the pettiness of our lives and the narrow limits of human knowledge, he was content to leave the mystery of final causes to a power higher than his; for God's purposes are inscrutable, and man's aim in this earthly existence should be to seek laws by which he may prepare himself to meet the divine mercy. Hence Johnson's deep interest in moral laws and his continual enunciation of precepts through which he might aid his fellow men in their preparation for eternity.¹⁹

It should be remembered that Johnson's first premise in thinking about literature as a whole is that it has its source in human life, that it expresses human life in a remarkable variety of ways, and that its uses in man's behalf are virtually inexhaustible. Literature can deepen and extend the process of human experience so significantly that the awareness which stems from the elucidated experience can influence "men and manners and morals."

Johnson's apprehension of the quality and texture of human experience was very real and unusually sensitive. Thus the qualities of teacher, which he possessed in abundance, oftentimes overshadowed those of the man of business who was faced with earning his livelihood as well as those of the man of letters who took pleasure in beautiful literary expression. He endeavoured, says E.S. Roscoe, "to apply, for the benefit of others, precepts which he had himself formulated for his own good."²⁰ Johnson had the undeniable gift of being able to extract principles from details and then to express these principles not merely as aphorisms but as living truths. Like his contemporary Joseph Butler, he disavowed the idea of man's natural virtue and emphasised both the possibility and the necessity of evolving "a rational morality of principles"²¹ to compensate for man's lack of an instinctive morality. Henry Pettit has commented in a recent article that Johnson faced the problems of his time "with moral and intellectual energy" and that he "shows us a pattern of life well and fruitfully spent in a ceaseless inquiry into the potentialities of the human experience."²² More often than not Johnson had tested the efficacy of his teachings; thus the morality of much of his writing - Rasselas and The Rambler are cases in point - continues to move readers in modern times because it stems

in an almost unadulterated form from his own experience. In view of this fact, it is not surprising to find a scholar like John Butt remarking that "Johnson's morality is never bookish; it is confirmed by books, but it is not drawn from them."²³

Johnson was pre-eminently a moralist and, consequently, ethical problems were his chief interest. He staunchly believed that the poet's primary concern is man and the universal principles of human life; and if, as R.W. Chapman has put it, "his religion is not a religion of joy," he at least is able to ease the burden of those parts of human life which from age to age are given over "to toil, perplexity, and compromise."²⁴ He is able to assuage a part of "the pain of being a man," not, as some might expect, by removing man from reality, but by helping him to prepare himself for the "art of living" and by reminding him that there has always been "some happiness produced by hope."²⁵ The "vital humanistic principle" which lies at the heart of Johnson's literary theory is to be traced in its most significant measure to what Walter Jackson Bate has called his "large, compassionate ideal of human development,"²⁶ strengthened and ennobled by his strong religious convictions. Both the works that he wrote and the theory of literature that he advanced are sufficient attestation to this principle.

(2)

Johnson's thinking was firmly grounded in his Christian convictions and in the hardships of his own experiences. When in October 1769 Boswell asked him "whether we might not fortify our minds for the approach of death, he answered, in a passion, 'No, Sir, let it alone. It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives.'"²⁷ Because of his obligations, as a Christian, to himself, to his fellow men, and to his God, and as a result of the hard-won experience which he early came to recognise as part and parcel of a man's getting on in the world, Johnson looked at life with a seriousness which most men never know. For example, he was unable to affect the facile optimism which characterised the attitude toward religion of many of his contemporaries. In commenting upon Dr. Blair's sermon on devotion, Johnson remarked: "There is one part of it which I disapprove, and I'd have him correct it; which is, that 'he who does not feel joy in religion is far from the kingdom of heaven!' There are many good men whose fear of GOD predominates over

their love. It may discourage. It was rashly said."²⁸ And several years later he expressed to his friend Dr. Adams his fear of having failed in the fulfilment of the conditions on which salvation is granted.²⁹ The genuine seriousness of his outlook, his desire to promote piety, his hope of influencing human conduct for good, and his intense feeling of responsibility in the instruction and edification of his fellow human beings - all a part of his "humanistic principle" - led him to commit literary art, to which he himself was drawn originally as a means of livelihood, to the serious purpose of communicating truth and human experience that the reader can verify for himself. What he considered the underlying mission of literature caused him to deplore books of slight or frivolous substance. Very early in his career as a writer he stated in the Gentleman's Magazine: "The Character of an Author must be allowed to imply in itself something amiable and great; it conveys at once the Idea of Ability and Good-nature, of Knowledge, and a disposition to communicate it. To instruct Ignorance, reclaim Error, and reform Vice are Designs highly worthy of Applause and Imitation."³⁰ It seems only natural, considering his background, that Johnson's view of what literature should be and do is what it is.

Considering, then, the "vital humanistic principle" which is so important to Johnson's view of literature, what would have been his attitude towards the "art for art's sake" philosophy? Joseph Wood Krutch feels that Johnson would have looked upon it with unequivocal disdain; for Johnson believed that the artist who was really intent upon communication was to base his work securely on the facts of physical life and on the truths of human existence. In the course of his journey to the Hebrides he remarked to Boswell that "nothing³¹ is good but what is consistent with truth or probability." He believed that the artist was to be guided consistently by a reverence for the actualities of human experience and a certain knowledge that all art cut off from the affairs of men must be forever sterile and dead. Johnson could not have found any value in a sterile aestheticism which would seek to divorce art from life or in a work of literature which bore no perceptible relation to the realities of human experience. In the Preface to Shakespeare he states³² that "the mind can only repose on the stability of truth." It was, he deeply felt, the business of literature to interpret and to edify; and no work designed as pure ornament would be worthy of consideration. Johnson's moral faculties would have rebelled against the pursuit of

beauty for its own sake. That a poem, for instance, need not mean, but only be, would seem to Johnson absurd. McCutcheon points out that Johnson "would not agree that any poem could provide a completely unique experience for which the only relevant criteria are aesthetic."³³ If literary art was to mirror a larger totality of experience and truth than man, through his own limited powers, can discover for himself, its function, he thought, must be at least implicitly moral. Of his own purpose in composing The Rambler, he wrote as follows:

As it has been my principal design to inculcate wisdom or piety, I have allotted few papers to the idle sports of imagination....The essays professedly serious, if I have been able to execute my own intentions, will be found exactly conformable to the precepts of Christianity, without any accommodation to the licentiousness and levity of the present age. I therefore look back on this part of my work with pleasure, which no blame or praise of man shall diminish or augment. I shall never envy the honours which wit and learning obtain in any other cause, if I can be numbered among the writers who have given ardour to virtue, and confidence to truth.³⁴

Literature was to edify as well as to delight by its reflection of an immutable design. The best literature would mirror a complete world through its depiction of universal human truths and, as a result, suggest to the reader the depth of the full life and the richness of the human drama. The seriousness with which Johnson viewed life is complementary to that with which he viewed literary art.

Johnson, it may be said, considered literature almost exclusively from the didactic and logical point of view. Such a perspective does not exclude, by any means, an appreciative awareness of the necessity of ornament, appropriate imagery and diction, and modulation; but it does stress the idea that literary art must, in the final analysis, instruct and edify the reader. A natural consequence of this outlook is the conviction that authorship entails responsibilities not to be taken lightly. Johnson's firm grounding in the classics, his intense religious beliefs, and his desire to promote the welfare of others convinced him particularly of an author's ethical responsibility. The writer's "function as a moral guide," Francis Gallaway notes,

"committed him to a serious consideration of man's happiness, and a faithful representation of man's life. The proper study of mankind is man; not the stars in the heavens nor the flowers in the fields."³⁵ In The Rambler, No. 158, Johnson says that "to proceed from one truth to another, and connect distant propositions by regular consequences, is the great prerogative of man"³⁶ and, he implies, the proper function of literary art. In other words, the author has the responsibility to guide man toward that enlightenment which only truth can provide. It is not enough for him to examine experience as the man of science does, breaking it up into its integral parts, distinguishing one part from another, and classifying the individual constituents. His ultimate task is to unify experience. One of his most serious responsibilities is that of returning to the reader the unity of experience itself as man knows it or can know it in his own experience, in his own realm of activity. For only then can the work of literature - poem, play, or some other form - become what Cleanth Brooks has called a "simulacrum of reality."³⁷

Practically everything that Johnson wrote (and literary history has for decades commented on his marked versatility)³⁸ reveals his unceasing preoccupation with the moral problems presented by living. In one of the most celebrated passages of his Preface to Shakespeare, he says that "it is always a writer's duty to make the world better,"³⁹ a statement which has been angrily controverted by many since Johnson's time who maintain that a writer's primary duty as a literary artist is self-expression. Sidney Roberts feels that to such an attack "Johnson, the moralist, would reply that what a writer wishes to do should be something which, directly or indirectly, should make for the amelioration of mankind."⁴⁰ As Johnson said, "What should books teach but the art of living?" For him, literature was not an autonomous realm, nor were the various literary genres pure artifacts. He knew that literary art had been produced and would continue to be produced by living men in real social and historical settings; and he believed that literature should give, therefore, a true account of human nature.⁴¹ He felt strongly that when it presents accurate representations of men as they are, the reader will be able to view experience either as he himself knows it personally or as he understands it to be. In one of several brief discussions of the responsibilities of the writer, Johnson wrote the following: "The author, therefore, who

has judgement to discern the taste of his contemporaries, and skill to gratify it, will have always an opportunity to deserve well of mankind, by conveying instruction to them in a grateful vehicle....; and he that communicates truth with success, must be numbered among the first benefactors to mankind."⁴² His conviction that authors have the responsibility of inculcating moral truth is further strengthened by the weak example which he felt ancient authors provide. He said this in The Rambler, No.29: "The ancient poets are, indeed, by no means unexceptionable teachers of morality; their precepts are to be always considered as the sallies of a genius, intent rather upon giving pleasure than instruction, eager to take every advantage of insinuation, and provided the passions can be engaged on its side, very little solicitous about the suffrage of reason."⁴³ He goes on to indict some of the poets of his day for copying what Oswald Doughty calls "the immoral and non-moral sentiments of their heathen poetic ancestors, who had the excuse of moral and religious ignorance to which the modern writer can lay no claim."⁴⁴

In Imlac's famous dissertation on poetry in Chapter X of Rasselas, Johnson gives even more extensive expression to his view of the responsibility of the literary artist to impart moral instruction. Imlac, the poet-philosopher, assigns to the province of poetry the description of nature and passion and conceives its purpose as "the enforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth." Even Shakespeare, whom Johnson considered the literary artist par excellence, does not escape censure on the point of morality. Johnson finds Shakespeare's worst defect in his carelessness concerning moral instruction: "His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose.... He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting which the train of his story seems to force upon him, and apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting, for the sake of those which are more easy."⁴⁵ Likewise, Johnson finds cause for censure of Shakespeare in his failure to point his morals explicitly enough and in the absence of instructional comments on various aspects of villainy as they arise in the plays.

Johnson considered himself, and rightfully so, a

serious participant in life generally and in literature particularly; and he expected every person who became an author to take note of the responsibilities of authorship and, as a result, to deal significantly and meaningfully with human problems. It is appropriate in this connection to call attention to The Adventurer, No. 115, in which he summarises what he regards as the necessary qualifications of a writer. Although this essay is not so well known as some of the passages previously quoted, it does outline the prerequisites to happy authorship which Johnson considered basic. His own experiences as a man of letters, combined with his intricate knowledge of human nature, gave him unreserved qualification in this area. The concluding paragraphs of the essay are especially significant:

It will be naturally enquired, when the man, who feels an inclination to write, may venture to suppose himself properly qualified; and since every man is inclined to think well of his own intellect, by what test he may try his abilities without hazarding the contempt or resentment of the public.

The first qualification of a writer is a perfect knowledge of the subject which he undertakes to treat, since we cannot teach what we do not know, nor can properly undertake to instruct others, while we are ourselves in want of instruction. The next requisite is, that he be master of the language in which he delivers his sentiments: if he treats of science and demonstration, that he has attained a style clear, pure, nervous and expressive; if his topics be probable and persuasory, that he be able to recommend them by the superaddition of elegance and imagery, to display the colours of varied diction, and pour forth the music of modulated periods.

If it be again enquired, upon what principles any man shall conclude that he wants these powers, it may be readily answered, that no end is attained but by the proper means; he only can rationally presume that he understands a subject, who has read and compared the writers that have hitherto discussed it, familiarised their arguments to himself by long meditation, consulted the foundations of different systems, and separated truth from error by a rigorous examination.

In like manner, he only has a right to suppose that he can express his thoughts, whatever they are, with perspicuity or elegance, who has carefully perused the best authors, accurately noted their diversities of stile, diligently selected the best modes of diction, and familiarised them by long habits of attentive practice.

No man is a rhetorician or philosopher by chance. He who knows that he undertakes to write on questions which he has never studied, may without hesitation determine, that he is about to waste his own time and that of his reader, and expose himself to the derision of those whom he aspires to instruct; he that without forming his stile by the study of the best models, hastens to obtrude his compositions on the public, may be certain, that whatever hope or flattery may suggest, he shall shock the learned ear with barbarisms, and contribute, wherever his work shall be received, to the depravation of taste and the corruption of language.⁴⁶

Johnson, here, does not deal specifically with the matter of moral instruction; but he implies, at least, that in having to know his subject, in his separation of truth from error, and in his not being "a philosopher by chance," the author has something to communicate that can work for man's moral improvement. The entire passage posits indelibly the attitude of Johnson toward writers and writing, and it is decidedly relevant to the "humanistic principle" which is responsible for his subscribing to the didactic aesthetic.

(3)

It has been seen that Johnson's humanism had its source in something more than his intensive and extensive knowledge of the classics and that, as a result of the Christian morality which affected practically his every word and act, Johnson sought some means whereby human conduct could be redirected into positive channels and man could be taught to strive for a richer, fuller, and more virtuous existence. He found this means in literary art. Johnson's knowledge of the literary past, however, coupled with his common sense and his notable ability to examine a situation realistically, made him aware of the fact that efforts to

use literature for instruction and edification had often failed when authors had not attempted to please their audiences at the same time that these audiences were "being improved." He states in the Preface to Shakespeare that "the end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing."⁴⁷ He recognises the significant role of literary pleasure in the process of communication between author and audience; and he would not confine the necessity for literary pleasure merely to poetry, as the passage may suggest. He agrees that a good work should please the general public and satisfy the learned.⁴⁸ That is, works of literature per se should please. The passage from the Preface is just another way of saying that the pleasure which the reader derives is the means by which he comes to the inculcation of whatever instruction or moral wisdom the writer may be endeavouring to communicate; and ultimately, of course, it is this inculcation which makes convincing to the reader the need for observance or application of the truths which have been dressed and presented in a pleasurable form. Johnson makes clear his feeling that it is not sufficient to know, however, that a literary work should please the reader: it is the critic's responsibility to determine why it pleases. To this effect he writes in The Rambler, No. 92: "It is, however, the task of criticism to establish principles; to improve opinion into knowledge; and to distinguish those means of pleasing which depend upon known causes and rational deduction, from the nameless and inexplicable elegancies which appeal wholly to the fancy, from which we feel delight, but know not how they produce it, and which may well be termed the enchantresses of the soul."⁴⁹

Johnson, then, looked to literature, as did many other critics of his day, for both profit and pleasure. As early as his work on Boerhaave (1739), he wrote that "but a small part of mankind will sacrifice their pleasure to their improvement, and those authors who would find many readers, must endeavour to please while they instruct."⁵⁰ In The Rambler, No. 168, he remarks that "whoever desires, for his writings or himself, what none can reasonably condemn, the favour of mankind, must add grace to strength, and make his thoughts agreeable as well as useful."⁵¹ Johnson's conception of literature as a pleasurable instrument of moral instruction is reflected in a number of his practical critical judgments.

It is logical at this point, considering Johnson's recognition of the serious relationship between instruction and pleasure in literary art, to raise certain questions which will help to specify his ideas on how the reader can be pleased. Such questions as the following, no doubt, Johnson seriously pondered during his years as author and critic: What are the different sources of pleasure which may affect the reader? How do these sources conduce to the vital contribution to human affairs which literature should make? What is the nature of the literary appeal? How is it that man is attracted and made to respond to literary art?

David Daiches has identified three major sources of literary pleasure to which Johnson subscribes. It is important to recapitulate these prior to discussing a fourth source of pleasure which appears to have grown out of Johnson's humanism.

The first source of literary pleasure which Daiches identifies is recognition. He explains that for Johnson literature is a form of knowledge valuable for "its illustration and illumination of human nature"⁵² and that the reader derives pleasure from seeing human nature being thus illustrated and illuminated. The reader sees essentially what observant and thoughtful people know already, though it is often conveyed through examples that are new to him. Although Daiches does not cite them, Johnson wrote three almost inescapable statements which point up the reader's recognition of the natural as the universal. These are the often-quoted tulip passage in the discourse of Imlac in Rasselas; the passage on character in the Preface to Shakespeare; and that on metaphysical wit in the Life of Cowley, beginning "Great thoughts are always general, and consist in positions not limited by exceptions, and in descriptions not descending to minuteness."⁵³ The pleasure which the reader experiences stems from his recognition, in individual characters, of general human nature as he knows it either directly or indirectly. The author portrays general human nature, or the universal, through particular or natural examples which the reader can recognise. But as is invariably the case, Johnson says it better for himself: "Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature."⁵⁴

A second source of literary pleasure - and this one Daiches mentions only in passing - consists of the incidental beauties of expression which the author employs. Johnson refers to these as ornament; and it is they that contribute to the aptness, the liveliness, and the effective expression of the example which provides the recognition. That he valued beauty and originality of expression very highly is seen from this brief passage in The Rambler, No. 168: "...He that will not condescend to recommend himself by external embellishments, must submit to the fate of just sentiment meanly expressed, and be ridiculed and forgotten before he is understood."⁵⁵ When Johnson was charged with inconsistency for attacking ornamental beauty in architecture or statutory though allowing it in writing, he replied: "Why, Sir, all these ornaments are useful, because they obtain an easier reception for truth; but a building is not at all more convenient for being decorated with superfluous carved work."⁵⁶ Johnson's reply evidences his concern for the memorable conveyance of known truths. Further elucidation of Johnson's position regarding the use of ornament is provided by a second passage from The Rambler, No. 168: "Every man, however profound or abstracted, perceives himself irresistibly alienated by low terms; they who profess the most zealous adherence to truth are forced to admit that she owes part of her charms to her ornaments; and loses much of her power over the soul, when she appears disgraced by a dress uncouth or ill adjusted."⁵⁷

A view of literary pleasure which entails only recognition of general human nature and the use of ornament would be much too restricted for Johnson. Thus Daiches mentions, though only briefly, moral instruction as the third source of literary pleasure acknowledged by Johnson; and he quotes the famous passage from the Preface in which Shakespeare is indicted for his laxness in the teaching of morality. As supplementary to Daiches' limited discussion, it should be noted that in numerous different contexts Johnson implies that the pleasures to be gained from moral instruction can, in many cases, be realised by man only after he has been pleased by literary ornament. The blandishments of ornamental pleasure must lead man to moral instruction before he can experience the real pleasure which truth alone can provide. Such was not the case, of course, with Johnson himself; but at least he could view other men's tastes and preferences realistically. Jean Hagstrum says of Johnson's sources of pleasure: "All knowledge, all

learning, nature in both its empirical particularity and its moral generality, and the vigorous operation of the mind expressed in any kind of activity - all these he found pleasurable."⁵⁸

These three sources of literary pleasure, then - recognition, ornament in expression, and moral instruction - are central to Johnson's idea that literature must both please and instruct.

The fact that has been overlooked by recent scholarship is that Johnson's humanism is responsible for another source of pleasure which Johnson no doubt felt literature could provide. It is simply this: the possibility of positive concrete achievement in man's life resulting from his application of principles which he sees at work in literary art. Johnson believed that man possesses an unlimited capacity for hope and expectation ("It is necessary to hope, tho' hope should always be deluded, for hope itself is happiness, and its frustrations, however frequent, are yet less dreadful than its extinction,"⁵⁹ and "We love to expect; and, when expectation is disappointed or gratified, we want to be again expecting"⁶⁰). He believed that ideas are of most value when put to use for the good of man. Boswell records Johnson's random observation that "it was a most mortifying reflexion for any man to consider, what he had done, compared with what he might have done."⁶¹ Hence it follows that he would expect a reader to derive substantial pleasure and satisfaction from the recognition that the moral truths expressed in literature can be applied to his own life and that such application can help him to draw nearer to the concrete realisation of his hopes and aspirations than would otherwise be possible.

In discussing Johnson's position in relation to humankind, Houston writes as follows: "In the name of a truth higher than can be discovered in the laboratory he stands for the human will and man's responsibility for the course of his actions."⁶² He later adds that "Johnson's humanism solidly rests upon his denial of the claims of naturalism"⁶³ and that "his interest in biography was that of a professed humanist, whose philosophy rested upon a lively interest in men as men, not in men through books, nor in men in relation to nature; and, because he felt so deeply that a careful training of the will and character must be at the base of any sound moral philosophy, he

sought to aid the cause of common morality by his own biographical contributions."⁶⁴ Like Houston, Walter Jackson Bate sees Johnson's humanism as the confutation of determinism and points to Johnson's life as a vivid exemplum; for Johnson discovered in the midst of his hardships and weaknesses that "human nature is able to remake and remold itself and that this re-creation - this liberating and educating or leading out of human potentiality - can be carried through...."⁶⁵ Bate quotes Johnson's statement that "where 'there is no hope, there can be no endeavor'"⁶⁶ and points out that what man really searches for is "the union of hope with complete practicality."⁶⁷ Johnson's humanism is a practical humanism and consequently cannot stand idly or silently by when it witnesses "the unwitting betrayal by man of his own ultimate interests."⁶⁸ Such a betrayal was, personally for Johnson, imminent too often. His own attempts at "re-creation" are agonisingly revealed in his prayers and meditations, which are evidence of the fact that, in spite of everything, he had hope for himself. He knew well that man is helpless only if he fails to bestir his own efforts in his own behalf.

What, finally, is Johnson's idea of the nature of the literary appeal? His answer, in part, is related to this passage from the Life of Dryden: "Works of imagination excel by their allurements and delight; by their power of attracting and detaining the attention. That book is good in vain which the reader throws away. He only is the master who keeps the mind in pleasing captivity; whose pages are perused with eagerness, and in hope of new pleasure are perused again; and whose conclusion is perceived with an eye⁶⁹ of sorrow, such as the traveller casts upon departing day." And in The Adventurer, No. 95, he remarks that though the passions are few, "the alterations which time is always making in the modes of life" are a source of variety "to attract the notice and favour of mankind."⁷⁰ In short, "...upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety."⁷¹ For Johnson, instruction and pleasure are the aims of writing as well as the prime and basic ingredients of what is written. The latter is the means by which the inculcation of the former can be attained. It seems, as a result, that Johnson finds the nature of the literary appeal to inhere in a pleasurable representation of life, made possible by the invention, originality, and genius of an author who is the master of his subject and whose responsibility it is to obtain, through the graces of variety, ornament, and organisation, a "reception for truth" and a recognition, by the reader, of the

possibility of its being applied in his own life. For truth is demonstrable only within the experience of the reader. If there must be justification for literature, then it must lie in this possible application and thus the ultimate betterment of the individual and of mankind generally. As Bate has so appropriately expressed it, "The final 'preciousness' comes in realising that the concrete achievement is possible."⁷²

In an article entitled "The Moral Greatness of Samuel Johnson," Julian Hawthorne has summed up Johnson's character by remarking that Johnson "hated cant, hypocrisy, and falsehood because he so passionately loved honesty, truth and independence....No other intellect among his contemporaries was so sound, and massive as his, no other integrity so impregnable."⁷³ And just as he loved truth and virtue in life, he asserted the dignity of literary art, which is capable of communicating the value and significance of these qualities to man. Boswell says that "no man had a more exalted notion of the dignity of literature than Johnson, or was more determined in maintaining the respect which he justly considered as due to it...."⁷⁴ Boswell records this telling instance as proof: "He told Sir Joshua Reynolds, that once when he dined in a numerous company of booksellers, where the room being small, the head of the table, at which he sat, was almost close to the fire, he persevered in suffering a great deal of inconvenience from the heat, rather than quit his place, and let one of them sit above him."⁷⁵

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JOHNSON'S MONUMENT RESTORED

"After their efforts during the past five months, one of Denbigh's places of historic interest, Dr. Johnson's Monument, has been given a face-lift by staff and patients of Dwyfor Ward at the North Wales Hospital, Denbigh.

The monument is situated on one of Denbigh's most popular public paths, past Cae Dai and Dolhyfryd. It had fallen into disrepair and would before long have become almost unrecognisable if left unattended.

The monument, built in 1775, comprises a tall Grecian urn on a square pedestal with an inscription to Dr. Johnson's memory. It was erected by Myddleton during Johnson's lifetime - a gesture which occasioned some caustic comments from the dyspeptic doctor."

- From the Denbighshire Free Press 4th October 1972.
The inscription reads:-

This Spot Was often dignified by the Presence of Samuel Johnson LLD Whose moral Writings exactly conformable to the Precepts of Christianity give Ardour to Virtue and Confidence to Truth.

DR. JOHNSON, HENRY THRALE AND LONDON BREWING*

Ross Wilson, M.A., Th.L.

Dr. Johnson, the Thrales and The Anchor Brewery between them witnessed two major revolutions in London brewing in the eighteenth century. With Ralph Thrale, father of Henry Thrale, we have the revolution that was the introduction and success of London porter that was to dominate London brewing throughout the eighteenth century; indeed, almost up to Wellington's Free Trade in Ale Act of 1830. At the other end of the Johnson-Thrale relationship we have the transformation of London brewing - of porter, of course - into financially ruled mass production, when brewing became a matter largely of Quaker finance, in London at least.

But before we look at those revolutions and the years between, years which include the period when the Doctor and Mrs. Thrale themselves became brewers, we must look at The Anchor Brewery itself.

That brewery was situated in Southwark, which had been a brewing centre, chiefly under Dutch and German direction, for centuries. It was also the centre of the hop trade - again an indication of Dutch-German influence. It had also, of course, long been famous for its inns, taverns - and prisons.

The Anchor Brewery itself had been established there, adjacent to the site of the Globe theatre, in 1616, making beer and ale. In 1665 it was in the tenure and occupation of James Monger, godson of the founder, of the same name, who had died in 1657. The third owner was James Child, of the Grocers' Company, who, when challenged to be a brewer in 1670, transferred to the Brewers' Company, becoming Master in 1693.

Child had five daughters, but no son - a common fate among brewers in that and Dr. Johnson's century. It was later to be the decisive fate of Henry Thrale, the Doctor's friend.

*A paper read to the Johnson Society of London on 19th February 1972
Chairman: Mrs. A.G. Dowdeswell

Comparatively little labour was needed to operate a brewery then, but while Child was owner he did need a competent manager. That manager he found in Edmund Halsey, who, as a salaried official, received £1 a week wages, a salary of £60 per annum a brewer, and the expenses of his horse at the livery stables.

Halsey did the sensible thing - one of the two most sensible things he did in his life: he married Ann, one of Child's five daughters, who brought him, as dowry, a partnership - that is, a share in the annual profits. Child died in September, 1696, and willed that the estate be divided into three equal portions: one-third going to his widow Ann, and the remaining two-thirds to daughters under the age of 21, "the rest of my children having had their portions already." Widow Child retained her interest in the brewery, Halsey paying her a weekly sum until she died in 1701.

The other most sensible thing Halsey did was to take into service, as manager, his sister's son, Ralph Thrale. Young Ralph was born in 1698, the only son of Ralph Thrale the elder, described as "yeoman of Offley, Hertfordshire." Offley has a double significance for us: most of the malt used in London breweries then came from Hertfordshire. Naturally there would be close business and personal ties between the principals. Business associates were also related by marriage, and business was kept in the family. Secondly, Hester Lynch Salusbury, later to become Mrs. Henry Thrale, had as uncle Sir Thomas Salusbury, of Offley.

A passing note on Halsey: his return as M.P. for the Borough in 1711 was successfully contested on grounds of bribery, but he was M.P. for Southwark from 1722 to 1727, one of a long line of Southwark brewer M.Ps.

His two sons, Thomas and James, died young; his only daughter, Anne, married Richard Temple, later Lord Cobham, and Halsey himself became a governor of St. Thomas's Hospital in 1719 and also Master of the Brewers' Society in the same year. Shades of Gray, and Johnson - Halsey was Lord of the Manor of Stoke Poges, where he was buried.

Halsey stood in some unknown kind of relationship to Child, but Ralph Thrale was Halsey's nephew. That was the way things went, and still go, in the London brewing world. As Campbell said somewhat later, in 1747, in his General Description of All Trades:

The Brewer in London, as far as I can learn, seldom takes Apprentices; his work is carried on by Labourers who have acquired their knowledge by Experience, and those who intend to set up Business have either been acquainted with it, by being Son or Relation to some Man in the Trade, or take their chance by depending on the Skill and Honesty of the Clerks and Servants. (Most newcomers entered existing firms)...in Proportion to what cash they can advance, which is the most common way of their coming first into trade, for to erect a Common Brewhouse and lay in Stock answerable, will sink many Thousands before they see any Returns.

Halsey, like Child before him, had no sons, and Ralph Thrale thus entered the brewing trade because of a blood relationship, probably soon after his father died in 1711. He was to his uncle Halsey what Perkins was later to Ralph's son Henry Thrale.

But before Thrale took over the Anchor Brewery there occurred, while he was still Halsey's manager, that initial London brewing revolution - the introduction of porter. Porter, named after those manual workers who helped make it so popular, was first brewed in the autumn of 1722 by Ralph Harwood, a partner in the Bell Brewhouse at Shoreditch. The "Blue Last" public house in Shoreditch claims to have taken the first delivery. Meant to combine the virtues of the mixtures of beers drawn from various casks by publicans, it was first known as "entire butt", or "intire", before being nicknamed porter.

It was a real revolution in brewing techniques and led in good eighteenth-century style to technological advances in brewing - for instance, attemporization of the fermenting vats, storage in vats with thousands of gallons' capacity, and so on. But Ralph Thrale was well aware of the revolution and as a sensible manager and businessman joined in. It is one of the curiosities of brewing history in England that for the rise, development and progress of porter history here ever since has been almost entirely indebted to an article in the Gentleman's Magazine, XXX, of 1760. Later accounts have been almost entirely embroidered on that initial report.

Halsey died in 1729 and this time the transference of ownership to Ralph Thrale was a strictly commercial

proposition. He bought it for £30,000 - not for cash down, but by means of a loan which was repaid in eleven years. Halsey's executors simply decided to sell it as the simplest way of administering the estate. Johnson would then be aged twenty. He knew nothing at that time of Ralph Thrale, but we may here interpolate the account Boswell has left us in the Life with which the Doctor later endowed him:

He worked at six shillings a week for twenty years in the great brewery, which afterwards was his own. The proprietor of it had an only daughter, who was married to a nobleman. It was not fit that a peer should continue the business. On the old man's death, therefore, the brewery was to be sold. To find a purchaser for so large a property was a difficult matter; and, after some time, it was suggested, that it would be advisable to treat with Thrale, a sensible, active, honest man, who had been long employed in the house, and to transfer the whole to him for thirty thousand pounds, security being taken upon the property. This was accordingly settled. In eleven years Thrale paid the purchase money. He acquired a large fortune, and lived to be a Member of Parliament....

In fact, Thrale became M.P. for Southwark in 1741 and Master of the Brewers' Company in 1748. This was not from any desire for office on his part; rather, it was in recognition of his great eminence in the world of London brewing. He also that year became High Sheriff of Surrey.

Under Thrale, despite the savage competition from gin - the years of drunk for a penny, dead drunk for twopence and with straw to lie on for nothing - Thrale pushed ahead: in 1748 he made 35,600 barrels and in 1750 drew level with Ben Truman, the greatest porter brewer in London until then, when both Thrale and Truman made 46,000 barrels.

For the rest of his life - he died in 1758 - Ralph Thrale suffered, and the Anchor Brewery with him, from increasing funds being spent on his own non-business commitments and on his son and heir, Henry, who lived with the best at Oxford on an allowance of £1,000 per annum! And this stage of Henry Thrale's education was succeeded by a very grand tour in the company of Lord Westcote.

As the Doctor put it in Boswell's account:

But what was most remarkable was the liberality with which he used his riches. He gave his son and daughters the best education. The esteem which his good conduct procured him from the nobleman who had married his master's daughter, made him be treated with much attention; and his son, both at school and at the University of Oxford, associated with young men of the first rank. His allowance from his father, after he left college, was splendid; no less than a thousand a year. This, in a man who had risen as old Thrale did, was a very extraordinary instance of generosity. He used to say, 'If this young dog does not find so much after I am gone as he expects, let him remember that he has had a great deal in my own time'.

In fact, during the 1750s, the seed-corn was being used up: in 1750, the net assets were £72,000, but they slowly shrank to £56,200 by 1758 and production followed, down to 32,700 barrels in 1758. The absolute decline of over 13,000 barrels was bad enough, but relatively things were far worse. Truman was then making 60,000 barrels a year, and Whitbread was eclipsing him and making 64,588 barrels a year. The diagnosis is obvious: increasing expenditure by the owner was sapping the brewery's strength. And that rising expenditure was also robbing the brewery of the owner's time: He was less at the counting house and in the market, and the end result was greater inefficiency. On the other hand, witness Truman's and Whitbread's success.

So it was when in 1758 Henry Thrale assumed command of his father's Anchor Brewery, Deadman's Place, now Park Street, Southwark, living most of the time in a rather dismal house next to the brewery itself. Production hesitated under the new owner, and in 1760 amounted only to 32,700 barrels, or only 100 barrels up on the last year of his father's life.

That was an important year, financially, for the brewers in London, and, indeed, everywhere in England.

The price of ale and beer had always been regulated, in a rather complicated manner that need not detain us here. But with the introduction of porter, the new "entire butt" beer in 1722 things become much clearer. Price now became the responsibility of the brewer, though the retail price for sale was still officially fixed. The result was

that porter retailed in London at 3d. per quart pot. It stayed at that price until 1760, although the brewers' profit margins were quite erratic as they balanced a year of cheap raw material costs against an expensive year, when malt and hops might be dear or not so productive of quantity and quality. On the other hand, their profits generally tended to increase as their new mass production methods gained sway.

Now in the generation 1722-1760 the price of a quart pot at 3d. had become traditional. Suddenly this was broken by an increase in the beer duty - to meet the needs of the Seven Years' War, of course. Bloodshed costs money, as this century has shown only too well. In any case, the duty was raised from 5s. to 8s. per barrel for strong beer and ale. The leading brewers, Thrane among them, insisted this could not come out of their profit margins. They increased their prices to publicans to 30s. a barrel before any Act of Parliament, or public permission in any form, granted the publicans permission to do so. (Price control is not only a creature of this age: it goes back as far as the Middle Ages.)

For a time there was confusion and uncertainty: some publicans refused to raise their prices, thinking of what we now call "customer relations" - fearing riots, fights, loss of trade and so on - while some others did. A few were brought before the Westminster justices for price raising ahead of permission. The leading London brewers were threatened with what was then described as "popular action." The people were outraged by this disturbance of the traditional.

The London Magazine reported this incident in 1761:

While their Majesties were at Drury Lane Theatre to see Winter's Tale, as Garrick was repeating the lines:

'For you, my hearts of oak, for your regale
here's good old English stinge, mild and stale'

a fellow cried out of the gallery: "At threepence a pot, Master Garrick, or confusion to the brewers."

Finally, the new price was accepted and authority given to the increase after publicans had been permitted to sell at 3½d a pot. In fact, this established a new traditional

price until the Napoleonic bloodletting at the turn of the nineteenth century made another price rise inevitable. In 1799, the price was raised to 35s. the barrel to the publican and retail prices went up to 4d. per pot. But from 1762 onwards, under the new Act, raising the price of strong beer without permission was not illegal: the Act saw the end of centuries of price control of strong beer. Nevertheless until 1799 the price varied little, though frequent adulteration by the publican compensated for loss of price increases.

In the year following that Act of 1762 Henry Thrale married, his bride being Hester Lynch Salusbury, and as she and the Doctor play later a most important role in the management of the brewery, a glance at her origins is not out of place.

Born in 1741 of a good Welsh family in the first fifteen years of her marriage, she had twelve children, of whom only four survived childhood - and none of the survivors was a boy. Her father was John Salusbury, of Bobbel, Carnarvonshire. But Hester and her mother lived in London and she met Garrick while still a girl. She was given a solid education and was acquainted with Latin as well as with French, Italian and Spanish.

There was, actually, little real sympathy between Thrale and Hester, but she gradually built up a distinguished circle of friends around her with some claim to culture and learning. In the case of Doctor Johnson, however, it was an old friend of her husband who performed the introduction, the Irish actor Arthur Murphy.

There is considerable disagreement as to the precise date of that introduction. Some put it in 1764, the year after the marriage - and some in 1765, though certainly early in that year.

Boswell puts it as follows: "This year" - 1765 - "was distinguished by his being introduced into the family of Mr. Thrale, one of the most eminent brewers in England, and a Member of Parliament for the borough of Southwark." In fact, of course, Thrale was not at the time an M.P. "Foreigners are not a little amazed when they hear of brewers, distillers, and men in similar departments of trade, held forth as persons of considerable consequence."

Southwark was "a natural" for a brewer M.P. The brewer Sir Charles Cox was Southwark's M.P. from 1695 to 1713.

Edmund Halsey, brewer uncle of Ralph Thrale was the M.P. from 1717 to 1729, though for the first part of that time he represented Buckingham. Ralph Thrale was Southwark's M.P. from 1741-47, and Henry Thrale from 1765 to 1780, the year before his death. Charles Barclay was later to assume the double role of Southwark brewer and local M.P.

During his tenure of the seat, Henry Thrale was throughout a Ministry man completely who later got the Doctor to draft his ingratiating letters to North in 1780 begging for a borough "through the influence of Government", just as he had himself begged a seat from Newcastle in 1760, before he knew the Doctor.

To revert to the Johnson-Thrale meeting effected by the mutual friend Murphy. It has been put at January, 1765, though Boswell does not specify a month. Hawkins wrote that the friendship was "contracted, as his diary imports, in 1765." Mrs. Thrale, in her Anecdotes, puts the meeting with the Doctor in 1764, saying that during the last few weeks of the year he dined with them every Thursday. The later antipathy between Boswell and Hester is well known, and it is possible that Boswell wished to shorten the period of time his rival had known the Doctor and extend his in proportion. Likewise, she may have wished to lengthen the period of friendship.

Professor Powell, in his revision of Birkbeck Hill's Boswell, settles the matter by quoting Mrs. Piozzi as follows:

"It was on the second Thursday of the month of January, 1765, that I first saw Mr. Johnson in a room." After recording Murphy's part in effecting the conjunction, she continued:
 "Mr. Murphy at four o'clock brought Mr. Johnson to dinner. We liked each other so well that the next Thursday was appointed for the same company to meet...and since then Johnson has remained till this day our constant acquaintance, visitor, companion and friend."

The Doctor, as is well known, came to have his own room at their house by the brewery, and his chair is still in use in the Board room, and the knocker of the door of his Bolt Court house, plus other relics of his time, are preserved in the brewery's museum.

Hawkins has little to say on Johnson's brewing relationship with Thrale; his emphasis throughout is on the personal relationship. He comments on Thrale as "a brewer, in Southwark, who though a follower of a trade, which in other countries is lightly thought of, yet as in this implies great opulence, and the power of conducing in various ways to the interests of the community, ranked as a gentleman." Referring to his Oxford education and his parliamentary seat - though Thrale was not an M.P. if he and Johnson met in January 1765, or before - Hawkins continues that he "could not but be deemed a valuable addition to the number of Johnson's friends."

Continuing on that personal theme, Hawkins goes on:

It might have been expected that Johnson would have declined obligations that he was unable to repay, at least in kind; but he knew that friendship weighs not in a balance the favours that it confers. Mr. Thrale's tenders carried in them all the evidences of sincerity, and he had the example of men, equally wise with himself, to justify his acceptance of such invitations as were now made him.

Hawkins then displays a form of social climbing on the part of the Thrales:

The only obligation they subjected him to was that of supporting his character and in a family where there were many visitants, furnishing such conversation as was to be expected from a man who had distinguished himself by his learning, his wit, and his eloquence.

Macaulay, in his "Johnson" entry in the seventh edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, observed:

Soon after the club began to exist (1764), Johnson formed a connexion less important indeed to his fame, but much more important to his happiness, than his connexion with Boswell. Henry Thrale, one of the most opulent brewers in the Kingdom, a man of sound and cultivated understanding, rigid principles and liberal spirit, was married to one of those clever, kind-hearted, engaging, vain, pert young women who are perpetually doing or saying what is not exactly right, but who, do or say what they may, are always agreeable.... The Thrales became acquainted with Johnson, and the acquaintanceship ripened fast into friendship. They

were astonished and delighted by the brilliancy of his conversation. They were flattered by finding that a man so widely celebrated, preferred their house to any other in London. Johnson soon had an apartment at the brewery in Southwark, and a still more pleasant apartment at the villa of his friends on Streatham Common. A large part of every year he passed in those abodes....Mrs. Thrale rallied him, soothed him, coaxed him, and if she sometimes provoked him by her flippancy, made ample amends by listening to his reproofs with angelic sweetness of temper... It would seem that a full half of Johnson's life during about 16 years was passed under the roof of the Thrales.

This, of course, bears out what Boswell has to say, except as regards dates, and as Johnsonians we should all be appreciative of what Thrale, the Southwark brewer, did for the then premier man of letters in London, especially as Johnson himself had almost a complete breakdown in 1766. At least part, if not most of that year was spent by the Doctor with the Thrales as they nursed him back to health and guarded him.

. It is a fascinating concatenation of events that it was in January, 1765, that Johnson and the Thrales began their long friendship at the Anchor brewery and the owner's residence adjoining. That brewery, as we have noted, was close to the site of the old Globe theatre, erected originally in 1599 and the scene of the original production of so many of Shakespeare's plays until it was burnt down in 1613 and re-erected in 1614. Now it was in the October of 1765 that the Doctor's Shakespeare was published.

Ralph Thrale continued Halsey's expansion of the brewery and bought, among other pieces of land, a plot at Bankend on which to build a waterworks to supply the brewery. The region is curiously well endowed in wells: Burroughs, the gin distillers at Kennington use well water copiously. Later Thrale's waterworks were purchased by the Borough Water Works, a company that replaced the machinery worked by horses with a steam engine in about 1770. During Henry Thrale's ownership, more land was purchased and included in his 1777 purchases was the site of the Globe theatre, to become part of the expanded brewery. Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree unveiled a bronze plaque on the south side of Park Street to mark the site in 1908. He also bought property at Bankend where stands the present "Anchor", which had been known by the "name and

sign of the Castle" and later as the "King's Head." So, even Johnson, Thrale and Shakespeare were associated.

Let us get back to Henry Thrale as a brewer. Although in the first years of his ownership, the brewery seemed to be marking time, in fact Henry was making great and up-to-date improvements. Luckily for him, and later for Johnson, the times were prosperous, trade buoyant, and only the occasional bad year threatened disaster because of his extravagance. As Johnson remarked, "though in affluent circumstances, he had good sense enough to carry on his father's trade." One characteristic of that perpetuation of his father's trade was the sound eighteenth-century principle of applying the latest in science and technicalities to the trade. Sometimes, allied with greed - called business enterprise - to a point approaching disaster, as we shall see. It was then that the Doctor and Hester stepped in to save him.

However, Henry began expansion as soon as he was in charge. The total valuation of plant and utensils rose from £3,569 to £7,110 in the year 1758-59, as old equipment was sold off, and new coppers, backs, piping and mill work of increased capacity were installed.

These kept up production at least until 1767 when he burst out expansion-minded again, doubling the value of utensils and fixed goods to £14,600 by 1780. Production leapt from the 32,000 barrel level which Henry found to 75,000 in 1776 and 87,000 in 1778 under his compulsive drive to gain the leadership of the London porter trade. In fact, he only reached third place, to his great annoyance, with both Whitbread and Felix Calvert ahead. In any case, this was better than the eighth position he held in 1760 and he had passed Sir Benjamin Truman.

This compulsive urge to bigness brought the brewery to the edge of ruin in 1772. All the breweries were affected by the times; it was a bad year for trade. And Thrale was operating with very small liquid reserves. Nevertheless, he threw everything - and more - into extra raw materials. "Speculation," wrote Hester, "was the root of all evil," and she defined speculation as "brewing more beer than is really necessary merely because malt is cheap, or buying up loads of hops in full years, thereby expending one's ready money in hopes of wonderful returns the ensuing season."

Thrale was without a first line of defence in the financial crisis. First, malt prices had risen, then hops also rose - from £4-5 to £9, setting the commercial conditions for the crisis by increasing raw material outlays when a price change was not possible.

Further, Henry was committed financially to his brother-in-law Arnold Nesbit, who was touched by the bankruptcy of the banker Fordyce - which had "cast a cloud over all the Commercial World."

As Johnson wrote in August, 1772: "Such a general distrust and timidity has been diffused through the whole commercial system that credit has been almost extinguished and commerce suspended."

Thrale further complicated matters by allowing himself to become involved in the scientific experimentation of the age as applied to brewing. There had been a long search for a beer concentrate, especially encouraged by the Royal Navy, and a chemist H. Jackson was in 1772 put in charge of this concentration experimenting. This Jackson was probably Henry Jackson, but possibly Humphrey Jackson whom Hester and the Doctor strove might and main to prevent inveigling Henry Thrale into costly brewing experimentations.

Perhaps it was "J-ck-n's copper" that Thrale was in danger of falling into, and the Admiralty imply that he had the apparatus for reducing the wort ready to go.

In any case, it was just in this difficult year of 1772 that the chemist Humphrey Jackson prevailed on Henry to experiment in brewing without malt. Malt is barley that has been artificially and partly germinated to convert the starch in the barley into a saccharine matter which is then mashed with hot water and fermented after being cooled. Without the malting the barley would not allow itself to be fermented. But such was the scientific experimentation of the age. Hester and the Doctor protested against the venture but Henry went ahead and also backed Jackson with large sums in an attempt to find a way of preventing ships' timbers from rotting - in the hope of a lucrative naval contract. Thrale no less than Jackson was a child of his age. In this difficult year the experiment was written off as a failure - with vats, chemicals and the East Smithfield site all abandoned.

The financial crisis further tightened its grip on Thrale, as a banker in a small way. He had accepted, as was the frequent custom among brewers then, a few thousand pounds on deposit, and the crisis meant that lenders called in their loans, or deposits. As a final measure of stringency his manager John Perkins and the clerks decided, after seeing their master completely in the hands of Jackson and refusing their advice, to hand in their notice and leave in a body.

This was about the last straw for Hester. She used all her charm, as described above by Macaulay, to humour and entice Perkins. Helped by the Doctor and Perkins, she set about holding the staff and, as important, raising money. As she put it in her Diary:

First we made free with my mother's money... about 3,000£ 'twas all she had; and big as I was with child, I drove down to Brighthelmstone to beg of Mr. Scrase 6,000£ more... Dear Mr. Scrase was an old gouty solicitor, retired from business, friend and contemporary of my husband's father. Mr. Rush lent us 6,000£, Lady Lade (Thrle's sister) 5,000£.

The size of those sums gives some idea of the magnitude of the crisis. And a further £3,000 came from Lady Lade, and money was borrowed from a Count Viry, and £6,000 from Mrs. Hankin, the mother of the malt-factor at Ware, Herts.

There was talk of mortgaging some Salusbury estates in Wales and Hertfordshire - Mrs. Thrle was niece of Sir Thomas Salusbury. In addition to these loans to solve the crisis, the brewery's total indebtedness in trade - including debts from Jackson's activities - was said to be £130,000. Most of this latter was in the form of inescapably extended credit to tradesmen for materials supplied. Hankin, the malt-factor, was owed £6,400 and the hop-factors £18,000.

It took the firm almost nine years to pay off these debts completely, though there was a quick return of confidence. But the really important element for our enquiry is that from this date, 1772, Mrs. Thrle and Doctor Johnson were virtually directors of the brewery which was efficiently conducted by Perkins, who increasingly demanded a share in the actual direction of the establishment. He was later, after Thrle's death, to become managing partner, and was one of the first in the brewery world of what we now know as managing directors with a share in the company.

In October of that disastrous year, 1772, and writing from Lichfield, the Doctor had drawn one of the main morals of the crisis: "The first consequence of our late trouble ought to be an endeavour to brew at a cheaper rate. Unless this is done nothing can help us." He urged economy in the household and added that "this year will undoubtedly be a year of struggle and difficulty."

But that depended primarily on the price of malt, a matter outside their control. As Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale in that October, 1772, letter:

The price of malt has risen again. It is now two pounds 8s. the quarter. Ale is sold in the public houses, at sixpence a quart, a price which I never heard of before.

Mrs. Thrale replied early the next month:

Mr. Thrale bids me tell you that he has now 2,000 Quarters of Malt for which 38s.: the Quarter is only to be paid; shortly however he expects to give 40s.: or more for every Quarter he buys. So much for the brew house only My Master adds - Where is the Money to come from that is to pay for all?

In January, 1773, the situation was no better and Perkins was forecasting nothing but ruin. By March things improved somewhat. Boswell, we may note, takes no notice of the brewery dangers or Johnson's part in it all. But the fact remains that Hester, with a little - no more - help from the Doctor saved the brewery. Despite woman's alleged lack of aptitude for business. Perkins now said that customers were "much pleased" with the porter, and Thrale, by Johnson's Letters, had begun spending again. The race for expansion was on again.

One of the innovations of London porter brewing was the introduction of enormous vats in which to store - to mature - the beverage. It was an obvious solution to the problem of mass production to build as large a container as possible, and once the initial construction difficulties had been overcome, the size of the vats became a testimony to the size of one's trade; a matter of boasting, in short.

When the Doctor was on his Scottish jaunt, Mrs. Thrale wrote him that her husband "had built great Casks holding 1,000 Hogsheads each, and was much pleased with their Profit and

Appearance - one day, however... I forgot says he to tell you how one of my great Casks is burst and all the Beer run out."

This corroborates Johnson's discussion with Mr. Keith, the collector of Excise, at Inverness on the 29th August 1773. Boswell recorded:

He let Keith talk to him of the Excise in Scotland, and, in the course of conversation, mentioned that his friend Mr. Thrale, the great brewer, paid twenty thousand pounds a year to the revenue; and that he had four casks, each of which holds sixteen hundred barrels, - above a thousand hogsheads.

In the meantime, Hester was still trying to salvage what she could, and, in effect, act as a director-partner in the brewery and consulting fellow-director Johnson and keeping him informed of the business.

In September that year she wrote to the practical Perkins, for instance:

Cardess of the Blue Posts has turned refractory and applied to Hucks's people who have sent him in beer. I called on him today, however, and by dint of unwearied solicitation (for I kept him at the coach side a full half hour) I got his order for 6 Butts more as the final tryal.

And again:

I was obliged yesterday to go and see a dirty Gaoler to suffer our Brewhouse to serve his tap, and when I complained with tears to Mr. Johnson of the Indignity, Dear Lady, says he, your Character is exalted by it. I tell you it advances in Height.

That last occasion must have been, of course, after the Doctor's return from Scotland.

To return to the vats, or casks as they were then often named. By 1775 Thrale had vats with a total capacity of 23,400 barrels, though none, it seems, was larger than 1,500 barrels in capacity. It was becoming, in fact, a matter of snobbish and trade prestige to boast the largest vat in London. And if in London, why not in the world? Possibly it

was a reaction against the great tun at Heidelberg. Whitbread named two of his cisterns "King's Vault" and "Queen's Vault" in token of a royal visit. Thrale hated Whitbread and Calvert, both larger brewers than he, and in retaliation he had a hundred people dine in one of his new vats.

Thrale was determined to outdo or out-vat Whitbread, and, according to Hawkins, "Johnson quieted him, and prevented his expending a large sum on what could be productive of no real benefit to him or his trade."

After his 1773 trip to Scotland, Johnson tried to send some of Thrale's porter to Dunvegan, Rasay and Col, and got Boswell to arrange transport in Scotland, though, as we shall note, Thrale was doing a flourishing trade with Ireland at this time.

In September, 1775, the Doctor accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Thrale and daughter Queeney to France and while in Paris Johnson visited the Paris brewery of Antoine-Joseph Santerre, who was later to be in charge of the troops surrounding the scaffold at the execution of Louis XVI. Johnson "went over the brewery" and heard with much complacency from Santerre that he "brews with about as much malt as Mr. Thrale, and sells his beer at the same price, though he pays no duty for malt" - the British malt duty was only abolished by Gladstone, about 1880 - "and little more than half as much for beer. Beer is sold retail at sixpence a bottle. He brews 4,000 barrels a year." That was little compared with output at the Anchor Brewery.

The next year, 1776, profits reached £14,000, and malt prices fell heavily - to Thrale's advantage. As the Doctor wrote Mrs. Thrale at Bath, in May that year: "I called on Mr. Perkins at the counting house. He crows and triumphs; as we go on we shall double our business." I like his use of the "we" and "our".

Johnson, in all but actual crises, was incurably optimistic, abetting Thrale's ambition and adding to Hester's worries in the good years as much as he comforted her in the bad ones. "What is meant by tying up money in trade, I do not understand," he wrote her. "No money is so little tied up as that which is employed in trade." He, too, was keen on expansion again, and oblivious of what we call liquid capital.

But that year 1776 saw disaster strike for the Thrales. Johnson and Boswell were at Lichfield in March that year, and after reading a letter Johnson said: "One of the most dreadful things that has happened in my time." Boswell enquired what it was. The Doctor replied: "Mr. Thrale has lost his only son!" Boswell was "indifferent", but Johnson went on: "This is a total extinction of the family" - he could have said business - "as much as if they were sold into captivity."

Boswell remarked that the daughters would inherit the wealth, but - "'Daughters (said Johnson warmly) he'll no more value than -' I was going to speak," wrote Boswell, "'Sir, (said he) don't you know how you yourself think? Sir, he wishes to propagate his name.'"

That was the crux of the eighteenth-century matter. Halsey succeeded Child by marrying his daughter. Ralph Thrale succeeded, by payment, the son-less Halsey. Now Ralph's son Henry looked like dying son-less. Though shortly before Christmas, 1776, Johnson wrote Boswell:

Mrs. Thrale is big, and fancies that she carries a boy; if it were reasonable to wish very much about it, I should wish her not to be disappointed. The desire of male heirs is not appendant only to feudal tenures. A son is almost necessary to the continuance of Thrale's fortune; for what can misses do with a brewhouse? Lands are fitter for daughters than trades.

By the next summer Johnson was again in business with Mrs. Thrale, writing from Lichfield as harvest approached, in August:

I have no doubt of a most abundant harvest, and it is said that the produce of barley is particularly great. We are not far from the great year of an hundred thousand barrels, which, if three shillings be gained in each barrel, will bring us fifteen thousand pounds a-year. Whitbread never pretended to more than thirty pounds a-day, which is not eleven thousand a-year. But suppose we shall get but two shillings a barrel, that is ten thousand a-year. I hope we shall have the advantage. Would you for the other thousand have my master such a man as Whitbread?

That was in August, 1777. Within a few months Thrale's ambition to be the leader in the porter trade was again almost his undoing. Once more Hester and the Doctor had to come to the rescue. According to her Diary Hester was, in July, 1778, trying to get Henry never to brew more in one winter than 80,000 barrels.

That was after another financial crisis in the spring. Close to the wind in cash and liquid resources, every slight fluctuation of raw material prices, every miscalculation over quantities or prices produced a real crisis. Despite his own encouragement of Thrale's ambition to make 100,000 barrels, the Doctor had to admit when the storm was over: "If you thus persist in pouring the Profits of Trade back upon the Trade, that Trade will swell indeed like a Bubble, but like a Bubble it will be sure to burst." And as Hester put it: "Mr. Thrale overbrewed himself last Winter, and made an artificial Scarcity of Money in the Family, which has extremely lowered his Spirits: Mr. Johnson endeavoured last night and so did I, to make him promise that he would never more brew a larger Quantity of Beer in one Winter than eighty Thousand Barrels."

Faced once more with a money shortage, Hester had to borrow money from Scrase and prepared to cut her Welsh timber. Perkins, with his quite laudable ambition to become a partner, an aspect of character that riled Mrs. Thrale, proved his worth once more in times of danger, though Henry Thrale threatened to sack him because he "sets his faults before him somewhat too strongly."

This time things were not as bad as in 1772: the harvest of 1778 was good, and Hester wrote in October: "All goes on well at the Brewhouse I hear and the Money that was borrowed when the Leaves were coming out will be paid - or may be before they are fallen." Thrale agreed to the 80,000 barrel maximum. Though Hester did write that after the harvest that year Thrale actually brewed 96,000 barrels, followed the next year by 76,000 and in January, 1780, she was estimating only 60,000.

Small wonder that in December, 1778, Hester wrote in her Diary: "Sure I shall never take to Dram drinking - I hate every sort of Drink at present but Toast and Water, though there is one other Liquor I could delight in, and only one, Champagne."

Recovery, however, at the Anchor Brewery was of short duration. Henry Thrale had a stroke in June, 1779, following the bankruptcy and death of his brother-in-law Nesbitt to whom he was said to be indebted for £220,000. Hester then became more closely connected than ever with Perkins who had basically run the brewery for years, under a general guidance from above. She bid for trade with difficult publicans, keeping them in argument beside her coach; she interviewed clients and was regularly at the counting house, always, be it noted, with the support of Johnson. Though, really, she was primarily dependent on Perkins's professional skill and experience. In that association, however, with Johnson we can see another reason for his wishing her to marry him after Henry's death: he was originally opposed to her selling the brewery and no doubt saw their business partnership continuing.

Hester was indeed a remarkable business woman for her period, and in the spring of 1780 devotion to business even led her to move from Streatham to the house by the brewery, which she disliked, the better to attend to business. She was called in in 1779, for instance, to settle a dispute between workmen - an intervention which produced, as did the 1772 crisis, a miscarriage. Indeed, after Henry's stroke until his death Hester, aided, but only aided, by Johnson and Perkins carried the brewery - the "Golden Millstone" as she dubbed it - on her shoulders.

Once more the effects of war were making themselves felt in the commercial and financial world. Production fell away at Deadman's Place, as we have seen, and as the Doctor wrote Hester at the end of 1779: "All trade is dead, and pleasure is scarce alive. Nothing almost is purchased but such things as the buyer cannot be without, so that a general sluggishness and general discontent are spread over the town. All the trades of luxury and elegance are nearly at a stand."

Thrale was prostrate and disordered through the spring and summer of 1780, utterly out of business. He and Hester were both at Brighton in June that year when Perkins, the manager, saved the brewery from a fate akin to bankruptcy - the Gordon Riots. As Boswell put it: "The brewery was in great danger, and rioters were pacified with fifty pounds' worth of meat and ale." When they returned to the attack for more free pickings, they were met by the troops.

When Hester heard of the doings, she wrote Perkins:

Oh my good Mr. Perkins! What troubles have you gone thro? Sir Phillip tells us that your activity and management saved us all. - Good God, how could you manage it? - he wrote in too great a hurry of spirits to mention any thing but your general Praize for Skill - which I always knew to be great, but never had such reason to rejoice in it as now - he says your ingenuity kept us all from ruin and you will say nothing for yourself.

John Perkins, incidentally, came from Durham as a young man to seek his fortune in London. He certainly earned and won it.

The Sir Phillip referred to was Sir Phillip Jennings Clerke, an old family friend of the Thrales, who led the troops. But the incident revealed most strongly to Mrs. Thrale how completely they were in Perkins's hands. In short, it was another illustration of the managerial revolution then in progress.

Those obligations soon became inescapable: Henry Thrale died in the afternoon of 4th April 1781 with Johnson beside him at the last. As Johnson said, "His servants would have waited on him in his awful period, and why not his friend." Again: "I felt almost the last flutter of his pulse and looked for the last time upon the face that for fifteen years had never been turned upon me but with respect and benignity."



Johnson was the only one who did not wish to sell the brewery. Hester was at work, as she had been for some time past, in the counting house from nine in the morning until five in the afternoon. According to Fanny Burney they were "brewing themselves into bankruptcy." Ultimately she offered Perkins the Deadman's Place house if he could get a buyer. Perkins then got in touch with David Barclay, the Quaker head of the banking firm - still with us, of course - in Lombard Street, who bought it for £135,000 and put his nephew Robert into the business with Perkins.

Johnson was one of Thrale's four executors, who each received £200, but before we glance at the Barclay Perkins purchase we must pause a moment to consider the gap after the

April death of Henry Thrale and the June sale - a very prompt sale, it may be said.

With Thrale's death, the four executors had to carry on the family business without a head to the family. The endeavours by Mrs. Thrale and Dr. Johnson to carry on full time what Henry's illness had made them do part time could not succeed. The executors were divided among themselves. Being under conditions of unlimited liability the executors were liable to answer for the firm's debts, though they could not enjoy the profits. Only Johnson was sanguine.

Johnson himself wished to try his hand at running the brewery. He had, of course, no difficulty in grasping the technical side of any industry, and his experience of making money prompted his classic aphorism: "Trade could not be managed by those who manage it if it had much difficulty."

As to his brewing knowledge and ability, in line with the practical bent of his mind, we all recall his description of the art as propounded at Dunvegan during his Scottish tour. As Boswell wrote: "He this morning" - Thursday, 16th September, 1773 - "explained to us all the operation of coining, and, at night, all the operation of brewing, so very clearly, that Mr. M'Queen said, when he heard the first, he thought he had been bred to the Mint; when he heard the second, that he had been bred a brewer." What an historic opportunity Boswell missed, not to have taken the Doctor down verbatim!

On the financial, managerial side, Widow Thrale noted that "he found some odd delight in signing drafts for hundreds and for thousands, for him a new, and as it appeared a delightful occupation." A charming sidelight on the Great Cham of Literature! But she also wrote: "When all was nearly over, I cured his honest heart of its incipient passion for trade by letting him into some and only some of its mysteries." The operative word is "honest": trade and honesty did not then combine any more than today.

Those mysteries were not all that obscure. Brewing was a highly technical operation, and on the brewer-manager's ability hung a large capital sum. Well run, it could produce good profits, indeed large profits. But disaster could easily eat up the £149,000 capital revealed by Thrale's 1780 Rest Book - when they rested from brewing for the summer -

within a few years. We have already seen, for example, what Hester had to borrow in 1772.

She and the Doctor knew something about the counting house and its operations, but only Perkins knew, practically, the technical side of brewing. That was the hub of success. No wonder she prayed, and later she wrote in her memoirs: "God Almighty sent us a knot of rich Quakers, who bought the whole."

The executors were in the hands of Perkins, and he now threatened to hold out for a share of the profits. It was his chance to bid for a partnership. He had been at the centre of things for years, the real architect for a lifetime. The sheer size and capitalisation of the business, thought the executors, would keep buyers away. It was proposed to reduce the scale of operations - to keep sales to London only and to drop the export trade - mostly to Ireland - and the country trade. The executors thought they could not allow long term loans to the purchaser on the security of the estate, such as had been granted to Ralph Thrale in 1729.

It all played into Perkins's hands. Even Johnson's famous quip as an executor played into those hands: "We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice." Such was his "incipient passion for trade."

Perkins' second and decisive trump card was that he had married, as his second wife, Amelia Bevan, widow of Timothy Paul Bevan, son of one of the richest bankers of Lombard Street and himself a wealthy druggist and merchant, whose extensive relationships were ready to bring in capital in abundance for the purchase, and plenty of juniors as partners.

All became clear to Widow Thrale. She persuaded Perkins to bring forward his relatives; she lent him the produce of £2,000 she had in the stocks; she got Crutchley to offer him £1,000 to enable him to take up his share of the new partnership; she virtually bribed Amelia Perkins with the gift of the house at the brewery, complete with furniture. With only one serious contender at the sale, the price - £135,000 - was, she felt, a "prodigious bargain." At least they had not brewed themselves into another bankruptcy and she had slipped the "golden millstone" from off her neck.

The £135,000 was paid in this fashion: £35,000 at once; then £25,000 a year with 4 per cent. interest on the amount outstanding. Thrale's executors received a bond underwritten by four persons: Robert Barclay and John Perkins, the new heads of the brewery, John Barclay and John Gurney, bankers.

The four new partners, Robert Barclay, David Barclay, Sylvanus Bevan - the latter two held their shares through Robert Barclay until 1786 - and John Perkins, all gave a counter-bond to John Barclay and Sylvanus Bevan at the bank. Perkins, that is, held a quarter share, and to obtain this he had to borrow £5,000 from his fellow partners as well as £1,650 from Mrs. Thrale. Beer was becoming banking; banking was all.

Robert Barclay, incidentally, merchant of Cheapside, was born in Philadelphia in 1751 and came to England at the age of twelve to live with his uncle David Barclay, banker. Bevan was his cousin. His great-grandfather, Quaker, had been a close friend of William Penn, Quaker founder of Pennsylvania.

A neglected curiosity of history. At the takeover it was agreed to carry on the business under the name of Hester Thrale & Co., and on Hester's remarriage in 1784 an agreement was made with her daughter, Hester Maria Thrale to continue the use of the name for the payment of £100 a year. The name was only changed to Barclay, Perkins & Co. in 1797.

To revert to Widow Thrale. When it was all over, she wrote: "Well, here have I... completed - I really think very happily, the greatest Event of my life." A significant admission of what is great. "I have sold my Brewhouse to Barclay the rich Quaker for 135,000£, to be in four years' time paid. I have by this bargain purchased peace and a stable fortune, Restoration to my original Rank in Life and a Situation undisturbed by Commercial Jargon, undisgraced by Commercial Connexion." There speaks a true woman of her age and class.

It was only right that John Perkins should be the bridge in the transformation. The importance of actual blood relationship is most important to the period. Cousinhood was then essential and it must be taken for granted that one of the most fundamental considerations in eighteenth-

century entrepreneurship was kinship. Cousinhood and Quakership now proceeded to remodel British brewing. Even the very transference had as its origin the failure of the Thrales to produce a healthy son and heir. Such a fate was most common in that century, and we have already noted its incidence at the Anchor Brewery itself.

In the absence of an assured blood succession to management with large capital sums involved and technical skills of the first order, it was just the opportunity for a senior, salaried staff member to be taken into partnership. The rich who brought in the wealth and capital were themselves disinclined to become technical brewers; they were only the investors, the financiers. So Perkins and his like, the superintendent, or clerk, promoted to partnership as the century drew to its close, were basically the ancestors of the salaried director of today. John Perkins can be taken as the example.

A social order had died with Henry Thrale. Even more, a whole epoch in British brewing had perished with him. A new age was ushered in - the age of financial investment in the brewing industry as an outright financial transaction. Sir Benjamin Truman had died the year before Thrale and exactly the same process of transformation was soon to set in there with the dominance of Hanbury and his Quaker banking connections.

As to Johnson's part, as an executor, in the deal, we may quote from the account given by Hawkins, to whom Johnson turned for some legal advice: "It is easy to see, as Johnson was unskilled in both money and commercial transactions, that Mr. Thrale's view... could only be, that, by his philosophical prudence and sagacity... he might give general direction to the motion of so vast a machine as they had to conduct. Perhaps he might also think, that the celebrity of Johnson's character would give a lustre to that constellation, in which he had thought proper to place him. This may be called vanity...." In short, even at death, Thrale was still social climbing.

Hawkins proceeds about Johnson:

He therefore... began to form theories and visionary projects, adapted as well to the continuation and

extension of the trade, which, be it remembered, was brewing, as the disposal of it; but in this, as he also acknowledged, he found himself at a loss.

The other executors, after reflecting on the difficulty of conducting so large an undertaking, the disagreeableness of an office that would render them in a situation between the public and the revenue, determined to make sale of the whole, and blew up Johnson's schemes for their commencing as brewers, into the air. In carrying this resolution into act, the executors had a great difficulty to encounter: Mr. Thrale's trade had been improving for two generations, and was become of such enormous magnitude, as nothing but an aggregate of several fortunes was equal to; a circumstance, which could not but affect the intrinsic value of the object, and increase the difficulty of finding purchasers....

This difficulty... Mr. Thrale's executors found the way to surmount: they commenced a negotiation with some persons of worth and character, which, being conducted on both sides with fairness and candour, terminated in a conveyance of the trade with all its appendages, for which the consideration was an hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds.

Hawkins' final comment on the deal as it concerns us is that "of this arduous transaction, Johnson was little more than a spectator, and, when called upon to ratify it, he readily acquiesced." I am not sure that Hawkins is not here being a little unfair to the Doctor, a little lacking in acknowledgement of his abilities. Perkins, remember, had the greatest respect for Johnson's abilities and had an engraving of Johnson hanging in his office at the brewery.

Two particular notes on Johnson's part, rather diminish Hawkins' evaluation of his commercial ability. First, in 1781 Johnson proposed an incremental scale of payment for Perkins, who had been paid £500 per annum, in the hope that he and the brewery would be kept working together. In this scheme as put to the executors, he proposed that Perkins' pay was to be £200 for the first £4,000 profits - "which will come of itself," he said - £400 for the second £4,000 profits; for the third £4,000 - "which will give a yet higher proof of good management," said Johnson - £600. He thus hoped to "connect his interest with ours."

In fact, Perkins, remembering his own career, brought his own senior clerk, George Lester, at once into such a profit-sharing scheme as early as 1781. Lester became "a nominal partner in consideration of his skill and experience" with a salary of £500 annually - Perkins' old income - and that reward which £4,000 of the partnership capital would have given him. This profit-sharing did not allow him to have any "capital of trade" in his own hands - he could not withdraw it - nor could he nominate his son to succeed him. This same scheme, founded on the Doctor's proposal, basically, was later copied by other brewers, who in time even parted with the share itself to the official, making him an actual partner.

To revert to Johnson himself in the deal with the new owners. On 16th June, 1781, he wrote to Bennet Langton: "Mrs. Thrale is disencumbered from her Brewhouse; and it seemed to the purchaser so far from an evil, that he was content to give her for it an hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds. Is the nation ruined?"

The Doctor had, as we know, a great contempt for the Gothic fashion, and we may close on his parody of Thomas Warton, as follows:

Hermit hoar, in solemn cell,
Wearing out life's evening gray:
Smite thy bosom, sage, and tell,
What is bliss? and which the way?

Thus I spoke; and speaking sigh'd;
- Scarce repress'd the starting tear; -
When the smiling sage reply'd -
- Come, my lad, and drink some beer.



VIOLENCE IN HUDIBRAS AND HOGARTH'S ILLUSTRATIONS

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William Hogarth's illustrations for the 1726 edition of Hudibras might be enlisted to support the argument that violence is a controlling satiric theme in Samuel Butler's major poem.¹ Almost all Hogarth's sixteen engravings portray some form of violence, either physical, figurative, or symbolic.² Because Hogarth illustrated scenes central to the action of Hudibras, a brief description of each engraving should assist readers of this poem to perceive distinctly the variety of ways in which violence manifests itself in Butler's satire.

Plate I (Grey, I, 1) shows Hudibras and Ralpho on horseback, about to set out on their adventures. The rump of Hudibras' horse is predominant in the foreground, while Hudibras' paunch and humped back are clearly emphasised. Butler's description of the Presbyterian Knight's person should be recalled here:

His Back, or rather Burthen, show'd
As if it stoop'd with its own load,
For as Aeneas bore his sire
Upon his shoulders through the fire:
Our Knight did bear no less a Pack
Of his own Buttocks on his back:
Which now had almost got the upper-
Hand of his Head, for want₃ of Crupper.
(I.i.285-292)

Unlike the hero Christian in The Pilgrim's Progress, the burden that Hudibras carries on his back is not his past sins, but rather the weight of his buttocks which threaten to overcome his head, both literally and figuratively.

Plate II (Grey, I, 97) shows Hudibras as orator confronting the bear-baiting mob as he inveighs against the bloody pastime they are about to indulge in. Hudibras' hand is raised in a gesture of restraint, while one of the "worthies," presumably Talgol, answers him angrily (I.ii.683ff.). The mistrustful and sullen faces of the mob, all of whom are armed with sticks, are indications of the fight that is to ensue.

Plate III (Grey, I, 171) is a representation of the first bear-baiting fight (in I.ii). Talgol is pulling the Knight from his horse, and Hudibras is about to fall on the bear. Ralpho's horse, which has just had thistles stuck under its tail, is in the process of throwing him (I.ii.839-880).

The next three plates all represent occurrences in the second encounter with the bear-baiting mob (in I.iii). In Plate IV (Grey, I, 240), Trulla wields a blow with her cudgel from behind Hudibras, as he leans from his horse to aid the fallen Ralph (I.iii.675-784). In Plate V (Grey, I, 252), Trulla stands over Hudibras after having thoroughly beaten him. She holds off the other bear-baiting worthies from attacking the Knight further, since she has already granted him quarter and will not break her word (I.ii.929-942). In Plate VI (Grey, I, 253), Hudibras and Ralpho are mounted backwards on their horses as they are led in humiliating defeat to the village stocks by the victorious bear-baiting mob (I.ii.961ff.).

Plate VII (Grey, I, 296) shows Hudibras and His Squire confined in the village stocks. The widow points in recognition to Hudibras who holds his ears (in vexation, embarrassment, despair?) (II.i.101ff.). In Plate VIII (Grey, I, 261), Ralpho gives counsel to Hudibras concerning the Knight's "Scruple" about whipping himself, as he promised the widow he would do in return for her freeing him from the stocks. Hudibras' hand rests on his head, as if to scratch the "Scruple" (II.ii.51-66); a whip lies in the foreground at the Knight's feet. Hudibras will soon offer to whip his Squire "by proxy," which will provoke a fight between the two.

Plate IX (Grey, I, 405) is a double-size fold-out representing in full detail the Knight's and Squire's attempt to interfere with the raucous Skimmington, which they have mistaken for a mock Roman procession, "Antichristian and lewd." Hudibras holds his hand over his eye where he has just been hit by an egg, while Ralph's horse is being attacked again in a sensitive spot by a flaming cudgel (II.ii.814-834). The nagging wife and the hen-pecked husband sit on the horse slightly left of the centre; and she faces forward, while he faces the steed's rump.

In Plate X (Grey, II, 41), Sidrophel the astrologer looks through his telescope. He has just sighted an astrological "Prodigie" and is soon to sight an earthly one: Hudibras (II.iii.399-488). The fat Knight is riding with Ralpho to the

astrologer's dwelling to consult Sidrophel concerning his love suit with the widow. Plate XI (Grey, II, 48) shows Sidrophel telling Ralpho and Hudibras why the Knight came to consult with him. Their faces show amazement since the Knight has not yet explained his business. Whachum, the astrologer's Zany, had previously extracted this information from the unwitting Ralpho and is shown in this plate communicating it to the astrologer-cheat under the guise of astrological jargon (II.iii.489-574). By the end of Canto III of Part II, Hudibras has fallen out with the astrologer. In Plate XII (Grey, II, 95), Hudibras, with his sword raised, stands over the prone Sidrophel, who vainly tries to defend himself with an "Iron-Lance." Whachum has just dropped his weapon, a fire fork, and has been routed by a "twitch" in the "Breech" from Hudibras' sword (II.iii.1041-1070).

After leaving the astrologer for dead, Hudibras in Canto I of Part III returns to the widow to tell her an outrageous lie about how he has beaten himself. Plate XIII (Grey, II, 125) shows the Knight as lover unctuously saluting the widow, head bowed, hat in hand (III.i.150-180).⁵ Hudibras' humped back-become-buttocks are again represented quite prominently since his baser faculties have taken control of his reason in his courtship. The widow rewards Hudibras' violence to truth by arranging for him to be beaten in an "antimasquerade." In Plate XIV (Grey, II, 193), the darkness of the background and the masks which the attackers wear accentuate the animal-like expression of fear on the face of the cudgelled Knight (III.ii.47ff.).

In Canto III of Part II, Butler drops the characters of Hudibras and Ralpho and substitutes a long debate between a Presbyterian and an Independent. Plate XV (Grey, II, 339) portrays the burning of the rumps at Temple-Bar, the symbolic mob violence with which the debate culminates (III.ii.1407-1690). Appropriately, the members of the mob are mostly shown from the rear, as they carry members of the Rump Parliament in effigy in a mock procession.

Canto III of Part III returns the reader to the adventures of the Knight, who has fled from his beating and rejoined Ralpho. In Plate XVI (Grey, II, 394), Hudibras' hump is again much in evidence, as he is shown taking his grievance against the widow and Sidrophel to a lawyer (III.iii.621ff.). Resolving to fight his case at law instead of on the battlefield, Hudibras will inevitably continue to perpetrate violence in

one form or another.

Now that we have examined in numerical order the specific content of Hogarth's engravings, I can proceed to categorise under three general headings the kinds of violence represented in each plate: physical, figurative, or symbolic. The mechanical operation of regrouping the illustrations will allow me to point to the respective significance of each form of violence within Hudibras.

Of the sixteen plates described above, four (III, IV, IX, and XIV) portray fights, beatings, or mob-scenes, in which some variety of physical abuse is being inflicted on Hudibras the Presbyterian Knight, his Squire Ralpho, or Ralpho's horse. One plate (XII) shows Hudibras as a knavish aggressor. The Knight suffers cruelly humorous physical humiliations in three other engravings (V, VI, and VII).

Violence conceived of as physical injury inflicted by one human being on another is popularly regarded as the most reprehensible kind of violence. This is roughly the form violence takes in these eight plates. Yet it must be admitted that it is not especially disagreeable for the reader to see Butler's hero (or his Squire) physically humiliated, although one may at times feel a corrupting pity for him. Even if a major portion of the action of Hudibras involves physical violence, the reader often may experience a Hobbesian "sudden glory" in laughing at Hudibras' foolish sufferings.

Probably the major reason that Hudibras is so reprehensible and, within the context of the satire, so deserving of the abuse he receives is his irrepressible or, more accurately, obsessive commitment to hypocrisy and ridiculous wrongheadedness in whatever course of action or train of argument he undertakes. As a mob-orator (in Plate II), a learned disputant (VIII), an impassioned lover (XIII), and a plaintive at law (XVI), Hudibras manifests his hypocrisy by abusing language of various kinds to further his selfish ends. It is the Knight's violence to wit, learning, law, and truth which causes others to abuse him physically, but the violence done to Hudibras seems more than fair retribution for the violence he has perpetrated - not only on other characters but on the reader's rational and aesthetic sensibilities - by his intolerably long, overly ingenious, and indecorous speeches. That the Knight's violence to language inevitably leads to physical violence is satirically

appropriate in a poem which satirises the English Civil Wars, which were brought on, according to Butler, when "hard words.../ Set Folks together by the ears" (see I.i.1-14).

In attacking violence in its figurative manifestations, Butler, in effect, may be extending the definition of violence beyond the popular conception of it as infliction of physical injury. The reader of Hudibras may thus be asked to examine his limited conception of violence, as Butler dramatises the variety of ways in which Hudibras perpetrates it. In representing violence in its symbolic forms, Butler not only explains in physiological and psychological terms why Hudibras inevitably perpetrates violence in one form or another, but he also offers a satiric rationale for his continued physical abuse of his hero. In those plates (I, XIII, XVI) in which Hudibras' distorted physiognomy is emphasised by Hogarth, the reader is expected to see the fat Knight as a living rump, a target deserving all the physical abuse he receives. That Hudibras' buttocks threaten to overcome his head is symbolically appropriate since, in his actions and speech, the Knight's baser faculties always manage to gain control of his reason.

The symbolic and actual violence in Hogarth's illustration of the burning of the rumps (in Plate XV) can be understood as a collective manifestation of men's baser faculties overcoming their reason. Instead of this taking place within the person of Hudibras the Presbyterian Knight, the disorder and irrationality in this mob-scene is the consequence of the lowest social class within the state and the lowest faculty within human beings forcibly taking control. Butler plays on the metaphor implicit in the word rump, the name given to the remains of the Long Parliament, to force an equation between violence within the human body and violence within the body politic.

Hogarth's illustrations point up Butler's treatment in Hudibras of violent human behaviour in its various forms. Butler's dominant thematic emphasis on violence in his poem reflects his strong humanistic concern with violence as a potential in human nature. In one of his few critical observations about the way satire affects its readers, Butler wrote in his notebooks:

Satyrical wit may seem to be the most pleasant of all other: Men cannot laugh heartily without shewing their teeth, and therefore the French call a Satyr Dent riant.⁸

As a reader of Hudibras may see in Hogarth's plates, the function of satire for Butler may very well be to show men, under the guise of pleasantries, the potential for violence that is within them.

Documentation

1. Hudibras. In Three Parts ... Adorn'd with a new Set of Cuts, Design'd and Engrav'd by Mr. Hogarth (London: Printed by T.W. for D. Brown, J. Walthoe, J. Knapton ... etc., 1726). The same prints were "re-engraved, enlarged, and slightly varied by J. Mynde" for Zachary Grey's edition of Hudibras (2 vols.; Cambridge, England, 1744) - parenthetical references to Grey in my text provide the volume number and the page on which the Hogarth/Mynde engraving appears. For modern reproduction of these prints, see Hogarth's Graphic Works, compiled by Ronald Paulson (2 vols.; New Haven, 1965). The prints themselves appear in II, Plates 90-105; a catalogue and commentary are in I, 125-127. "Hogarth did two sets of engravings for Hudibras, one as an independent series of large and elaborate designs, the other for an edition of the poem" (Paulson, I, 125). Although the twelve large illustrations are much superior in quality to these done for the 1726 edition, I have chosen to describe the more numerous smaller plates, because they illustrate more completely the action of Butler's poem. For a thorough discussion of violence as the controlling satiric theme in Hudibras, see my unpublished dissertation, Violence in Hudibras: Wit, "Hard Words," and the Rump (University of Pennsylvania, 1971).
2. There are actually seventeen Hogarth prints in the small set. The first, supposedly a portrait of Samuel Butler, is "in reality a portrait of Jean-Baptiste Monnoyer" (Paulson, p.126, cat.no. 85). I begin numbering plates with the second in the series.
3. Hudibras, ed. John Wilders (Oxford, 1967) - all parenthetical references in my text to Hudibras are to Wilders' edition; large Roman numerals are used for parts, small Roman numerals for cantos, and Arabic numerals for lines.
4. Crowdero, his wooden leg disengaged, lies in the right foreground; his broken fiddle is at his side.
5. Note the figure peering surreptitiously from the window. This is most likely Ralpho, who has just informed the widow of Hudibras' true conduct in beating and robbing the astrologer and his assistant (see III. i.99-154).



Trulla Attacking Hudibras

6. Ironically, Hudibras hypocritically becomes the physical aggressor (in Plate XII), when he discovers that Sidrophel and his assistant have abused language to cheat him (XI).
7. Plate X, of course, doesn't show Hudibras at all, only Sidrophel looking through his telescope with Whachum at his side. Nevertheless, for the reader familiar with Hudibras, there is a subtle appropriateness in Sidrophel's sighting what he takes to be a "horrible and fearful Portent" of the end of the world, since, immediately after, he lowers his glass only to discover the fat Knight riding toward his dwelling.
8. Characters and Passages from Note-books, ed. A.R. Waller (Cambridge, England, 1908), p.409.

Acknowledgement

Plate 93 (cat. no. 89) from Paulson's Hogarth's Graphic Works is reproduced by kind permission of Yale University Press and the University of Illinois Library. Paulson reproduced the illustration in his book from a copy of Hudibras (1726) belonging to the University of Illinois Library.





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