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From the Editor

During the year Mr Richard Thrale has succeeded Mr John Comyn in the Chairmanship of the Society. We welcome the former and wish him a successful term of office; we thank the latter for all his services, and wish him a happy retirement.

We are pleased to announce that Mrs Anthea Hopkins has agreed to serve on the Committee.

We have to record, with regret, the death of a long-standing member, Mr E Gordon Allen: our sympathy has been expressed to his widow.

For reasons beyond our control there was no April meeting of the Society. The speaker has, however, agreed to read his paper at a later date.

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YOUNG SAMUEL JOHNSON AND HIS BIRTHPLACE (ILLUSTRATED)

G. W. Nicholls Ph.D, MA and R. W. White JP, MA - 19 October 1991

Chairman: Mrs A. G. Dowdeswell

Dr Nicholls is the Curator of the Johnson Birthplace Museum at Lichfield. He was educated at Blackpool Grammar School, and at the University Colleges of Swansea and S. David's Lampeter. He was Una Ellis-Ferman Research Scholar at Bedford College, and his doctoral thesis was on "Stage Production of Ben Johnson (1600-1776)." He has been involved in many activities in Lichfield and has publications on Johnsonian and other subjects to his credit.

Mr White is Chairman of the Friends of the Birthplace. He was educated at Queen Mary's Grammar School Walsall and Christ's College Cambridge, where he was a Choral Exhibitioner. A member of the Johnson Club, and sometime Chairman of the Johnson Society he is, like Dr Nicholls, particularly well fitted for the present paper.

They had brought with them some excellent slides. First Mr White took us on a tour round Lichfield to visit various places associated with Johnson, including his Dame School, the Grammar School, the site across the Pool of his father's parchment factory and the willow tree he liked to visit, St Mary's Church, the Cathedral and the Close where some of his friends lived. Then Dr Nicholls showed us what had recently been done at the Birthplace, to restore the kitchen and other rooms to the appearance they would have had in Johnson's time. He demonstrated how the Museum was being rendered as a whole more representative of Johnson, so that visitors, especially those who were not familiar with him, would have a clearer idea of his life and his times. His portrait surrounded by his contemporaries, and chronology boards setting out his life in parallel with events of his time, and a copy of the well-known portrait of Tetty Johnson in its distinctive frame should establish him as a man of his time. Instead of trying to reproduce Michael Johnson's bookshop as a museum piece, a working bookshop had been established, with antiquarian and modern books and souvenirs of the house. Altogether a successful transformation into a living household rather than just a museum.

JOHNSON AND FANNY BURNEY

Dr K. E. Smith, Senior Lecturer in English, Bradford

University - 16 November 1991

Chairman: Anthea Hopkins MA

Dr Smith has provided us with this summary of his paper.

Despite the great difference in their ages the affinity between Johnson and Fanny Burney was significant in both personal and literary terms. On a day-to-day level he enjoyed her humour and penetrating observation while she appreciated the care and attention which underlay his bantering. Yet beyond the grandfatherly relationship there were significant shared experiences. Both had made their way through ability into society rather than being born to status. Both carried deep fears under their literary and social success: he of vacuity and spiritual desolation, she of oppression and loss of autonomy.

In literary terms the most obvious Johnsonian influences are on the two novels published during his lifetime, Evelina (1778) and Cecilia (1782). Although

Fanny Burney both displayed her original flair and drew on non-Johnsonian sources in her first novel her creation of Mr Villars with his injunction to the heroine 'not only to *judge* but to *act for yourself*' is reminiscent of Johnson and Evelina's own achievement of a balance between true, personal feelings and workable social relationships echoes the values of Johnson's essays.

However, the generally boisterous tone of Evelina is much less Johnsonian than the more sombre characterization of Cecilia. Here the heroine's serious choice of life and the sense of danger is society remind us of Rasselas. It should be stressed, though, that Fanny Burney's achievement is to use Johnsonian insights for fictional achievements that are purely her own. If Cecilia's final reflections do have a strong reminiscence of Johnson's work her proto-feminist theme of the heroine's exploitation by her various male guardians is something quite new and challenging.

Although Camilla (1796) and The Wanderer (1814) take us further and further into sensibility and even Gothicism this does not mean that Johnson's influence was entirely lost. Despite the vicissitudes of life in France and England, despite changes in her modes of writing in later years, Fanny Burney's life and fiction both evince values of stoic endurance and committed sociability that are not unfamiliar to us. These values may have been natural to her but she must have drawn comfort from their earlier endorsement by her good friend the author of The Rambler and Rasselas.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY RESPONSE TO MIRACLES

Dr James Gray, Thomas McCullah Professor of English
Literature (Emeritus) Dalhousie University - 14 December 1991
Chairman: Richard Thrale

Dr Gray has provided us with this summary of his paper.

Opinions on the subject of miracles ran the gamut, during the eighteenth century, from sheer scepticism to over-credulity. John Dryden had pointed out that, if we were able to understand or explain miracles, we would be wiser than the Creator, whereas Alexander Pope, half a century later, maintained that at last a human being, namely Isaac Newton, had fathomed nature's laws to the point where even the supernatural could be explained. Thus the myth of the "omniscient scientist" was born. But the most famous sceptic of the period, David Hume, based his doubts about miracles on the very nature of nature's laws: how could the irrational be rationalized? On the other side of the argument, scientists such as Robert Boyle and physico-theologians like William Derham engaged in a remarkable alliance of faith and reason. There were limits, however, even to the scientists' credulity. Newton, for instance, could not accept the doctrine of the Trinity, and the very process of scientific inquiry led to the questioning of such dogmas as the immaculate conception, the virgin birth, and the resurrection.

In the eighteenth century there were five main ways of dealing with miracles: (1) dismiss or ignore them, as did many of the deists; (2) justify them as part of the evidence for divine power and authority; (3) accept only those recorded in Scripture, and deny any or all post-apostolic claims to miraculous phenomena; (4) cast doubt on the authenticity of all of them; and (5) defend them stoutly against the sceptics, with religious enthusiasm but without logic.

In literary and homiletic contexts we find all five of those attitudes represented. Jonathan Swift suggested that attempting to explain a mystery of any kind was counter-productive, since an explanation would make it a mystery no longer. Laurence Sterne reminded his York congregation that even some of the disciples themselves could not at first accept the miracles of Christ. The Wesleys, as well as other leading preachers and exegetes, such as Philip Doddridge, recognized the need for detailed interpretations of the miracles. Among the foremost rationalists was Conyers Middleton, who contended that no Christian, after the Apostles, could be proved to have possessed miraculous powers, and who likened the over-credulous to believers in witchcraft. Edward Gibbon in his earlier years took a totally opposite position from that of Middleton, but changed his mind later when he became progressively anti-clerical. There were many naturalists who thought, as C. S. Lewis was to do in our time, that miracles such as the changing of water into wine or feeding the multitude with five loaves and two fishes could be explained simply in terms of the acceleration of natural processes. But the total disbelievers, led by David Hume, seriously questioned the authenticity of miracles on the grounds that, if they existed at all, they must be subversions of nature.

It was Hume, in fact, who articulated, in his Essay on Miracles, the accumulated doubts of sceptics who had gone before him. His arguments brought him widespread notoriety, and were refuted, often passionately and sometimes intelligently, by a host of writers and thinkers, including James Beattie, William Warburton, William Adams, John Leland, and John Douglas, but they won considerable support on the Continent of Europe. The most effective animadversions came from the pen of a fellow Scot, George Campbell, using the very ratiocinative tactics Hume had employed, and from William Paley, who cited the martyrdom of many of the Apostles as a very strong reason for accepting the validity of the miracles performed by Christ.

Dr Johnson, as always, put the matter squarely, remarking that everything which Hume had advanced against Christianity had passed through his own mind long before. Though there might be great difficulty in *proving* miracles he said, "let us consider; although God has made Nature to operate by certain fixed laws, yet it is not unreasonable to think that he may suspend these laws, in order to establish a system highly advantageous to mankind....."

JAMES BOSWELL: A PERSONAL APPRECIATION (ILLUSTRATED)

J. H. Leicester MA - 18 January 1992

Chairman: David Parker

In his introduction, the speaker referred to the 250th anniversary of Boswell's birth celebrated in 1990, and the 200th anniversary of the publication of the Life of Johnson commemorated in 1991. Both events rightly focused attention on Boswell himself. The popular notions of Johnson and Boswell, as inseparables and - shades of Macaulay - of the Life as an accidental masterpiece produced by a skilled reporter hanging on Johnson's every word persist even today. Over the last half-century, however, his literary reputation as a creative writer has increasingly been appreciated.

Using slides and recorded passages to recall some of the memorable scenes that come to life in the pages of Boswell, he wished to pay a personal tribute. Like countless others he had Boswell to thank for introducing him to Johnson

and his world. As a schoolboy in the dark days of 1940 he had acquired a Shorter Boswell which he later took with him on war service in the Royal Navy. Such quotations as

No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail; for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned A Man in a jail has more room, better food, and commonly better company

delighted his messmates. His interest in Johnson continued and led to meeting people and visiting places which he otherwise would not have known. Again, he had Boswell indirectly to thank for that.

During Boswell's first brief visit to London in 1760, he had been admitted to membership of what he referred to as "that elegant, useful and noble Society" - the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. Regrettably he failed to pay his subscription and his membership lapsed. Johnson's signature appears in the first list of members of the Society; he paid two years' subscription in 1760. Had Boswell's subscriptions been more forthcoming, his early ambition to meet Johnson might well have been fulfilled at the Society. It was, of course, on 16 May 1763 that the famous first meeting took place in the back parlour of Tom Davies's shop in Covent Garden.

The speaker recalled the occasion in the Johnson Commemorative Year when members of our own Society attended the unveiling by Robert Robinson of the Greater London Council Blue Plaque, at what is now known as Boswell's Coffee House in Russell Street, to mark the original site of the meeting.

The speaker illustrated Boswell's art as a biographer by comparing the original account of the first meeting as recorded in the London Journal with the expanded version in the Life commenting on the biographical technique and the traits of character revealed.

Having survived the first encounter, undeterred by Johnson's rebuffs, Boswell saw the relationship develop into a lifelong friendship. Further readings and slides recalled the first meeting at Johnson's chambers in Inner Temple; the plans to entertain Johnson at Boswell's Downing Street lodgings thwarted by his landlord; and scenes at the Mitre tavern. Contrasts were drawn between Boswell being unprepared or off-guard, being one of a number as a spectator, or being in complete control of the occasion as host and master-minding the conversation. His technique improved with experience.

In the year he met Johnson, we find Boswell apologising for the imperfect manner in which he was obliged to exhibit Johnson's conversation. But he became aware that

In progress of time, when my mind was, as it were, strongly impregnated with the Johnsonian oether, I could with much more facility and exactness, carry in my memory and commit to paper the exuberant variety of his wisdom and wit.

Boswell's artistry in recreating a scene at which he himself had not been present was illustrated with his description of "one of the most remarkable incidents in Johnson's life" - the private conversation with George III in the library at the Queen's House. The experience came from Johnson; it is Boswell who brings it vividly and dramatically to life on the printed page.

A further 1984 event was recalled when the Society went by river to Greenwich - as Johnson and Boswell had done in 1763. Using slides of eighteenth-century prints and modern photographs, the speaker quoted from Boswell to retrace the journey: from Temple Stairs to the Old Swan - the moving story of the young rower pleasing Johnson and earning a double fare - the walk to Billingsgate to avoid the hazards of London Bridge, and taking oars again for Greenwich. Here was an example of Boswell having Johnson to himself and fully exploiting the occasion, primed with a copy of London and ready to quote on cue.

Again, Boswell's technique was illustrated by comparing the Journal entry at the time with the Life version. The memorable day ended at the Turk's Head in the Strand with Boswell uncharacteristically confessing he was lost for words to express his feelings upon what he regarded as an "unexpected and very great mark of his affection and regard" - Johnson's resolve to accompany him to Harwich prior to his departure for Holland. The description of the parting at Harwich was a further example of Boswell's art in recreating a scene combining the visual and the emotional:

As the vessel put out to sea, I kept my eyes upon him for a considerable time, while he remained rolling his majestic frame in his usual manner; and at last I perceived him walk back into the town, as he disappeared.

It was at the Turk's Head that Boswell gave an account of his family and the romantic seat of his ancestors. Johnson resolved to go there one day; Boswell "could scarcely indulge a hope that Auchinleck would indeed be honoured by his presence". Johnson realised his wish to visit Scotland and notwithstanding his prejudices was to enjoy what he later described as the pleasantest part of his life. We have Boswell to thank for that, and as a consequence of the three months' tour the Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland (1775) and hence Boswell's own Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides (1785).

The speaker described how he and his family had followed in the steps of Johnson and Boswell on their Scottish Tour and contrasted some recent photographs with descriptions of places they had visited: Edinburgh; St Andrews - where Johnson found the university "pining in decay and struggling for life" in contrast to its flourishing state today - Auchinleck, where Johnson and Boswell's father came into collision; and Glen Elg where Johnson described how they spent a night on the hay:

I directed them to bring a bundle into the room, and slept upon it in my riding coat. Mr Boswell being more delicate, laid himself sheets with hay over and under him, and lay in linen like a gentleman.

In 1763, Johnson recommended that Boswell should keep a Journal of his life "full and unreserved" with the proviso that he should keep it private and have a friend to burn it in case of his death. The first advice was unnecessary; Boswell had been keeping a Journal for some years already. The further advice was, fortunately for us, ignored. He was not to know, of course, that the survival of his Journals, letters and private papers would in itself provide an extraordinary story.

The great Yale Editions of the Private Papers of James Boswell present him in the round. His letter to Rousseau, written when he was still only twenty-four

- sixteen months after leaving Johnson at Harwich - and after travelling in Holland and Germany gives a vivid picture of the over-confident, opinionated young Scots gentleman virtually demanding an exclusive private audience with the great philosopher:

I present myself, Sir, as a man of singular merit, as a man with a feeling heart, a lively but melancholy spirit.... Open your door, then, Sir, to a man who dares to tell you that he deserves to enter it.... I await your reply with impatience.

A year later, Boswell was compiling The Journal of a Tour to Corsica and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli which was published in 1769. It was a success, running into a second edition within a few months and a revised edition the following year. Johnson recognised its merits:

Your Journal is in a very high degree curious and delightful.... You express images which operated strongly upon yourself, and you have impressed them with force upon your readers.

He wondered whether he could name any narrative by which curiosity was better excited, or better gratified. To this high praise, he added his own insight into Boswell's forte as a writer: "Your history was copied from books; your journal rose out of your own experience and observation."

A slide depicting Boswell at the Shakespeare Jubilee and attending the Masquerade resplendently dressed as an armed Corsican Chief with "Corsica Boswell" round his hat was a reminder that his literary and social standing rested on his Corsica and his friendship with the heroic figure, Paoli. To his contemporaries, he was Corsica Boswell and Paoli Boswell long before he became renowned as Johnson Boswell.

Having ranged over various facets of the Johnson friendship, the speaker referred to the last visit that Boswell made to Johnson's house and the dinner with Reynolds.

Had I known that this was the last time that I should enjoy in this world the conversation of a friend whom I so much respected, and from whom I derived so much instruction and entertainment, I should have been deeply affected. When I now look back to it, I am vexed that a single word should have been forgotten.

For so much that was remembered and preserved for posterity, we have Boswell to thank. The final farewell to Johnson at the entry to Bolt Court left Boswell with a foreboding "of our long separation."

In the year following Johnson's death, Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides appeared, dedicated to Edmond Malone who gave invaluable help and encouragement with the Life. A slide of old houses in Great Queen Street, where Boswell resided at No.56, and composed part of the Life, was linked to the satirist, John Wolcot - known as Peter Pindar - who had also lived in Great Queen Street. It served as a reminder that Boswell and Johnson had their detractors as well as admirers. Wolcot directed his wit against many public figures of the day. In contrast with the opinion expressed in the Gentleman's Magazine that Boswell's Journal of the Tour was an entertaining and instructive work, Wolcot produced a verse satire: "A Poetical and Congratulatory Epistle to James Boswell, Esq., on His Journal of a Tour to the

Hebrides with the Celebrated Dr Johnson" (1786):

O Boswell, Bozzy, Bruce, whate'er thy name,
Thou mighty Shark for anecdote and fame;
Thou Jackall, leading Lion Johnson forth
To eat Macpherson 'midst his native North

..... a thousand eyes
Survey thy books with rapture and surprise,
Loud, of thy Tour, a thousand tongues have spoken,
And wondered that thy bones were never broken

Or again, he acknowledged Boswell's popular reputation only to demolish it with a characteristic sting in the tail:

Rare Anecdotes! 'tis Anecdotes like these
That bring thee glory, and the Million please;
On these shall future times delighted stare,
Thou charming Haberdasher of Small Ware.

At least we can commend his prescience regarding the delight of future times.

Two theatrical presentations in recent years have presented Boswell in decline. One advertised "An Evening or Carnality, Calvinism, Claret and Conviviality with Dr Johnson's Biographer" set in his room in Queen Anne Street, with a bloated caricature of Boswell to accompany it. The other, depicting the old lawyer of 1793, was set in his last London address in Great Portland Street. This, too, depicted a dissolute, dishevelled Boswell. In contrast, the final slide of the George Willison portrait - painted in Rome in 1765 and now in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery - showed the handsome young traveller of the Grand Tour, resplendent in scarlet and gold, with a green gown edged with fur. In concluding the tribute to Boswell, we returned to that first eventful meeting in Tom Davies's shop where two contrasting yet strangely complementary lives came together. Yet as his own work is re-assessed and his literary standing advances, he had liberated himself from Johnson and can stand proudly today in his own right.

JOHNSON AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IMAGES OF SCOTLAND

Miss Claire Lamont, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne

15 February 1992

Chairman: Trevor Russell-Cobb BA, BSc(Econ)

In Johnson's London (1738) he writes

For who would leave, unbrib'd, Hibernia's land
Or change the rocks of Scotland for the Strand?
There none are swept by sudden fate away,
But all whom hunger spares, with age decay....(11.9-12)¹

The young man from Staffordshire had arrived in the capital a year before with, he used to claim, 2½d in his pocket.' His disillusionment at the chances of the poor man making good in London comes across in these lines, which are apparently a version of the pastoral, a recognition by those in cities of the simpler and less corrupted life of the country. But even if

we suppose that they represent more than a piece of temporary rhetoric on Johnson's part the lines make extremely modest claims on behalf of Ireland or Scotland. The predominant rural feature of Scotland is 'rocks'. And although death in Scotland is likely to be by natural causes, rather than by 'sudden fate', it is discouraging to note that one of those causes is hunger. It is not surprising that when later in the same poem he again seeks to find a rural retreat from the hazards of the Strand he turns to his own native and fertile Midlands, 'the fair Banks of Severn or of Trent' (1.211). I should like, however, to remain with 'the rocks of Scotland'. They are an image of Scotland, in Johnson's definition of the word image, 'a representation of any thing to the mind; a picture drawn in the fancy.'³ My subject is eighteenth-century images of Scotland, and I shall try to isolate those which were in Johnson's mind in part by reference to those which were current in his day but which he did not share. The culmination of the argument is his Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland (1775) the account of his visit in 1773, a visit in which representations long held in the mind finally met reality.

One image of Scotland from the south is that it is a wild tract of country north of a line. The line in the mind may be the Anglo-Scottish border, established between Tweed and Solway by the twelfth century. It may be one of the walls built by the Romans. Daniel Defoe at the Antonine Wall between the Forth and Clyde explained it thus:

the Romans finding it not only difficult, but useless to them, to conquer the Northern Highlands, and impossible to keep them, if conquer'd; contented themselves to draw a Line, so we now call it, cross this narrow Part of the Country, and fortify it with Redoubts, and Stations of Soldiers to confine those wild Nations which were without'

The Scots had the traditional vaunt that they were not conquered by the Romans; to which the retort was that the Romans gave up the attempt on such unpromising country and built a wall instead. Everything north of it seemed therefore fierce, uncultivated and probably about to erupt over the wall. In earlier centuries the eruption might be military. As the Bishop of Ely points out to Shakespeare's Henry V the 'weasel Scot' was always ready to invade at any moment when the English crown appeared weak.⁴ After the Union of the Crowns of the two countries in 1603 the eruption would be of Scots seeking their fortunes in the wealthier south. Johnson's famous retort to the Scot John Ogilvie, 'Sir, let me tell you, the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England!'⁵ 'alludes to this tradition.

Later conquerors from the south also left their mark on Scotland. Cromwell's conquest left a series of forts in the Highlands, which were repaired and added to by the Hanoverian governments of the eighteenth century in response to the Jacobite threat. Defoe noticed the military forts in his day, and then commented 'But where Armies have march'd, private Travellers may certainly pass'. (805) An image of Scotland as a country in any way conquered is one which Johnson had to treat with care. The parliaments of England and Scotland had finally been united in 1707 and whatever means had been used to achieve that union they had not included military conquest. His visit, however, took place less than thirty years after the crushing of the Jacobite rising of 1745. By no means all Highlanders had taken the Jacobite side; but it was Highland Scotland that had taken the brunt of the government's vengeance. Johnson saw the ruins of the Cromwellian fort at Inverness and was entertained

in the Hanoverian forts of Fort George and Fort Augustus. Like Defoe Johnson was indebted to the army for any roads laid beyond Inverness.'

The intention of Johnson's journey was not to visit Scotland in general, but specifically to visit the Western Islands. He claims at the beginning of his published *Journey* that he had desired to visit the Western Islands for so long 'that I scarcely remember how the wish was originally excited'.⁽³⁾ He told Boswell, however, that his curiosity had been aroused by reading in boyhood a book published by an inhabitant of one of the islands, Martin Martin, a native of Skye.⁴ The book was A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland published in 1703. The route that Johnson and Boswell took was up the east coast of Scotland, then west along the Moray Firth to Inverness. A quicker route to the islands would have been to sail from the Clyde, as a contemporary traveller, William Pennant did. There were reasons, however, for taking the longer and more arduous journey north. In the previous summer Johnson and Boswell had met Sir Alexander MacDonald of Sleat in London and he had invited them to stay with him on their visit to the islands.⁵ He lived on Skye, where Martin Martin had come from. It was going to the heart of Johnson's desire to visit the islands to go to Skye first. And it suited Boswell to go to the islands by the northerly route. It enabled him to ensure that Johnson visited the Scottish university cities where Boswell could be assured of hospitality and where perhaps Johnson might experience something to modify his usually pessimistic view of Scottish 'Enlightenment' learning. The travellers set out north from Edinburgh on 18 August 1773. Boswell took the opportunity to borrow the copy of Martin Martin's Description of the Western Islands from the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh for the journey.

The organisation of his published travels indicates the impetus of Johnson's mind. He dismisses Edinburgh, where he had stayed for three days, as 'a city too well known to admit description'.⁽³⁾ The object of his journey and his book is the islands. He gives short chapters to the places visited on the route north, St Andrews, Arbroath, Montrose, etc. After Fort Augustus he pauses for more philosophical reflection. The choice of a northern route to the islands meant the advantage of frequented roads at least as far as Inverness, but exposed the travellers to a difficult crossing westwards from Fort Augustus to the sea at Glenelg. They had a two days' crossing of mountainous country, and it caused Johnson to reflect on mountainous regions and to name one of his chapters The Highlands.

Mountains are part of everyone's image of Scotland. Defoe says of the country north of Inverness that it

cannot call for a distinct Description, because it is all one undistinguish'd Range of Mountains and Woods, overspread with vast, and almost uninhabited Rocks and Steeps fill'd with Deer innumerable (819)

He summed it up as 'this frightful Country'. The volume of Defoe's Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain which includes his journeys to Scotland was published in 1727. Another traveller, Edmund Burt, who was in Scotland in the 1720s, but whose book, Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland was not published until 1754, has much to say about mountains.

To cast one's Eye from an Eminence towards a Group of them, they appear still one above another, fainter and fainter..... and the whole of a dismal gloomy Brown drawing upon a dirty Purple; and most of all disagreeable when the Heath is in Bloom.¹⁰

Burt is a good observer; he remarks that the rugged outlines of the mountains look particularly harsh when seen against the sky, 'and the clearer the Day, the more rude and offensive they are to the Sight'. (II, 11)

And, certainly, it is the Deformity of the Hills that makes the Natives conceive of their naked *Straths and Glens*, as of the most beautiful Objects in Nature. (II, 15)

Yet by the end of his book Burt acknowledges that he has been won over by the mountains '(by what Charm I know not)' and is not unwilling to return to them. (II, 135) The eighteenth century was won over to the Scottish mountains as it had been won over to the Alps and was undergoing the same conversion to the charms of the English Lakes. William Robertson, the historian and Principal of Edinburgh University, on hearing that Boswell planned to bring Johnson to Scotland, was 'confident he would be pleased with the grand features of nature in many parts of this country'.¹¹ It was unwise of Robertson to tempt Johnson to Scotland with 'grand features of nature'. Robertson did not know that Johnson's business in Scotland 'was with life and manners'. (*Journey*, 32) Presumably he had not heard Johnson's riposte to Ogilvie's observation 'that Scotland had a great many noble wild prospects'.

JOHNSON. 'I believe, Sir, you have a great many. Norway, too, has noble wild prospects; and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble wild prospects'¹²

In his published *Journey* Johnson was able to base the early chapters on the experiences and thoughts he had had in each place visited. It is when he reaches the mountainous district west of Fort Augustus that he starts to confront the purpose of making the journey, which was arduous for a man of 63, whose knowledge of mountains hitherto had been of the Peak. Johnson had behind him many adroit and humorous remarks at the expense of Scotland and the Scots. In fact these ripostes are not usually at the expense of the country, but rise out of conversational situations in which he takes delight in defeating Boswell or some Boswell substitute (another Scot, defeated in Boswell's hearing). It is in no mood of verbal triumph that he considers the mountains in the *Journey*. He is now confronting 'the rocks of Scotland'. He is also confronting the business of writing a travel book. Johnson had written a searching account of the bad travel writer in his *Idler* paper no. 97 in 1760. In it he claimed that the narrations of travellers commonly disappoint because the traveller moves about the country too quickly and thoughtlessly.

This is the common style of those sons of enterprise, who visit savage countries, and range through solitude and desolation; who pass a desert, and tell that it is sandy; who cross a valley and find that it is green He that would travel for the entertainment of others, should remember that the great object of remark is human life.¹³

It was when he was first engulfed in mountains, on the way to Glenelg, that Johnson 'first conceived the thought of this narration.'⁽⁴⁰⁾ He could not simply tell his readers that the Highlands were mountainous. The Highlands presented a challenge to the purpose of his journey and the purpose of his book. Why should one travel to mountainous regions? Johnson did not find them beautiful. He was struck by their barrenness and solitude. He acknowledges the vantage point of an observer used to natural scenery where man has combined with nature to produce fertility:

An eye accustomed to flowery pastures and waving harvests is astonished and repelled by this wide extent of hopeless sterility. The appearance is that of matter incapable of form or usefulness, dismissed by nature from her care and disinherited of her favours, left in its original elemental state, or quickened only with one sullen power of useless vegetation. (39-40)

That is close to Burt's idea of 'the Deformity of the Hills'. Why should anyone travel to the mountains, especially since 'it is easy to sit at home and conceive rocks and heath, and waterfalls'? A short paragraph explains why regions of solitude should be visited even by those whose 'object of remark is human life.'

Regions mountainous and wild, thinly inhabited, and little cultivated, make a great part of the earth, and he that has never seen them, must live unacquainted with much of the face of nature, and with one of the great scenes of human existence. (40)

The mountainous district on the way to Glenelg was certainly an introduction to 'the rocks of Scotland'. The pairing of those rocks with 'Hibernia's strand' in Johnson's *London* may imply that the Scottish rocks he had in mind were those of her coasts and islands, rather than her mountains. His desire had long been 'to visit the *Hebrides*, or Western Islands of Scotland'. Of these two names the second is purely descriptive, and if there was more to it than that it may have contained an intentional reference to Martin Martin's book. But the other name, the *Hebrides*, carried with it more associations. The name the *Hebrides* is thought to derive from the word which Pliny writes in Latin as *Hebudes* meaning probably uncultivated lands. The *u* in *Hebudes* is thought to have become *ri* by error.¹⁴ The name *Hebrides* had been used by poets in ways which had built up some imaginative associations with the word. Milton in *Lycidas* had let his mind range

where'er thy bones are hurled,
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world.

James Thomson in *The Castle of Indolence* wrote of

a shepherd of the Hebrid Isles,
Placed far amid the melancholy main

William Collins wrote of 'the moist marge of each cold Hebrid Isle'.¹⁵ The object of Johnson's journey was to visit these islands, which accounts for the unexpected way in which in the published *Journey* Inch Keith, a small island in the Firth of Forth, is described at some length shortly after Edinburgh had been dismissed without description. In a letter to Mrs Thrale Johnson makes it clear that it was at his insistence that they had stopped at Inch Keith.¹⁶ Johnson is obviously thinking ahead to the object of his journey when he writes 'Here ... we made the first experiment of unfrequented coasts.'¹⁷

Johnson's letters and private writings give insight into his feeling on finally visiting the islands. He wrote to Mrs Thrale from Skye,

Little did I once think of seeing this region of obscurity, and
little did you once expect a salutation from this verge of
European Life. (348)

That is one image of the Hebrides, and similar to Milton's. Johnson makes play with another image in a letter to Mrs Thrale, an image which he mockingly expects her to hold:

You are perhaps imagining that I am withdrawn from the gay and busy world into regions of peace and pastoral felicity, and am enjoying the reliques of the golden age; that I am surveying Nature's magnificence from a mountain, or remarking her minuter beauties on the flowery bank of a winding rivulet (359)

He added, 'The use of travelling is to regulate imagination by reality'. He began a letter to Lord Elibank, 'On the rugged shore of Skie, I had the honour of your lordship's letter' (352) He was fascinated and frightened by small islands, and expressed the fear of being

shut up for months upon some little protuberance of earth, that just appears above the sea, and perhaps is scarcely marked upon a Map. (370)

The wind was more frightening to him than the sea: 'Mr Boswell and I are at present at the disposal of the winds'. (353) He was, however, perturbed by the remorseless beating of waves. In a poem written in Latin on the isle of Skye Johnson uses the pounding of the sea as an image of the restless waves of the mind."

Two-thirds of Johnson's published Journey is devoted to the islands, of which he visited eight, Skye and Raarsay, Coll, Mull, Ulva, Inch Kenneth, Sandiland and Iona. I have tried to suggest that there was an image of the Hebrides in the eighteenth century. Individual islands also had a reputation in the southern consciousness. Of these the chief two were Skye and Iona, both of which Johnson visited. One or two other islands also existed in the mind. One of these was the island group of St Kilda, remote beyond the outer Hebrides, whose description also first by Martin Martin had given them a reputation for primitive simplicity and virtue.¹⁸ Another was Staffa recently brought to the public attention by an article by Joseph Banks in The Gentleman's Magazine in 1772 and an account by Banks printed in William Pennant's Tour in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides, published in 1774.¹⁹ Johnson did not visit the outer Hebrides, let alone St Kilda. According to Boswell it was only heavy seas that prevented them from landing on Staffa.²⁰ Johnson was probably wary of the terms in which Banks admired Staffa: 'Compared to this what are the cathedrals or the palaces built by men!' ²¹ He was probably not gratified to be told that the tremendous cave on Staffa was called by the people 'the cave of *Fiuhn* ... whom the translator of *Ossian's* works has called *Fingal*'.²² Johnson acknowledges Banks but says little about the island, although he seems to have seen it closely enough to have said more. (141-2) As the reputation of the island as a cathedral of nature spread he reflected how it took a traveller to notice what the local inhabitants had not recognised as remarkable.

The Highlands of Scotland were associated in the English mind with the supernatural. This was confirmed by the best known literary work set in the north of Scotland, Shakespeare's Macbeth. Johnson recalls the play when on his way to Inverness he passed through Forres 'the town to which Macbeth was travelling, when he met the weird sisters in his way.' (25) He added, 'This to an Englishman is classic ground.' Other less sinister forms of supernatural were commonly reported from the Highlands and islands of Scotland.

Martin Martin described beliefs and practices which were current in the islands in his day. Johnson was not the only eighteenth-century English writer to read Martin's book. The poet William Collins did so too, and from it got instances of the supernatural which appear in an poem which is known as Collins' Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland'. The title was not Collins' own, and probably owes something to a phrase in Johnson's *Life of Collins*. It was not published until 1788."

In his *Journey* Johnson is sceptical about the supernatural on almost all occasions when it is mentioned. On Raasay shaped stones were frequently found. 'The people call them "elf-bolts," and believe that the fairies shoot them at the cattle.' (63) Johnson knows them to be stone arrowheads left by earlier inhabitants. Some other superstitions he says are 'by the diligence of the ministers almost extirpated.' (106)

Of Brownie, mentioned by Martin, nothing has been heard for many years. Brownie was a sturdy fairy; who, if he was fed, and kindly treated, would, as they said, do a great deal of work.

There was another supernatural creature, *Greogach*, for whom milk used to be put out 'within these three-and-thirty years'.

These were beliefs which had already been superseded, and which had the status with Johnson of tales. He was not confronted with the believer, and still less with the practice of laying out milk. Where he was confronted with a supernatural claim which might impinge upon him he was impatient. One evening at Ulinish on Skye a short voyage was taken to see a cave. There was conversation among the Gaelic-speaking boatmen. Johnson writes this:

They expected no good event of the voyage; for one of them declared that he heard the cry of an *English* ghost. This omen I was not told till after our return, and therefore cannot claim the dignity of despising it. (74)

This episode is not far from the aspect of the supernatural which is treated at the greatest length by Johnson, the second sight.

Second sight is the involuntary capacity to see things which are either too distant for the usual powers of perception or are in the future. The faculty of second sight has been recognized for a long time, and instances of it are found in many cultures. The first use of the term recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is in 1616. In the late seventeenth-century a group of men associated with the Royal Society became interested in investigating second sight. Among their number were Boyle, Pepys and Aubrey. The one whose researches were most fruitful was John Aubrey. In his *Miscellanies*, published in 1696, he gave 'An Accurate Account of *Second-Sighted Men* in Scotland: in Two Letters from a learned Friend of mine in Scotland". Aubrey's instances come largely from mainland Scotland; but he gives two references to the isle of Skye. The next important account of second sight was by Martin Martin. At the end of his *Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* of 1703 there is 'A Particular Account of the *Second Sight*'. Martin lists specific instances of second sight, and he names the places where they occurred. Many of them are in Skye, especially in the north of Skye. That was where Martin was born. Martin gives a rich harvest of instances, but he also admits that second sight is less prevalent than it had been formerly. There were

commentators willing to explain why. Thomas Tickell contributed a paper to The Spectator in 1714 on the 'Desire of knowing future Events'. He wrote this:

It is not unworthy Observation that superstitious Enquiries into future Events prevail more or less, in proportion to the Improvement of liberal Arts and useful Knowledge in the several Parts of the World. Accordingly we find, that magical Incantations remain in *Lapland*; in the more remote Parts of *Scotland* they have their second Sight, and several of our own Countrymen see abundance of Fairies.²⁴

There were those who thought second sight a dangerous or improper faculty. They were probably exceeded in number by those who did not believe it at all. Edmund Burt blamed Martin for what he regarded as 'the Cheat' (II, 212), and he added 'But these Islands are so remote and unfrequented, they are a very proper Subject for Invention'. (II, 288) There were mocking references to second sight in The Tatler and The Spectator. Anti-Jacobite writers start to use the 'second sighted' Highlander as a figure of contempt in political satire. In Addison's paper, The Freeholder, there is second-sighted Sawney who has a vision of a Temple of Rebellion.²⁵

In his *Dictionary* (1755) Johnson defines second sight as 'The power of seeing things future, or things distant: supposed inherent in some of the Scottish islanders.' The definition owes something to Martin Martin. The quotation which follows, however, is from The Freeholder:

As he was going out to steal a sheep, he was seised with a fit of *second sight*: the face of the country presented him with a wide prospect of new scenes, which he had never seen before.

The tone of contempt remains in the second quotation Johnson gives, to illustrate the adjective second-sighted. It is also from The Freeholder:

Sawney was descended of an ancient family, renowned for their skill in prognosticks: most of his ancestors were *second sighted*, and his mother but narrowly escaped for a witch.

One cannot escape the impression that at the time of compiling the *Dictionary* Johnson was a sceptic concerning second sight.

In 1763 A Treatise on the Second Sight, Dreams and Apparitions was published by one calling himself Theophilus Insulanus - the lover of God from the islands. He was William MacLeod of Hamer on the Isle of Skye, and his intention in defending second sight was to combat religious scepticism. He gives many instances of second sight, a significant number of them from Skye. Martin Martin had established the association between Skye and second sight. His book lies behind Collins' reference to the seer 'In Skye's lone isle'. (1.54) MacLeod's book was less well known, but it could only confirm the association. Johnson could not have approached Skye without knowing that it had been the centre of the debate about second sight.

Johnson's introduction to the passage on second sight in his *Journey* indicates how well established the image was.

We should have had little claim to the praise of curiosity, if we had

not endeavoured with particular attention to examine the question of the "second sight." (107)

Johnson debates the issue, refining some of the arguments put forward by Martin. Despite the disparaging quotations in the Dictionary Johnson had previously expressed a wish to know more about second sight. In March 1772 Johnson and Boswell had drunk tea with Mrs Williams who had told them a story of second sight which had taken place in Wales. Boswell adds '[Johnson] listened to it very attentively, and said he should be glad to have some instances of that faculty well authenticated.'²⁶ What would authenticate second sight for Johnson? There is only one way to authenticate it. Johnson writes of those experiencing second sight

they are impressed with images, of which the event only shews them the meaning. They tell what they have seen to others, who are at that time not more knowing than themselves, but may become at last very adequate witnesses, by comparing the narrative with its verification. (110)

It would have been good fortune indeed if Johnson could have become such a witness. The next best would be to talk to those who had had experience of second sight. Johnson had wished to talk to a second-sighted person. Martin called them seers, which Johnson imitates. (Collins adds some elements not present in Martin in his reference to 'the gifted wizard seer', 1.54). Johnson writes

To talk with any of these seers is not easy. There is one living in *Sky*, with whom we would have gladly conversed; but he was very gross and ignorant, and knew no *English*. (110)

It was not possible to talk to a seer, but there was plenty of opportunity to hear the testimony of others: 'we heard many tales of these airy shows, with more or less evidence and distinctness.' (108) Professor Jemielity has shown on how many occasions during his stay on *Skye* second sight was a topic of conversation.²⁷ Some of those whom Johnson met had contributed instances of second sight to Theophilus Insulanus' collection. It is a feature of Johnson as an enquirer to lay out conflicting arguments and then sum up their complexity memorably. The conclusion of his passage on second sight is an example

There is, against it, the seeming analogy of things confusedly seen, and little understood; and for it, the indistinct cry of national persuasion, which may be perhaps resolved at last into prejudice and tradition. I never could advance my curiosity to conviction; but came away at last only willing to believe. (110)

Why was Johnson 'willing to believe' in second sight, when he was unwilling to believe in other supernatural beliefs of the islanders? One reason is expressed in this sentence: 'It is an involuntary affection, in which neither hope nor fear are known to have any part.' (110) Most other supernatural beliefs and practices were based on hope or fear. It is also likely that he was overwhelmed by the sheer number of those who did believe it:

The Islanders of all degrees, whether of rank or understanding, universally admit it, except the ministers, who universally deny it, and are suspected to deny it, in consequence of a system, against conviction. (108-9)

Intellectually Johnson left Skye willing to believe. Yet on an occasion when he was taken by surprise, the surprise of the prescience relating to himself, he was stoutly sceptical. I have quoted already the boatman at Ulinish who 'declared that he heard the cry of an English ghost.' Johnson adds, 'This omen I was not told till after our return, and therefore cannot claim the dignity of despising it.' (74) Johnson calls it an omen. Had he forgotten a passage in Martin Martin about 'a way of foretelling Death by a Cry'? It is apparent that second sight is to do with *sight*. Yet in Martin Martin's 'Account of the Second-Sight' there is mention of a comparable perception involving not sight but sound:

THERE is a way of foretelling Death by a Cry that they call *Taisk*, which some call a *Wrath* in the Low-land.

THEY hear a loud Cry without doors, exactly resembling the Voice of some particular Person, whose death is foretold by it."

Martin gives an instance of it from Skye, and William MacLeod had one or two instances of prescient sounds. It was possible that Johnson was very close to an episode similar to second sight, and that he was too close for comfort.

I have tried to suggest aspects of Johnson's *Journey* that take impetus from images of Scotland current in England in the eighteenth century. I can do so no longer without mentioning the image which is probably the first to spring to mind, that derived from Macpherson's *Ossian*. Macpherson's supposed translations, starting with fragments published in 1760 and moving on to more finished works of Highland poetry, describe an ancient world. His bard, Ossian son of the hero Fingal, is supposed to have lived in the third century. Ossian describes a maritime culture between Scotland and Ireland, before the coming of Christianity and before clanship. It is a heroic age: its heroes are engaged in hunting or fighting. It surprises with its number of dauntless heroines who engage in the fighting or mourn at graves marked with piles of stones. Its terrain is mountainous, with pure streams and scattered trees. The sun and moon supply much of the imagery; but they are frequently obscured by mist. This was a heady mixture and it was read with delight. It influenced artists more than poets, but Blake was clearly influenced by Ossian. In talking about Johnson one has to approach *Ossian* carefully, because of his well-known contempt for Macpherson. The question of Macpherson's sources and his honesty was always waiting to erupt in Johnson's conversations in Scotland: it is the only matter in which his harmonious relations with the Rev. Donald MacQueen in Skye were ruffled. (119) If one sets that aside it is clear that an image of Scotland derived from Ossian would be of little use to Johnson. He did not have a romantic view of scenery, and the Ossianic works show a complete disregard for the 'life and manners' which Johnson was interested in, as other heroic poetry would.

A question remains, however, from the *Ossian* controversy, and it concerns the figure of the bard and nature of an oral tradition. The Highland bard was known to English readers before Ossian. Martin Martin had described one, and Edmund Burt had heard one at the table of Simon, Lord Lovat. Martin's description inspired Collins:

Old Runic bards shall seem to rise around
With uncouth lyres, in many-coloured vest,
Their matted hair with boughs fantastic crowned...(11.41-44)

There were no bards in the islands when Johnson visited and he was not able to discover how recently they had died out. (111-12) He did not in any case have a romantic view of a bard, as one who wrote from inspiration without the help of learning. In allusion to Macpherson he wrote, 'After what has been lately talked of Highland Bards, and Highland genius, many will startle when they are told, that the Earse never was a written language' (114) Johnson was deflected from any idea of Highland genius by the dreadful fact of Highland illiteracy. What level of learning had any man attained without books? It is apparent that he underestimated the oral tradition: 'In an unwritten speech, nothing that is not very short is transmitted from one generation to another.' (116) It was still a surprise in the twentieth century to discover the number of lines that could be recited by singers living in the Balkans, descendants of Homer's world.²⁹ There was another disadvantage among a warlike people:

one generation of ignorance effaces the whole series of unwritten history. Books are faithful repositories, which may be a while neglected or forgotten; but when they are opened again, will again impart their instruction: memory, once interrupted, is not to be recalled. (111)

What between Macpherson and an illiterate society the question of the bard was a disturbing one for Johnson. Collins, however, had written about other sorts of song than that of the bard. He envisaged the 'choral dirge that mourns some chieftain brave' and

some sounding tale of war's alarms;
When at the bugle's call, with fire and steel,
The sturdy clans poured forth their bonny swarms,
And hostile brothers met to prove each other's arms. (11.49-52)

These were songs from Scotland's more recent past, alluding to clanship and war. Johnson did not hear warlike songs in the islands, but he did hear work songs. In Mull he heard a rowing song,³⁰ and on Ramsay a song to accompany harvest. (62) One evening one of the ladies sang two songs in Gaelic. Johnson asked to know what they were about and was told that one was a love song, and the other 'a farewell composed by one of the Islanders that was going ... to seek his fortune in America.' (59)

Of all the islands off the north-west of Scotland there was none as famous as Iona. Icolmille, the island of Columba's church, was mentioned in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* as the place from which Christianity was brought to northern Scotland. On Iona was once the cathedral of the Bishop of the Isles, monastic buildings for men and for women, and burial grounds where kings of Scotland, Ireland and Norway were buried. Johnson and Boswell determined to visit it; Boswell was the instigator. He had been taught from a boy to reverence Iona and expected to find it a place of spirituality. There are indications that Johnson was more wary.

The words of Tertullian have been applied to Scotland, 'Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo vero subdita' The territories of the Britons inaccessible to the Romans [are] subdued by Christ.³¹ The fact did not make Johnson feel any more at home in Scotland, because he disliked the reformed religion of Scotland, Presbyterianism. He especially lamented the destruction associated with the Reformation which he found particularly visible in Scotland. Other eighteenth-century travellers wrote crudely on this matter.

Daniel Defoe visited Melrose in the Scottish border, and he wrote this:

Here we saw the ruins of the once famous Abbey of *Mailross*, the Greatness of which may be a little judg'd of by its vastly extended Remains But the Reformation has triumph'd over all these Things... nor can any Protestant mourn the Loss of these Seminaries of Superstition (763)

Johnson was in no mood of Protestant triumph when he was in Edinburgh. He wrote to Mrs Thrale that he had seen the Cathedral, 'which I told Robertson I wished to see because it had been once a Church' (*Letters*, 341) As Johnson travelled through Scotland he regarded the ruins of ecclesiastical buildings in mournful succession: a chapel being used as a greenhouse in St Andrews (7), the ruins of Elgin Cathedral (23), two roofless chapels on the Isle of Coll, 'the faithful witness of the triumph of Reformation'. (122) Johnson wrote, as if in reproach to Defoe:

It has been, for many years, popular to talk of the lazy devotion of the Romish clergy; over the sleepy laziness of men that erected churches, we may indulge our superiority with a new triumph, by comparing it with the fervid activity of those who suffer them to fall. (65)

He was less disappointed by Iona than he might have been because Iona had been extensively described by earlier travellers. The most recent was Thomas Pennant, who had visited the previous year, and whose book appeared the year before Johnson's. Pennant found the ruins of the nunnery church full of cowdung and he paid a listless fellow to remove it so that he could see the tomb of the last prioress." As he had observed before, 'in many parts of *Scotland* our Lord seems still to be worshipped in a stable' Johnson withdrew from detail to general reflection, and his famous lines have often been quoted:

That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of *Marathon*, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of *Iona*. (148)

There is no escape, however, from the fact that the dignity of Iona is all in the past.

I have mentioned images of the terrain; but there were images of Scotland which concerned the people, and especially their dress. Defoe remarks of Glasgow

Here is a Manufacture of Plaiding a Stuff Cross-strip'd with Yellow and red, and other Mixtures for the Plaids or Vails, which the Ladies in Scotland wear, and which is a Habit peculiar to the Country. (747)

Burt, describing the plaid - 'made of Silk or fine Worsted, chequered with various lively Colours' - adds that 'it is brought over the Head, and may hide or discover the Face according to the Wearer's Fancy or occasion.' (I, 100) Defoe only very casually mentions the dress of the Highland men. They dress

in the Plaid and the Trousers, go naked from below the Knee to the mid Thighs, wear the Durk and the Pistol at the Girdle, and the Targ or Target at their Shoulder. (837)

Burt gives a precise account of the plaid and trews, the dress of the gentlemen, and the 'common Habit of the ordinary Highlanders', the kilt. He spells it *Quelt*; its use in Burt is the first occurrence in the Oxford English Dictionary of the noun kilt. (II, 184-86) The kilt that Burt describes is what has come to be known as the 'great kilt', *ad hoc* pleating of the plaid to encircle the waist, secured with a belt, after which the remainder of the material is thrown over the shoulder. Johnson first saw women wearing plaids in Aberdeen. (*Letters*, 345) However he was less likely than earlier travellers to see Highland dress because it had been made illegal by acts passed after the defeat of the Jacobites in 1746. The wearing of tartan and the plaid remained illegal until 1782. Johnson is an interesting commentator on the extent to which the law was observed in the islands. He saw 'only one gentleman completely clothed in the ancient habit' (51) That was Malcolm MacLeod whom Johnson met at Raasay and who was a staunch Jacobite. But what about the others? They seem to have made a compromise between the law, their preferences and their poverty. 'In the islands the plaid is rarely worn.' (51) Nonetheless the 'fillibeg, or lower garment, is still very common, and the bonnet almost universal' (52) Johnson does not use the word kilt. Fillibeg is the Gaelic word for the short kilt, that is the kilt without the plaid attached. The 'bonnet', a flat woollen cap, usually in blue, was the well known dress of Scotsmen from Lowlands as well as Highlands.

Collins envisaged the Highlands where the 'sturdy clans poured forth their bonny swarms'. Martin Martin had described the clans and the feudal power of the chiefs. Johnson admitted that he had hoped to find that form of social organisation. His acknowledgment that he had come too late is one of the passages most often quoted from his *Journey*: 'We came thither too late to see what we expected, a people of peculiar appearance, and a system of antiquated life.' (57) Johnson was struck by the vestiges of the clan chief's power. He saw the deference with which the chief of the clan Maclean was received on Iona. (162) As to the chief's state: Johnson dined to the sound of bagpipes in Armadale, Dunvegan and Coll. (103) The economics of clanship, however, by which the chief was supported by the labours of his clanmen in return for his protection was being undermined by the introduction of money. Johnson guessed that only in St Kilda and in smaller and remoter islands were there still societies without money. (113)

The Highlanders were known to be a warlike people. Johnson was told that battles between the clans had ceased (47) It is the unspoken knowledge behind the text of his book that Highlanders had been involved in a bloody campaign not thirty years before. It was the punitive laws passed after their eruption that hastened the decline of clanship by removing the inherited powers of the chiefs, powers that had been both military and legal. The changing state of the Highlands was little known elsewhere. Johnson noted that

To the southern inhabitants of Scotland, the state of the mountains and the islands is equally unknown with that of Borneo or Sumatra: Of both they have only heard a little, and guess the rest. (88)

What are our images of Scotland but guesses; guesses that lodge in the imagination. They become 'pictures drawn in the fancy.' Johnson's journey started from images of Scotland, some long held, some shared and some his own, and subjected them to rigorous enquiry. In following him the reader learns the lesson he impressed on Mrs Thrale, that 'The use of travelling is to regulate imagination by reality.'

1. Samuel Johnson, Poems, ed. E.L. McAdam, Jr., with George Milne, (The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, VI), 1964, 48.
2. Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, rev. L.F. Powell, 1934-50, I, 101 n.1.
3. A Dictionary of the English Language, 1755, Image 5.
4. Daniel Defoe, A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain, (1724-27), ed. G.D.H. Cole, 1927, II, 751. All subsequent quotations from Defoe are from this edition and are indicated by a page number in brackets after the quotation.
5. Shakespeare, Henry V, I, ii, 170.
6. Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. cit., I, 425.
7. Samuel Johnson, A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland, (1775), ed. Mary Lascelles, (The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, IX), 1971, 27. All subsequent quotations from Johnson's Journey are from this edition and are indicated by a page number in brackets after the quotation.
8. Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D., ed. Frederick A. Pottle and Charles H. Bennett, 1963, 3.
9. Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. cit., II, 173-8; V, 14.
10. Edmund Burt, Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland, 1754,, II, 10. All subsequent quotations from Burt are from this edition and are indicated by a page number in brackets after the quotation.
11. Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, ed. cit., 5.
12. Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. cit., I, 425.
13. Samuel Johnson, 'The Idler' and 'The Adventurer', ed. W.J. Bate, John M. Bullitt and L.F. Powell, (The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, II), 1963, 300.
14. The Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed., 1989, Hebridean; W.C. Mackenzie, Scottish Place Names, 1931, 23, 123, 133n.
15. John Milton, 'Lycidas' (1638), 11. 154-8, Milton Poetical Works, ed. Douglas Bush, 1966, 146-7; James Thomson, The Castle of Indolence (1748), st.xxx, 'The Seasons' and 'The Castle of Indolence', ed. James Sambrook, 1972, 174; William Collins, 'An Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland' (1749-50), 1.141, The Poems of Gray, Collins, and Goldsmith, ed. Roger Lonsdale, 1969, 511.
16. 25 August, 1773. The Letters of Samuel Johnson, ed. R.W. Chapman, 1952, I, 342. Subsequent quotations from Johnson's Letters are from this edition and are indicated by a page number in brackets after the quotation.

17. Poems, ed. cit., 278-9.
18. Martin Martin, A Voyage to St. Kilda, 1698.
19. For the 'discovery' of Staffa see Samuel Johnson, A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland, ed. J.D. Fleeman, 1975, 233, n.5.
20. Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, ed. cit., 326.
21. William Pennant, A Tour in Scotland, and Voyage to the Hebrides, MDCCLXXII, 1774, 262.
22. *Ibid.*, 263.
23. For the history of Collins' 'Ode' see the headnote in The Poems of Gray, Collins, and Goldsmith, ed. Roger Lonsdale, 1969, 492-501.
24. The Spectator, ed. Donald F. Bond, 1965, no. 604, V, 65.
25. Joseph Addison, The Freeholder, ed. James Leheny, 1979, no.27, 149-52.
26. Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. cit., II, 150.
27. Thomas Jemielity, 'Samuel Johnson, the Second Sight, and his Sources', Studies in English Literature, XIV, 1974, 403-420, esp. 408-415.
28. Martin Martin, A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland, 2nd ed., 1716, 305.
29. A. B. Lord, ed., Serbo-Croatian Heroic Songs, 1954.
30. Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, ed. cit., 326.
31. Tertullian, 'Adversus Judaeos' VII, Patrologia Latina, ed. J. -P. Migne, II, 1844, col. 610.
32. William Pennant, op. cit., 246.
33. William Pennant, A Tour in Scotland, MDCCLXIX, third edition, 1774, 233.

**DR JOHNSON AND CHARLES AND MARY LAMB: INTELLECTUAL ASSUMPTIONS
IN THE ART OF WRITING FOR CHILDREN**

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It was known that Carolyn Misenheimer would not be well enough to travel to London to deliver this paper in person and it was hoped that her husband would be with us to read it in her stead. In the event, however, he too was not able to travel and the paper was read by David Parker. Members will be pleased to learn that both the Misenheimers have made good recoveries.

Writing successfully for children has always presented a unique challenge. Perhaps for that reason, in the present day almost all writers concentrate their talents on either adult literature or children's literature. The great exception to that pattern in modern life appears to be C. S. Lewis who wrote critically acclaimed scholarly books on both literature and religion while simultaneously achieving the pinnacle of success in children's literature with his seven-book series The Chronicles of Narnia which first appeared, one yearly, from 1950 through 1956. In the nineteenth century, Robert Louis Stevenson attained immortality as the finest essayist of the last two decades of the century.¹ He was also the most distinguished romantic novelist of his age;² but despite the fact that he wrote primarily for adults, his A Child's Garden of Verses is a universally recognized children's classic.³

Hence it is clear that some few authors do succeed in spanning the gulf between adult and children's literature with great aplomb. The remarkable point about both Dr Johnson and Charles and Mary Lamb is that they, though two of them basically writers for adults, wrote enduring literature for children before the public, and the publishing world, realized that children need literature of their very own. What elements caused these three writers to think of children as a distinct audience with special needs and desires and to respect that audience sufficiently to write specific works for it?

As one studies the lives of these authors, one perceives certain similarities of background and circumstance, particularly in the area of self-directed, voracious reading from an early age, guided in each case by an innate sense of taste for writers who could capture the imagination, expand the boundaries of the mind by expressing arresting thoughts with rich but precise use of words, and inspire the highest instincts of mankind.

From his earliest memories, Dr Johnson's attitudes concerning proper reading for children were shaped by his own experiences and by his unique responses to those experiences. As Professor Clifford observes, in Johnson's early childhood there were fairy tales and tales of adventure which stirred his imagination. His favourite one, St George and the Dragon, he heard from his mother's maid.⁴ Professor Clifford reports:

Johnson always maintained that tales of adventure were fitter for children than were utilitarian stories written for their edification. "Babies," he insisted to Mrs Thrale, "do not want to hear about babies; they like to be told of giants and castles, and of somewhat which can stretch and stimulate their little minds." When Mrs Thrale urged that the opposite was proved by the great sale of such books as Tommy Prudent and Goody Two-Shoes, he retorted, "Remember always that parents buy the books, and that the children never read them."

In describing the Lichfield Grammar School which Johnson attended, Clifford tells us that the pupils were gradually led to read in Latin fables and childish stories written by the simpler ancient authors.⁵ Years later when Johnson once again looked over these works, he found them quite unfamiliar. Consequently, he drew the following conclusion:

That which is read without pleasure is not often recollected nor infixed by conversation, and therefore in a great measure drops from memory.⁶

In addition to his learning Latin and the major Greek and Roman classics at school, Johnson had the unusual freedom of exploring the contents of his father's bookshop and of borrowing whatever works caught his eye. As he outgrew stories of ogres and giants, he developed a taste for chivalric romances which endured throughout his life. More importantly, by the time he was nine, he was captivated by Shakespeare." Although he read voraciously, he rarely completed a book. Rather, he skimmed or sampled, reading always for pleasure. Somehow by this approach he developed two unique skills which doubtless contributed to his later remarkable and varied literary achievements. He learned to read with great rapidity, and he learned to grasp immediately the significance of a work without reading it in its entirety."

The crucial idea here is that from an early age, Dr Johnson enjoyed reading strictly for pleasure fables, fairy tales, stories of adventure, and chivalric romances. Although he is famous for his didactic writing and for his often stern precepts concerning the acquisition of learning, he also knew and promoted the concept of pleasurable reading for children. This attitude perhaps explains his writing a fairy tale for children. True it is that "The Fountains" contains a moral, but the moral is clothed in enjoyable, imaginative trappings quite agreeable to children.

Mary Lamb's entire formal schooling occurred in the evenings at Mr Bird's school off Fetter Lane, a short distance from the Temple. In due course, Charles attended the same school; but being a boy, he went during the day."¹⁰ Prior to his matriculation there, however, Charles learned from Mary the rudiments of reading."¹¹ Although William Starkey, in Mary's days at the school Bird's assistant, later claimed for the school instruction in "languages" and "mathematics," in later years Charles averred that neither he nor Mary learned any languages other than a bit of their native English. He also explained that in that school, "mathematics" meant "cyphering."¹²

Certainly Mary as well as John and Charles had free access to Samuel Salt's private library which included the works of Shakespeare, Swift, Addison, Steele, and Pope."¹³ Even though her formal education was abbreviated and probably inferior, there are many references by her contemporaries to Mary's intellectual attainments and to her understanding of important literary works. In a letter to Coleridge of October 28, 1796, Charles says, "She has her hands too full of work to read much, but a little she must read; for reading was her daily bread."¹⁴ Later Coleridge wrote of her, "Her mind is elegantly stored--her Heart feeling."¹⁵ In 1838, John Stoddart wrote in glowing terms about the many evenings he and the Lambs spent together in the years 1800 through 1803 when they talked about Chaucer, Shakespeare, Chapman, Jeremy Taylor, and other authors agreeable to them all. As Stoddart observe, "Mary Lamb was always of the party, and joined in the criticisms, in her mild, unpretending way."¹⁶

From these reports we must conclude that Mary was a discerning, intelligent, and prolific reader. Katharine Anthony tells us that at an early age Charles read, among other works, the Greek tragic poets, Shakespeare and Milton, Goldsmith, and Dr Samuel Johnson."¹⁷ Thus, from very early in their lives, all three of these writers, though aware that most children did not read for pleasure, assumed with the certainty born of their own experiences that children could and should read widely and deeply as early in their lives as possible.

Johnson's friendship with the Thrall family filled a void in his life and gave him great comfort and joy. For their residence he served as consultant on the

selection of books for the library. He assumed the role of the family patriarch and developed a particularly close relationship with Hester Maria, the oldest child, whom he called "Queeney." It was at the Thrales' that Fanny Burney met him in 1777. Because of the portrait she wrote of him in her diary, we are able to see Johnson in a benign, humorous, relaxed state, apparently free for a time from the melancholia with which he was habitually plagued.¹⁸ As John Wain asserts, "Johnson loved children," a fact that has been little noted by many Johnsonian scholars. At Streatham Park, he entered into the family celebrations and games, the type of activities which, as John Wain notes, appear at the time to be meaningless but in later years provide us with bittersweet memories.²⁰

In his letters to Mrs Thrale, Johnson frequently complains that he has had no letter from "Miss" or "Queeney." When he does receive one, he is quick to express his appreciation. Among his letters to Queeney, two are of special interest to us both because they reveal his deep love for her and because they demonstrate his active concern with her reading. Chapman observes that Johnson is so adroit at tailoring both the manner and the content of his letters to fit the abilities and the characters of his correspondents that in this way Johnson reveals added dimensions of his subtle understandings and his amazing versatility.²¹ On July 18, 1780, he writes:

You, my Love, are now in the time of flood, your powers are hourly encreasing, do not lose the time. When you are alone read diligently, they who do not read can have nothing to think and little to say.²²

Again, to Queeney he writes on July 24, 1783:

Your account of your time gives me pleasure. Never lose the habit of reading, nor ever suffer yourself to acquiesce in total vacuity If ever therefore you catch yourself contentedly and placidly doing nothing ..., break away from the snare, find your book or your needle, or snatch the broom from the maid.²³

In a similar passage to another youthful friend, Jane Langton, on May 10, 1784, Johnson writes:

I am glad, my Dear, to see that you write so well, and hope that you mind your pen, your book, and your needle, for they are all necessary. Your books will give you knowledge, and make you respected....²⁴

Even though Johnson urges both Queeney Thrale and Jane Langton to read whenever possible, on May 11, 1776, he speaks of Bennet Langton's self-reproach concerning his son's education. Consistent with his belief that young children should be able to read for pleasure, Johnson says:

I advised him to let the child alone, and told him that the matter was not great, whether he could read at the end of four years or five, and that I thought it not proper to harrass a tender mind with the violence of painful attention.²⁵

Indeed, in "The Idler," No.85, Johnson again addresses his firm belief in the lasting worth of reading for pleasure:

He that teaches us anything which we knew not before, is undoubtedly to be revered as a master. He that conveys knowledge by more pleasing ways, may very properly be loved as a benefactor, and he that supplies life with innocent amusement, will be certainly caressed as a pleasing companion.²⁶

Frequently in letters to his friends, Dr Johnson speaks, as James Misenheimer tells us, of "the priority of emphasis that he places upon books and their influence."²⁷ One example we find in Johnson's letter of December 8, 1763, to his new friend James Boswell, then a law student in Utrecht:

At least resolve, while you remain in any settled residence to spend a certain number of hours every day amongst your books If you can but kindle in your mind any strong desire, if you can but keep predominant any wish for some particular excellence or attainment, the gusto of imagination will break away.²⁸

Thirteen years later, Dr Johnson is still exhorting Boswell concerning the need to give high priority to books. After chastising Boswell on July 2, 1776, for failing to open his book boxes as soon as he received them in Edinburgh,²⁹ Johnson writes again on July 6:

Let me know whether I have not sent you a pretty library. There are, perhaps, many books among them which you need never read through; but there are none which it is not proper for you to know, and sometimes to consult.³⁰

Once again, Dr Johnson's predilection to skim and sample books influences his advice to his friend.

Johnson's strong affection for his black manservant Francis Barber and his yearning to have Barber realize his full potential are eloquently revealed in a letter of September 25, 1770, when Barber was in Bishop Stortford, Hertfordshire:

let me know what English books you read for your entertainment. You can never be wise unless you love reading.³¹

Brian W Alderson records Mrs Thrale's observation that Johnson felt three works of enduring pleasure to readers are Pilgrims Progress, Don Quixote, and Robinson Crusoe. Alderson explains:

In his scheme of things, these books would seem to fall into the category of those which not only assist the enjoyment of life but also its endurance. Each carries a powerful commentary on matters of Conduct and yet each contrives to set this into a narrative which owes much to those never failing sources of popular appeal: tales of high adventure and the language of the common man.³²

Alderson goes on to say that "in addition to adults of serious inclination, the children of the eighteenth century also found these works attractive. He maintains that doubtless one reason for children's attraction to these books was that very few works that were written for them were interesting."

Alderson also reminds us that throughout his writing, Johnson emphasizes the contributions to personal development that reading can make. Johnson sees it "not as a substitute for life but as a foundation for knowledge and a prophylactic against despair."³⁴

Just as Dr Johnson refers constantly to books and their importance in his letters to friends and associates, so, too, do both of the Lambs. In the earliest of Charles' letters that Edwin Marrs includes, that of May 27, 1796, to Coleridge, Lamb observes:

Your poems [Poems on Various Subjects (1796)] I shall procure forthwith. There were noble lines in what you inserted in one of your Numbers from Religious Musings, but I thought them elaborate.... I wish you success in all your undertakings.³⁵

Even at that early time in his life, Lamb was busy discussing all of the literature then current and offering his own opinions without hesitation. His discussions reveal his rich literary background. He includes some of his own poetry as well as extensive commentary on the writings of Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth, and numerous other contemporary authors who achieved lesser fame.

As the Lambs' friends - Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth, Hood, Hunt, and Hazlitt among others - had children, both Charles and Mary took a keen interest in their physical, social, and intellectual development. In their letters they often pose questions about particular children or comment on their specific achievements. These expressions of interest in children are interspersed with accounts of the Lambs' literary interests.

To Coleridge on July 28, 1800, Charles writes:

I have past two days at Oxford on a visit ... The sight of the Bodleian Library and above all a fine Bust of Bishop Taylor at All Soul's, were particularly gratifying to me.... And I desire to be affectionately remembered to Sara and Hartley. - ³⁶

In speaking of George Dyer to Manning on August 21, 1800, Lamb asserts:

I found ... that he *had* read Shakespeare, but that was a good while since: he calls him a great but irregular genius, which I think to be an original & just remark.... So Shakespeare, Otway, & I believe Rowe, to whom he was natura[lly] directed by Johnson's Lives, & these not read lately, are to stand him instead of a general knowledge of the subject -.³⁷

Quite frequently Lamb speaks of Shakespeare to his correspondents. On November 18, 1801, he writes to Robert Lloyd:

To your enquiry respecting a selection from B'p Taylor I answer - it cannot be done, & if it could it could not *take* with John Bull. - It cannot be done, for who can disentangle and unthread the rich texture of Nature & Poetry sewn so thick into a stout coat of theology, without soiling both *lace & coat*? how beggarly and how bald do even Shakespeares Princely Pieces look when thus violently divorced from *connexion & circumstance*! when we meet with To be or not to be - or Jacque's moralizing upon the Deer-or Brutus and Cassius' quarrel & reconciliation ... how we stare

& will scarcely acknowledge to ourselves ... that they are flat & have no power."³⁸

Already we see clearly the solid, carefully formulated foundation upon which Lamb would build both his critical assessments of Shakespeare and his part of *Tales from Shakespeare*. Doubtless, also, his own brilliant analysis of Shakespeare's art had an enormous influence on Mary as she wrote the fourteen tales of Shakespeare's comedies.

In her letters, Mary is usually concerned with the health, the living arrangements, and the familial circumstances of her correspondent. On October 13, 1804, she writes to Dorothy Wordsworth:

I hope Mrs Wordsworth, & the pretty baby, & the young philosopher are well, they are three strangers to me whom I have a longing desire to be acquainted with."³⁹

On the same day she closes a letter to Mrs Coleridge thus:

C Lamb particularly desires to be remembered to Southey & all the Southseys, as well as to Mrs C and her little Coleridges - ...⁴⁰

In 1806, both Charles and Mary begin to mention in their letters the project which was destined to become a literary classic for children, *Tales from Shakespeare*. So full of beauty and of the rich vitality of Shakespeare's art is it that since its first appearance in 1807, it has never once been out of print.

On May 10, 1806, Charles writes thus to Manning:

She [Mary] is doing for Godwins Bookseller 20 of Shakespears plays to be made into Children's tales. Six are already done by her to wit The Tempest, Winters Tale, Midsummer Night, Much ado, Two Gentlemen of Verona & Cymbaline: & the Merchant of Venice is in forwardness: I have done Othello & Macbeth and mean to do all the Tragedies. I think it will be popular among the little people. Besides money. It's to bring in 60 guineas: Mary has done them capitally, I think you'd think."⁴¹

On the same subject Mary writes to Sarah Stoddart May 30 - June 2, 1806:

My Tales are to be published in separate story books. I mean in single stories like the childrens little shilling books, ...

Charles has written Macbeth & Othello, King Lear & has begun Hamlet. You would like to see us as we often sit writing on one table ... like Hermia & Helena in the Midsummer Nights Dream."⁴²

On June 26, 1806, Charles confides in Wordsworth:

Mary is just⁴³ stuck fast in All's Well that Ends Well. She complains of having to set forth so many female characters in boy's clothes. She begins to think Shakespear must have wanted Imagination. - I to encourage her, for she often faints in the prosecution of her great work But she is stuck fast & I have been obliged to promise to assist her."⁴³

In writing to Sarah Stoddart on June 27 - July 2, 1806, Mary herself explains:

... having picked out the best stories first these latter ones take more time being more perplex and unmanageable."

Strangely enough, in their letters there is no mention of the actual publication of the *Tales*. In a letter to Manning dated February 26, 1808,

Charles reveals:

I have done two books since the failure of my farce The one is a Juvenile Book, The Adventures of Ulysses intended to be an introduction to the Reading of Telemachus! - it is done out of the Odessey, not from the Greek - I would not mislead you - not yet from Pope's Odessey, not from the Greek - I would not mislead you - nor yet from Pope's Odessey, but from an older translation of one Chapman. The Shakespeare Tales suggested the doing it. Godwin is in both those cases my bookseller."

When I introduce elementary children to Tales from Shakespeare, I emphasize the fact that the Lambs had no thought of subsuming Shakespeare's place in any child's educational experience." In the Lambs' preface they state their desires far better than we can do:

What these Tales shall have been to the young readers,, that and much more it is the writers' wish that the true Plays of Shakespeare may prove to them in older years - enrichers of the fancy, strengtheners of virtue, a withdrawing from all selfish and mercenary thoughts, a lesson of all sweet and honourable thoughts and actions, to teach courtesy, benignity, generosity, humanity; for of examples, teaching these virtues, his pages are full."

At the same time that the Lambs wished to instill in the young a lifelong love of Shakespeare, they were keenly aware of the need to simplify for children. Indeed, that was their primary thrust; and to achieve that goal, they took three crucial steps. They concentrated on the major characters only, they emphasized only the most important events, and they told the story of each play without reference to acts and scenes." They did not, however, dilute Shakespeare's rich language. This decision, I feel, they made deliberately, confident that children would be intrigued and stimulated rather than intimidated by Shakespeare's unsurpassed command of the English language. This choice, though probably not consciously associated in their minds with Dr Johnson, agrees perfectly with his use of difficult vocabulary in The Fountains.

Dr Johnson's fairy tale The Fountains appeared first in a volume called Miscellanies in Prose and Verse by Anna Williams in 1766." It was published by subscription, and according to Sir John Hawkins, netted her £100. This she combined with the £200 that David Garrick had procured for her in 1755 by doing for her a benefit play. This sum she invested carefully so that from it and from Dr Johnson's largesse, Mrs Williams was no longer destitute." Mrs Thrale tells us that the reason for Dr Johnson's contributing this tale as well as the preface and several other pieces was that after engaging a printer, Johnson realized that Mrs Williams' own collection of poems was too

slight to make up a volume. According to Hannah Carter, in a collection of unpublished writing (1810-1814) by Hester Thrale Piozzi, there is this account:

"Have you any verses by You - said he to me - which have never been seen? I showed him a Tale that I had written the Week before and he like it so well it was seized on Instantly and called The Three Warnings." "He said, Come, Mistress, now I'll write a Tale and your Character shall be in it: so he composed

The Fountains in the same book, a Performance little known, and in few hands - I guess not WHOSE except my own: ... and the work turned out a Thin flat Quarto which it appears sold miserably: I never saw it on any table but my own. This NOW however become a curiosity.⁵¹

Boswell reports that in 1766, Dr Johnson did not publish anything under his own name but that he did write the preface and several of the pieces in Miscellanies by Anna Williams. Boswell continues:

'The Fountains', a beautiful little Fairy tale in prose, written with exquisite simplicity, is one of Johnson's productions; and I cannot withhold from Mrs Thrale the praise of being the authour of that admirable poem, 'The Three Warnings.'⁵²

Although as Boswell tells us, "The Fountains" is beautifully but simply written, the simplicity lies only in its plot structure. Johnson uses the customary pattern of fairy tales by employing a somewhat repetitive series of adventures which end with a relatively satisfactory resolution. Otherwise, however, he departs from the usual shallow, even stereotyped characterizations which show no growth, no increase in knowledge or wisdom, no development of character. Rather, Johnson has placed his own unique mark on the tale by incorporating one simple device. He has the fairy Lilinet whom Floretta has unselfishly befriended grant Floretta not only her dearest wish but also a way to retract any poor decision she makes. By using two fountains, one of joy the waters of which are delicious, and one of sorrow the waters of which are bitter, at once Johnson provides Floretta both the power to make mistakes and the ability to correct them. Johnson also provides a wealth of insight into the pitfalls that await in turn a great beauty, a young lady of indifferent fortune, a young lady of spirit who defies all authority, a young lady of great wit (but not discretion), a lady of immense fortune, and one with the assurance of longevity of life (though without the promise of good health). At last Floretta gives herself up to the course of Nature, a sadder but a wiser young lady. Thus, Johnson uses the traditional format of the fairy tale and its frequent use of magic to entertain while simultaneously pointing a moral.

As Professor Clifford observes:

... Probably all Johnson wished was to make his hostess [Mrs Thrale] realise that most worldly ambitions were hollow, and he took this means of advising her to be content with the talents God had given her.⁵³

Hannah Carter concludes the Foreword by saying quite aptly, "It is a message, as you will see, which still holds good today."⁵⁴

In the most recently published volume of The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson entitled "Rasselas and Other Tales," Volume XVI, Gwin Kolb includes an excellent introduction to "The Fountains." In it, Professor Kolb states:

The incessant "hunger of the imagination," as Johnson calls it in *Rasselas*, rather than the machinations of a wicked fairy, evidently prevents her [Floretta] from obtaining lasting contentment.⁵⁵

Further, Professor Kolb maintains that in this tale, Johnson incorporates another of his favourite topics - the choice of life theme - which he also uses in *Rasselas* and in "The Vision of Theodore." In "The Fountains," Kolb asserts:

the heroine's succession of wishes and her consequent draughts from the two fountains serve to dramatize still again the same persistent notion, as old as Prodicus's "Choice of Hercules" - that of a human being making choices among alternate modes of life. The consistent aim of Floretta's selections is earthly happiness, an aim whose elusiveness, despite the fulfillment of most of her wishes, exemplifies another variation on a common notion in Johnson's writings, the vanity of human wishes.⁵⁶

Clearly, Johnson feels that children can deal with these deeper elements of meaning. Perhaps he assumes that they will be delighted with the story but that the more perceptive individuals, having attained greater maturity, will return to this tale, at least in retrospective contemplation, and deduce the more cogent applications to life inherent in the material.

In discussing the early education, both formal and informal, of Dr Johnson and of Charles and Mary Lamb, I have noted their early and continuing interest in the works of Shakespeare. Indeed, in the eighteenth century Dr Johnson wrote powerful critical works on Shakespeare which helped to dispel the negative influences of earlier critics and to return Shakespeare to his rightful place as the commentator *par excellence* on human nature. In his Preface of 1765 Johnson says:

Shakespeare is above all writers...the poet of nature.... His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places,...; by the peculiarities of studies or professions,...; or by the accidents of transit fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity.... In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species.⁵⁷

In speaking of Johnson in the Introduction to his edition of Shakespeare: The Complete Works, G.B.Harrison observes:

His Preface is one of the most valuable general estimates of Shakespeare in the eighteenth century.⁵⁸

In speaking of Charles Lamb's critical concepts of Shakespeare's characters, Harrison explains:

Indeed, some of Shakespeare's characters were to him so real that he resented the attempts of actors to impersonate them.⁵⁹

In Lamb's famous essay On the Tragedies of Shakespeare, Considered with Reference to Their Fitness for Stage Representation (1811), Lamb explains the underlying principle for his premise:

The greatness of Lear is not in corporeal dimension, but in intellectual:.... On the stage we see nothing but corporeal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear - we are in his mind....⁶⁰

Because all three of these authors, dedicated Shakespeareans, chose to devote at least a part of their talents to writing for children, I feel that they were influenced, probably unconsciously, by Shakespeare's own views of children and of their education. For example, Brutus, amidst the turmoil of his soul, finds his servant Lucius asleep and says gently:

Boy! Lucius! Fast asleep! It is
no matter. Enjoy the honey-heavy
dew of slumber. Thou hast no
figures nor no fantasies
Which busy care draws in the
brains of men,
Therefore thou sleep'st so sound.⁶¹

Another young boy, another Lucius, the grandson of Titus Andronicus, Shakespeare uses to help his ravished and mutilated Aunt Lavinia reveal the names of her assailants. First Titus observes that Lavinia appears to be searching for a particular book. He says to Lucius:

Open them, boy.
But thou art deeper read, and
better skilled.⁶²

Then Lucius, seeing that his aunt has at last found the volume she seeks, cries:

Grandsire, 'tis Ovid's Metamorphoses.⁶³

In this scene Shakespeare seemingly almost incidentally shows us how Titus treasures Lucius, how he respects Lucius' learning, and how well educated Lavinia is. Shakespeare also reinforces for us the many uses to which learning may be applied.

It is an amazing fact that in an age when even kings were sometimes illiterate, Shakespeare peopled his plays with those of both sexes and of almost all strata of society who could read and write. In The Tempest, we learn quite early the importance Prospero places on his books. Indeed, Caliban speaks to Stephano thus:

There thou mayst brain him,
Having first seized his books....
Remember first to possess his
books, for without them

He's but a sot, as I am, nor
hath not
One spirit to command.⁶⁴

Shakespeare also has Prospero speak tenderly to Miranda about his love of books and his joy in sharing that love with her, his beloved daughter:

So, of his [Gonzalo's] gentleness,
Knowing I loved my books, he
furnished me
From mine own library with
volumes that
I prize above my dukedom....

Here in this island we arrived,
and here
Have I, thy schoolmaster, made
thee more profit
Than other princes can that
have more time
For vainer hours, and tutors
not so careful.⁶⁵

In his Preface of 1765, Dr Johnson refers to Dryden's perceptive statement:

that Shakespeare was the man,
who, of all modern and perhaps
ancient poets, had the largest
and most comprehensive soul.⁶⁶

After studying Shakespeare, Johnson, and the Lambs with reference both to children and to the importance of books, I find it clear that having incorporated Shakespeare's genius into the fiber of their intellectual existence from early childhood, Dr Johnson and Charles and Mary Lamb accepted Shakespeare's prevailing attitude toward children's intellectual capabilities as their own. They loved children, they respected children's powers of intellect, and they wrote literature for children with the intellectual assumptions that children comprise a worthy audience for which no condescension of language, theme, characterization, or subtlety is either required or desired. Modern children, though constantly bombarded with banality and trivia, welcome an introduction to true literature written expressly for them by some of the greatest authors of English literature. Based upon my thirty-six years of experience in introducing literature to children, I know the truth of this. It behooves us, therefore, to insure their early knowledge of the Lambs' Tales from Shakespeare and of Dr Johnson's The Fountains: A Fairy Tale. By so doing we provide for our future generation a continuing healthy respect and joyful appreciation of the wonders of our rich heritage of English literature.

Notes

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47. Charles and Mary Lamb. Tales from Shakespeare (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd.,1982),p.vii.
 48. C. Misenheimer, p.70.
 49. Samuel Johnson. The Fountains: A Fairy Tale, Foreword by Hannah Carter (Lincoln, England: Thomas Harmsworth Publishing, 1978),p.3.
 50. Sir John Hawkins. The Life of Samuel Johnson, Ll.D.(London: J. Buckland, et al, 1787),p.324.
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 53. James L. Clifford. Hester Thrale Piozzi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), p.61.
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 56. Ibid.,p.226.
 57. Arthur Sherbo, ed., "Johnson on Shakespeare," The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), VII, p.62.
 58. G.B. Harrison,ed. Shakespeare: The Complete Works (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1968),p.76.
 59. Ibid.,p.78.
 60. Charles Lamb. On the Tragedies of Shakespeare Considered with Reference to Their Fitness for Stage Representation, Russell Noyes,ed., English Romantic Poetry and Prose (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956),p.589.
 61. Harrison,ed. Shakespeare: Julius Caesar, Act II, Scene ii,p.824.
 62. Ibid., Titus Andronicus, Act IV, Scene i,p.314.
 63. Ibid.
 64. Ibid., The Tempest, Act III,Scene ii,p.1491.
 65. Ibid., Act I, Scene ii,p.1478.
 66. Johnson on Shakespeare," VII,p.112.

THOMAS WARTON AND HIS FRIENDS: EDITING THE CORRESPONDENCE

Dr David Fairer, Senior Lecturer in English

University of Leeds - 16 May 1992

Chairman: C. Tom Davis BA, MA

The Chairman referred to Dr Fairer's publications on Alexander Pope (Pope's Imagination, 1984, The Poetry of Alexander Pope, 1989, and his editorship of Pope: New contexts, 1984.) He reminded us that Dr Fairer had also written extensively on the Warton brothers.

Dr Fairer talked about his forthcoming edition of the correspondence of Thomas Warton (1728-90) which was to gather together for the first time all the known letters sent and received by him - 609 in all. He showed how Warton's letters represented the many sides of his literary achievement as a poet, historian, classical scholar, gothic enthusiast, humorist, biographer and editor. They gave an especially interesting insight into how the HISTORY OF ENGLISH POETRY (1774-81) and the edition of Milton's Minor Poems (1785) grew into their final form, with other scholars responding to Warton's requests for information or

offering their own discoveries to him. The Warton Correspondence showed an eighteenth-century scholar at work in an age which was just beginning to discover the wealth of older English literature. Warton's more intimate side came across in the eleven recently discovered letters to his niece Charlotte, and there were some delightful glimpses of his burlesque humour. Altogether his correspondence gave a vivid picture of someone who played a significant role in Johnson's life.

THE WREATH LAYING

The annual wreath-laying ceremony was held in Westminster Abbey on 14 December 1991 by courtesy of the Dean and Chapter. The wreath was laid by Dr James Gray, Thomas McCullagh Professor of English Literature (Emeritus), Dalhousie University, who delivered the following Allocution.

The man whose memory we cherish today has become a precious part of each one of us. His wisdom, his extensive learning, his eloquence, his devoutness, his unassailable integrity, his concern for all humanity, his unquenchable sense of humour, and even his oft-expressed doubts and fears, have all combined to make us his sympathetic admirers and his faithful disciples. In another sense, as one of his recent biographers has said, every one of us owns Samuel Johnson.

As with all great souls in our history, of course, Johnson has had his detractors, some of whom have complained of the ponderousness of his prose style, or of his "vile melancholy," or of his rudeness, or of his constant striving for victory in debate. Although he needs no defence, from me or from anyone else, it may be well to remind those who think that way that the Johnson we all love and honour today was, after all, an essentially plain and simple man, who could and did express important truths in the briefest of terms, as in the lines he wrote for David Garrick, who keeps company with him here:

The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,
For we that live to please, must please to live,

or, as in the more ominous words of one of the sermons he composed for John Taylor,

... he who spoke, and the world was made, can speak
again, and it will perish.

There is no doubt that he had a melancholy side, and he did indeed, as a poet, ask that very sombre question,

Must helpless man, in ignorance sedate
Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate?

But, in that same poem (which, as the Editor of our New Idler has reminded us, Dame Peggy Ashcroft recited in this place exactly seven years ago), Johnson answered the question, with the same conviction that he eventually carried to his grave: with "obedient passions, and a will resign'd," and with love, patience, and faith, that dark foreboding can be set aside once and for all.

Let us remember, then, the cheerful, resilient Johnson, the one who loved company, who enjoyed the comforts of home, who had great affection for talented women like Hester Lynch Thrale whose descendant, Richard Thrale, presides over our Society today, the Johnson who was glad to be alive in spite of pain, and who was fond of saying that "there is nothing too little for so little a creature as man." Let us also remember the caring Johnson, who had room in his heart for all sorts and conditions of men and women, and who gave succour and shelter to the wretched and the homeless.

In this storied corner of the Abbey where, he was pleased to be told in his dying moments, he would be joining the company of the other illustrious poets, it may not be inappropriate to say that his magnanimous spirit reigns supreme. As James Boswell noted, in that nicely balanced tribute to Johnson at the close of his biography, which is enjoying its two hundredth anniversary this year, "his superiority over other learned men consisted chiefly in what may be called the art of thinking, the art of using his mind." That mind, too, adds the biographer, "was so full of imagery, that he might have been perpetually a poet." More important for us, he is perpetually a friend.

Professor Grey then read his adaptation of Johnson's tribute to Robert Levet.

LINES

TO THE MEMORY OF DR SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

"Condemn'd to hope's delusive mine
As on we toil from day to day,
By sudden blasts, or slow decline,
Our social comforts drop away."

When Johnson wrote those solemn lines
On Robert Levet, his surgeon friend,
He caught the spirit that defines
His own experience at the end.

From Brocklesby he sought to know,
Could he recover, or was it too late?
That faithful doctor whispered low
That "only a miracle" could check his fate.

"Then with no throbbing fiery pain,
No cold gradations of decay,
Death broke at once the vital chain,
And freed his soul the nearest way."

"His virtues had walk'd their extensive round,
Nor made a poise, nor left a void;
And sure th'Eternal Master found
His many talents well employ'd."

A miracle, then, was wrought for sure,
Through the lesson that his life imparts,
The works that continue to endure,
And the light that shines in all our hearts.

After the ceremony the luncheon, organised by Mrs Dowdeswell, was held at our usual restaurant, the Vitello d'Oro, re-opened after being closed for

refurbishment.

BOOK REVIEWS

Catherine N. Parke. Samuel Johnson and Biographical Thinking. University of Missouri Press, Columbia, Miss. and London. 1991. Pp.xiii + 178. ISBN:0-8262-0789-8. No price given.

Professor Parke advances the thesis that there is something peculiarly biographic about Johnson's thought processes, in the topics which interest him, and in his modes of expression. This is an interesting proposition which the author examines in some detail with a good deal of ingenuity and sympathy for the subject. The problem is that as the discussion advances the utility of the thesis becomes more questionable, since it is never made very clear quite what *biographical* actually means.

In fact Professor Parke allows the word to mean a great deal which is another way of allowing it mean nothing very much at all. It becomes an umbrella under which many kinds of interpretations and readings of Johnson can happily shelter, and with which the reader cannot really quarrel, but at the same time the point of combining all of them under that shelter is less and less evident.

The process of learning is presented as analogous to the making of someone's acquaintance, and is consequently 'biographical'; writing is a mode of communication analogous to conversations with other people, and is therefore 'biographical'; morality and ethics concern human behaviour and are also 'biographical'; travel makes us acquainted with other modes of human life and activity, and so is 'biographical'. But the senses in which all these things are *biographical* is far from stable and far from equivalent. By pointing out that the same term may be applied to them all Professor Parke calls attention to the need for precise and detailed discrimination of the application of the term. Unhappily she prefers to use it as a means of holding together the various readings and interpretations she offers, rather than as the object of her critical attention in itself.

This is disappointing for it means that the book really lacks a unifying thesis. As a series of observations on Johnson's various works it is a reasonable, and sometimes intelligent statement. Professor Parke is a sympathetic reader who is anxious to express her admiration for Johnson's essential humanity and to point out its varied manifestations in his writings. This she does, and many readers will find here much to consider carefully and to take notice of. But in the end the effect is scrappy and disjointed. Her empathetic readings become at times self-indulgent. The conversational tutorial approach is pleasing, but unstructured. Many of the observations will have gained their best effect in discussion or debate as stimulating suggestions cast upon the waters of the class; but preserved in cold print they need a different organization and a firmer control. Professor Parke has supposed that a generalized quasi-commonsensical notion of 'biographical' will serve, but of course it won't. It is not even clear in what sense a biography is 'biographical' since such a composition not only offers information about its subject, but at the same time reveals much about the author: whose biography is it? There is also some uncertainty about the force of the application of the term to real people and real human life, since a significant element in the word is *graphein*, 'to write', to compose in

language, to make up by an observer. One does not have to be wholly lost in solipsism to be aware that the observer may influence the thing observed.

It may be useful to have these questions raised in the reader's mind, and that is part of the pedagogical business which is submerged in this work, but such questions when raised by a tutor may reasonably be left to lie in the mind of the inquiring student; it is a different matter when they are offered in book form after long and careful consideration. A reader, as Johnson might have said, who has paid good money, deserves to have clearer guidance, and to have a clearer exposition of the author's argument and opinion. As it is this is a book to be dipped into for some rewarding insights, but it is not a book to return to. It is a brief conducted tour of some aspects of Johnson's works, and for a time we are content to follow the author's umbrella, raised as a guiding mark, and to listen to her commentary but in the end like day-trippers, we return to our starting point with some random accessions of notice and little of permanent gain.

This is a pity. Professor Parke is evidently a practised and skilled teacher and she surely awakens the interest of her pupils, but the activities of the classroom are not the same as those required for the writing of a substantial study of a complex and powerful thinker and writer. Reading Johnson himself will train us in careful discriminations of thought, and will reduce our naive over-readiness to indulge in vague metaphysical speculation. The latter activity is for the beginner, but must quickly be superseded and brought under control. Professor Parke has done neither.

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Anthony E. Brown, Boswellian Studies: A Bibliography. Third edition revised. Edinburgh University Press, 1991. Pp.xiv + 176. (ISBN 0 7486 0303 4)

Earlier versions of this bibliography (1964 and, especially, 1972) have established it as a useful, if not quite definitive, guide to secondary work on Boswell. The new edition contains even more by way of valuable material on the early reception of Boswell's works (Anthony Brown's special forte), and documents press comment with particular thoroughness. Unfortunately the book is weakened by two pervasive faults.

The first concerns the organisation. Brown's first section deals only with the immediate reviews of Boswell's published works, along with selected subsequent editions of the Life and the Tour. This means that the large central section, designated "General Studies", has to cover nearly all subsequent discussion. It occupies almost ninety pages, more than half of the text, and ranges from general Victorian chat about Boswell to specialized bibliographical notes by modern scholars. It would surely have been far more reader-friendly to have broken up these 1100 entries by subject or mode of approach. Separate sections on the Life, the Tour, biography, character/psychology, etc., would have made things a lot easier for us all. As it is, we have to cope with very full listings for outdated books on "best sellers of the ages", with a brief passage on Boswell, alongside short unannotated references to the sale catalogue of the library of James Boswell junior. The compiler ought to have saved his readers time by a greater effort of discrimination. There is a subject index, but this is of limited scope.

More seriously, the entire volume is disfigured by an extraordinary level of inaccuracy. Names are constantly mistranscribed. Sir Victor Pritchett appears three times as "Vernon S. Pritchett"; Gwin J. Kolb twice as "Gwen J. Kolb". Augustine Birrell is always "Birrell", Claude Colleer Abbott is "Coleer", C.J. Rawson "C.N.", Lodwick Hartley "Lodovic", Ian Ross "Iain", Garry Wills "Will", Charles N. Fifer three times "Claude", Monckton Milnes "Moncton", E.S. de Beer "DeBeer", Esther K. Sheldon "E.N.", Patricia Brückman "Bruckman", and even Frances Burney "Francis". Accents are normally missing in foreign words but where one is used in a French title, á is used for à. On the single occasion where a Greek title is used, the result is (to transcribe) that Aischuneo seauton appears as Aischmgeo seaton. Mostly the compiler is better on dates than names, but a few of the former are wrong. I doubt by the way if Karl Miller can have written the New Statesman review of R.W. Chapman's Journey/Tour edition in 1925, since he was not born then.

Most disquieting of all are garbled entries. Item 436 refers to a work by Austin Dobson as A Paladin of Philosophy and Other Papers At Prior Park, lumping together two different books. A journal is cited as "Neuphilologischesche Mitteilungen". Item 992 alludes to "Converse Pen ...ed. Bruce Redford". i.e. The Conversation of the Pen by Bruce Redford. Italics are often wrongly started and stopped, quotation marks are missing, a work edited by Harold Bloom (well, more or less edited) appears simply as by "Bloom" (sic). Translations are bravely listed, one from "Yugoslav"; but can the two Finnish translations really proceed from the twins named first as Jouko Linturi and second as Jouki Linturi? The annotations sometimes contain assorted bits of misinformation, such as the statement under item 1290 that "Painter-stainers" are members of the Royal Academy of Arts." There are some glaring omissions: several items by William R. Siebenschuh are listed, but not his main book on Boswell from 1972.

Such flaws make for a sorry catalogue, and yet the bibliography does have some important functions to perform. It is just a pity that more care could not have been taken with organizing the material lucidly and checking the factual content.

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OCCASIONAL PAPERS

JOHNSON'S LADY FRANCES
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In a brief note to Hester Thrale on 2 May 1782, Samuel Johnson wrote a cryptic sentence not explained by the context: 'Lady Frances not at home.' The person in question was one of the few figures R.W. Chapman was unable to identify in this edition of Johnson's correspondence. In fact there were few peeresses alive in 1782 who might fill the blank, and none of these is known to have had any direct link with Johnson, such as the reference seems to demand. But one suggestion can be made.

The individual in question is Lady Frances Manners, who was a daughter of the sixth Duke of Somerset and widow of the celebrated Marquis of Granby. Although she has not until now been connected with Johnson, evidence exists to show that she was well-known to several of the Johnson circle and that

there was a good reason for mentioning her at this precise juncture. Her third son Lord Robert Manners had recently seen action as a commander at the battle of Dominica under Admiral Hood, on 12 April 1782. Manners had a leg shot off in the action and died a few days later. Meanwhile the naval contest went on with the capture of a French squadron in the Mona passage on 19 April. This success was reported in the London papers (cited by the Annual Register under 27 April) and already by 25 April Johnson had caught wind of the story, as shown by his letter to Mrs Thrale on that date.² What this indicates is that Johnson was aware of the naval action in the Antilles, and that the news of the death of Manners (the most celebrated casualty in this phase of the war) would have reached England by the start of May.

There was a good reason why Johnson should have been concerned about Lady Frances in the loss of her son. The Manners were the leading patrons of Joshua Reynolds; the fourth Duke of Rutland, elder brother of Lord Robert, commissioned more pictures from the artist than any other individual. One of several portraits of the Duchess had been exhibited at the Royal Academy as recently as 1781. The connection with the family went back many years (Reynolds had painted the Marquis of Granby twelve times before the general died in 1770), but it was cemented in the accession of the fourth Duke in 1779. A year after the present letter, Johnson wrote to Mrs Thrale of a satiric illustration by James Barry, in which he had been placed by the artist between the Duchesses of Devonshire and Rutland, who were rival electioneers for the competing political parties. Johnson commended the exhibition which contained the picture in question, and was well aware of Barry's intentions in putting it on show.³

Just as relevant to the issue is the knowledge which the recipient of Johnson's letter would bring to any reference to the Manners family. Hester Thrale was well acquainted with the family, as evidenced by her allusion to 'a gay Duke of Rutland who lived many years ago [and] delighted in making that name a very common one' (letter of 23 September 1797, to Anne Poole).⁴ Moreover, she knew an earlier Lord Robert Manners, a son of the second Duke, who had told her military anecdotes in October or November 1778.⁵

It should be added that others in the Johnson circle were drawn into the orbit of the fourth Duke. For example, on 15 May, less than a fortnight after Johnson's letter, George Crabbe wrote to Edmund Burke that the Duke had appointed him domestic chaplain.⁶

In the following year both Reynolds and Johnson were involved in the promotion and publication of Crabbe's poem The Village.⁷ The point serves to illustrate a general familiarity between the Rutland household and individuals whom Johnson met almost daily. It would be natural for Johnson to express personal concern to Lady Frances, perhaps by calling on her, when news arrived of her son's death. The reference to her makes perfect sense in the context of events described which took place early in 1782.

¹ The Letters of Samuel Johnson, ed. R.W.Chapman (Oxford, 1952, II, 480.

² Letters, II, 477.

³ Letters, III, 23. See also Nicholas Penny (ed.), Reynolds (London, 1986), p.274.

⁴ The Piozzi Letters, ed. E.A.Bloom and L.D.Bloom (Newark, Delaware, 1988 -), II, 446.

⁵ Thraliana, ed. K.C.Balderston (Oxford, 1951), I, 345-6.

⁶ The Correspondence of Edmund Burke, ed. J.A.Woods (Cambridge, 1963), IV, 454.

' Letters, III, 9-10.

PROGRESSIVE OR CONSERVATIVE?: TWO TRENDS IN JOHNSON STUDIES

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Professor Greene's The Politics of Samuel Johnson (1960; 2nd ed.1990) is presumed to have demolished decisively the entrenched image of Johnson as a bigoted conservative and established instead that of a forerunner of modern democracy; but the impression of Johnson the conservative, although not in the Victorian sense, would seem to be still kept alive not only in the popular fancy but also among serious scholars. It is of course dangerously misleading to try to understand everything in terms of 'progressive vs conservative', but the dichotomy is convenient, at least as a working hypothesis to start on. Applying the idea in a somewhat forced way, let us first see the conflicting attitudes in the editing of Johnson's text.

The first collected works of Johnson was published in 1787 under the name of John Hawkins; but in fact its "contents were probably desultorily assembled by some house editor" and not really "edited" at all in the modern sense; Hawkins only contributed the Life of Johnson as the first volume and some notes to The Lives of the Poets.¹ All later collections of Johnson's Works, before the Yale edition of 1958, were however derived from the 'Hawkins's edition', and it is no more than a mere legend that the Oxford edition of 1825 is the 'best' of the earlier editions.² The first volume of the Yale edition, (Diaries, Prayers, and Annals, 1958) being originally designed as a separate and independent book, it is in and from the second volume (Idler and Adventurer, 1963) that the formal editorial principles have been brought into force. And there is the rub. The opening paragraph of the statement of the general editorial rules runs as follows:

The purpose of the edition is to produce a sound and readable text of Johnson, for use by graduate students, literary critics, literary scholars, and informed literate readers. It is not planned primarily as a text book for use in secondary schools, or as an exercise in ingenuity of bibliographical annotation.³

This is the reason for the questionable modernization of the text in spelling, capitalization and punctuation, and the 'leanness' of the explanatory notes.⁴ The result is that Vol.II invited a scathing criticism from Professor Bowers, an American authority in bibliography.⁵ Once started, however, it was impossible to revise the rules, and the following volumes were edited on the same lines. Another bibliographical expert, Dr Fleeman, concluded his review of Vols.III-V (Rambler) with the complaint that 'we are as far from a definitive and critical text of Johnson as we have ever been'.⁶ I, for one, make it a rule to read Johnson's English poems in Fleeman's edition (Penguin Books), and more often than not find the revised notes to the second edition of The Poems of Samuel Johnson (1974, Oxford English Texts) more satisfactory than those to Vol.VI (Poems) of the Yale edition. (As for the Journey, it would be unfair to appraise Vol.IX of the Yale edition in comparison with Fleeman's edition, which is the fruit of more than a quarter-century's scholarly labour.)

The Yale editors were of course not silent; Professor Strauss, for instance, successfully defended his choice of the fourth edition (1756) of The Rambler as his copy-text.⁷ But the most formidable champion, as far as I know, is Professor Greene, who, when the debate was renewed in the Times Literary Supplement in 1969 around Vols.VII-VIII (Johnson on Shakespeare), pointed out in his letter to the editor the great change in the compositional fashion that occurred in the middle of the eighteenth century, and contended that the dogma evolved from the editing of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts is no longer valid in editing Johnson, whose literary activities spanned both halves of the century:

Dogma about editorial practice derived from conventions which have become "standard" ... in dealing with sixteenth and early seventeenth-century texts is not in itself an adequate basis on which to draw up instructions for editing eighteenth-century ones.⁸

Greene's claim seems to have much to commend itself, and I have not yet seen any convincing refutation of it. This might be counted as an instance of the rivalry between 'progressive vs. conservative' stances where, contrary to the general assumption, seemingly purely scientific techniques are not wholly immune from literary ideology. The point will become clearer when I quote by permission a passage from Fleeman's letter (6 October 1989) in answer to my inquiry about the problem concerned:

You see that what looks like a debate between two practical procedures, quickly turns into a metaphysical disagreement about the nature of literary texts and their relation to readers.... The only evident advantage is that editors have tended to abandon hopes of developing a set of rules which can be followed easily and which will inevitably produce a sound edition at the end of the process. We are, as Greg actually observed in his closing sentences [of his famous 'Rationale'], forced back on our critical judgement. The editor must decide among the possibilities open to him: his textual policy and bibliographical expertise will, we hope, enable him to clarify the range of the options, but in the end he has to choose one rather than any other. That choice cannot be wholly decided on 'scientific' principles: it will involve reasoned argument, judgement, and literary sensitivity, and it will in the end be the editor's choice.⁹

At this advanced stage the dichotomy of 'progressive vs. conservative' will lose a great deal of its usefulness.

To turn from the problem of Johnson's text to Johnson himself, Professor H. Erskine-Hill, in defiance of Professor Greene's rejection of Boswell's reliability,¹⁰ has tried to reclaim Boswell's authority and even the notion of 'Johnson the Jacobite'.¹¹ In the new introduction (pp.xxv-xlvi) to the second edition of The Politics of Samuel Johnson, Greene naturally refutes Erskine-Hill at length; but, 'Johnson the Jacobite' aside, there are at least two new books which lend strong support to the view of Johnson as fundamentally a conservative. One is Sir Robert Chambers's Law Lectures at Oxford;¹² the other is Professor N. Hudson's study of Johnson's moral and religious thought.¹³

Although Boswell was not aware of the fact, in 1766-70 Johnson spent a great

deal of time encouraging and helping his young friend Robert Chambers, who at the age of twenty-nine was appointed Vinerian professor of law in 1766, in preparing the stipulated sixty lectures. It was not until the middle of this century that the original MSS of the lectures were found," and it was only a few years ago that they were printed. How and how much Johnson co-operated with Chambers it is now beyond hope to know for certain, but on the general structure of the lectures and Johnson's relevance, the editor of the text says:

An eloquent Introduction of four lectures sets forth the metaphysical and quasi-utilitarian foundations of all law as well as the Saxon and Norman roots of the common law. Then follows Part I on the public law tracing the ancient and modern structure of the British government in sixteen lectures, which, like the preceding Introduction, contain legal assumptions found in Johnson's later political writings. Part II catalogues the criminal law in fourteen lectures which, except for the underlying thesis of human malignity, seem generally contrary to Johnson's humane views on the subject. Finally Part III reviews both the private law of property and equity in twenty-two lectures that appear to have less relevance to Johnson's canon than the discourses in the first two parts of the course. (Editor's Introduction, p.20)

What characterizes the lectures, especially when compared with the predecessor Blackstone's Commentaries, is a markedly historical perspective which was rejected in contemporary Whig theories of government. The anti-Whig attitude is easily recognizable in the rather brief treatment of Magna Carta and the Glorious Revolution. But the professor and his colleague were not so bigoted as to believe in the divine right of kings, which to them was nothing more than a political convenience to strengthen and protect the king's power in the embryonic times of government:

In that age of prejudice and ignorance, when the civil institutions were yet few, and the securities of legal obligation were very weak, both because offences against the law were often unpunished, and because the law itself could be but little known, it was necessary to invest the king with something of a sacred character, that might secure obedience by reverence, and more effectually preserve his person from danger of violation. For this reason it was necessary to interpose the clerical authority, the crown being imposed by a holy hand might communicate some sanctity to him that wore it. And accordingly the inauguration of a king is by our ancient historians termed consecration; and the writings both fabulous and historical of the Middle Ages connect with royalty some supernatural privileges and powers. (Part I, Lecture 3, p.154)

Nor on the other hand were they so democratic as to put the rights of individuals before the happiness of society:

Society implies in its nature an interest common to many individuals, a pursuit of the highest degree of happiness that can be obtained and enjoyed by any number great or small, which that society comprises. To the happiness of the whole, it will be frequently necessary to sacrifice the happiness of a part, and

as no man is naturally willing that his happiness should be diminished to increase another's, or that the profit should be divided among many, when the labour or the danger is all his own, it is apparent that some public authority must be necessary to overrule single opinion, or private interest. (Introduction, Lecture 1, p.89)

It is no abuse of the term, I venture to hope, to call this attitude 'conservative'. And it is strange that Greene does not say anything whatever about Johnson's conservatism, even though in the new introduction (pp.xiii-xvii) to the Politics he refers to Johnson's humanitarianism in the Law Lectures.

Johnson's religious and moral thought has invariably been studied with Johnson himself in the centre; but, unlike his precursors, Hudson has investigated the same subject against the backdrop of the movements of religious and moral thought in England in 1730-60, thus presenting Johnson's thought in fragments on more than twenty separate issues. Hudson points out that, throughout the whole range of topics, Johnson's fundamental conservatism is evident; but it is conservatism not in a stiff and rigid form but qualified with various heterogeneous and sometimes even contradictory ingredients:

It would seem appropriate to conclude this study on a note which stresses Johnson's fundamental conservatism. This is not to question that a slightly different selection of citations, organized in a different manner, might bring other aspects of his thought and character to the foreground in our final impression. While we reflect on Johnson's conservatism, for example, we must try to keep in mind his extraordinary willingness to promote humanitarian reform in the laws governing provision for the poor, the debtors, and capital punishment. Nevertheless, it was Johnson's desire for stability and order which forms the most consistent link between the various areas of his thought...¹⁵

This is quite in line not only with Johnson's position in the Law Lectures but also with his revision in the fourth edition (1773) of his Dictionary, wherein he introduced a good number of illustrative passages culled from seventeenth-century theologians in order to defend the Established Church against contemporary attacks.¹⁶ Returning, however, to the opening thematic dichotomy of 'progressive vs. conservative', it is most appropriate to conclude this essay by once more quoting Hudson's final words:

There is perhaps no label that would adequately summarize the complexities of Johnson's thought.¹⁷

Notes

1. D.J. Greene, 'Not Dull Duty: The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson', in D.I.B. Smith, ed., Editing Eighteenth-Century Texts (University of Toronto Press, 1968), p.94.
2. J.L. Clifford and D.J. Greene, Samuel Johnson: A Survey and Bibliography of Critical Studies (University of Minnesota Press, 1970), pp.47-49. The description cited in the text is obviously based on Greene, op.cit. above.
3. Quoted in Greene, op.cit. above, p.101.
4. For detail see Vol.II (Idler and Adventurer), pp.xxiv-xxvi.
5. 'The Text of Johnson', Modern Philology, 61 (1964), 298-309.

6. RES, 22 (1971), 352.
7. 'The Dull Duty of an Editor: On Editing the Text of Johnson's Rambler', Bookmark (Friends of the University of North Carolina Library), No.35, June 1965, 8-22.
8. TLS, 4 September 1969, p.979.
9. See also the Journey, ed. Fleeman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), Editorial Policy, pp.liv-lx.
10. See "'Tis a Pretty Book, Mr. Boswell, But, ...", in J.A. Vance, ed., Boswell's Life of Johnson: New Questions, New Answers (University of Georgia Press, 1985), pp.110-46; 'Towards the Tercentenary', Transactions 1985 (The Johnson Society, Lichfield), 2-14; 'The Future of Johnsonian Biography', in Magdi Wahba, ed., Samuel Johnson: Commemorative Lectures Delivered at Pembroke College, Oxford (Beirut: Librarie du Liban, 1986), pp.39-62.
11. 'The Political Character of Samuel Johnson', in I. Grundy, ed., Samuel Johnson: New Critical Essays (London: Vision Press, 1984), pp.107-36.
12. T.M. Curley, ed., A Course of Lectures on the English Law, Delivered at the University of Oxford, 1767-1773, by Sir Robert Chambers, and Composed in Association with Samuel Johnson, 2 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
13. N. Hudson, Samuel Johnson and Eighteenth-Century Thought, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
14. See E.L. McAdam, Jr., 'Dr Johnson's Law Lectures for Chambers, II', RES. 16 (April 1940), 159-68.
15. Hudson, op.cit., p.250.
16. See A. Reddick, The Making of Johnson's Dictionary, 1746-1773 (Cambridge University Press, 1990), chapter 7.
17. Hudson, op.cit., p.251.

DR JOHNSON'S GIFT TO TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY AND THE DATING OF LETTER 318
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Johnson merely dates the letter 'May 31', but Boswell gives 'May 31, 1769', relying on a date supplied by Thomas Warton on the transcript he sent in 1786. To the original MS (Trinity Archives) Warton has likewise added '1769' in square brackets (this is almost certainly his hand) and, also in brackets, the note: 'He was now staying at Oxford'. Warton probably made these parenthetical additions in 1786, and if so he was recalling a visit by Johnson at least eleven years earlier. If we accept his memory as reliable here (and there is a case from the same year when his temporal memory played him false according to a similar pattern*) we are faced with a number of puzzling questions concerning Johnson's 1769 visit to Oxford. Chapman's chronology is:

[1769]	London	17 Jan. - 18 May	212-214
	Oxford	31 May - 29 June.	215-218

The date '31 May' is from this letter (Chapman 215). The following letter (Chapman 216) is dated '27 June' (an error, Chapman convincingly suggests, for 21 June), which means that Johnson has been in Oxford for a considerable period without any other trace having survived. During these weeks Mrs Thrale was heavily pregnant and gave birth to 'Lucy Elizabeth' on 22 June, but Johnson's letters to Streatham are dated [21] June, two on the 29th, and a final letter on 6 July (Chapman 216-9). In the first of these he says: 'I had your note sent hither and can easily spare the pineapple...'. Had Johnson

been at Oxford since 31 May without telling the Thrales where he was going? Or had he only just left (in which case the forwarding of the note would have been natural)? It seems strange that he should not write until [21] June, especially since he was concerned about her approaching 'crisis'. Boswell says of this stay in Oxford: 'During this visit he seldom or never dined out. He appeared to be deeply engaged in some literary work. Miss Williams was with him at Oxford' [Hill & Powell, II.68]. This is certainly vague. Boswell has no anecdotes, meetings or events to record, nor has anything further been found to locate him in Oxford at the end of May. Johnson's visit of 1775, however, is clear and well-documented. Chapman's chronology is:

[1775]	London	23 Mar. - 27 May	384.3 - 389.1
	Oxford	1 - 7 Jun.	399 - 403.1

On Saturday 27 May 1775 Johnson wrote to John Taylor: 'On Monday I purpose to be at Oxford, where I shall perhaps stay a week', and he certainly arrived there by 31 May since he wrote Mrs Salusbury's epitaph that same evening and was in chapel at six the next morning [Johnson - Mrs Thrale, 1 June 1775].

A fact not noted by Chapman (though it is by Powell, II. 485) is that Warton's inscription in the Baskerville Virgil (to which letter 318 relates) is headed '1775'. The date is in a different ink and appears a late 18th to early 19th C. hand, but probably not his. It may be a later addition by the then Librarian (a post taken by the Vice-President in the rota of college offices).

Supporting evidence, though not clinching, is contained in the Trinity College Library Benefactors' Book (Trinity Library Archives A.1). This is the earliest volume recording gifts to the college library and was started between 1625 and 1627. Regular entries appear to stop in 1744, but following a gap of over thirty years is the significant entry: '1775, Virgilius, Typis Baskervillianis. Dr Johnson', followed by a list of gifts made between 1820 and 1849. Comparison with other archival documents shows that these post-1774 entries are in the hand of Thomas Short (c.1789-1879; fellow 1816-79) who was Vice-President and Librarian 1825-38 and 1847-8. His list was probably a 'catching-up' exercise recording presentation volumes that did not already have entries in the Benefactors' Book, and this process may have been begun in 1825 when he took office. He could have taken the date '1775' from the inscription on the Virgil, or he may have added that date to the inscription at the same time. Whatever the case, it seems most unlikely that Short (who would know the traditional date of '1769' from Boswell) would record '1775' unless he had some evidence for doing so.

Is Warton's memory in 1786 correct? Or is the date added to the inscription and recorded in the Benefactors' Book correct? The circumstantial evidence relating to the two visits offers pointers towards accepting a revised date of 1775 for the letter accompanying the presentation of Baskerville's Virgil to Trinity library. Furthermore, as this is the only evidence for Johnson's being in Oxford earlier than 21 June 1769, the implications are that his stay was considerably shorter than has been thought. Neither date is certain, but for the purposes of this edition it has been concluded that, until new evidence emerges, the balance of probability favours the later date.

One additional point: the letter reads as though written on a Wednesday ('I will drink tea with you. I am engaged for the afternoon to morrow and on Friday; all my mornings are my own'). In this regard it should be noted that

both 31 May 1769 and 31 May 1775 were Wednesdays.

* Could Warton have been six years astray in his recollection of the date, remembering a gap of only *eleven* years as one of *seventeen*? An equivalent expansion of time also occurred in 1786 when he wrote to Boswell about Mary Jones (letter 516 in this edition). He told Boswell: 'she died, unmarried, years earlier. Here he is remembering a gap of only *eight* years as one of *fifteen* - an almost identical pattern of temporal memory. Set alongside this, it would appear possible for him to have been mistaken about the year of Johnson's presentation of the Baskerville Virgil.

The number 318 refers, of course, to Dr Fairer's forthcoming edition of Warton's Letters. [Ed.]

ADDENDUM TO VOL.D VI

We were not able last year to give an account of Dr David Nokes' paper on John Gay, Poet of Town and Country (delivered on 18 May 1991).

We are, happily, now in a position to remedy this, and we print a summary of the paper provided by the speaker. He tells us that his biography of Gray should be finished by the time this issue of The New Rambler appears and that publication (by Oxford University Press) should not be much delayed thereafter.

Johnson was not among Gay's greatest admirers. 'As a poet', he wrote, 'he cannot be rated very high. He was ... of a lower order'. The chief reason for this relegation of Gay to a 'lower order' was his preoccupation with pastoral, a poetic form which Johnson viewed with condescension. 'A Pastoral of an hundred lines may be endured; but who will hear of sheep and goats, and myrtle bowers and purling rivulets through five acts? Such scenes please barbarians in the dawn of literature, and children in the dawn of life; but will be for the most part thrown away, as men grow wise, and nations grow learned'.

Presenting Gay as a poet 'of town and country', Dr Nokes endeavoured to suggest that the persisting tendency to regard John Gay as a bucolic Peter Pan, gathering the rural songs and pastoral poems of his native Devonshire to entertain a London audience was something of a fallacy. In fact Gay's preoccupations were mainly urban, and his moral outlook had much in common with Johnson's. Barnstaple, where Gay was born and spent his childhood, was not a rural haven but a busy, thriving port, and Gay's own family were among the town's leading merchants, trading in drapery goods with the West Indies. His poems and plays are preoccupied with commerce as he artfully explores the relationship between town and country values in terms of a business exchange. Trivia, one of Gay's most accomplished poems, is a mock-georgic guide to the trades of London, presenting the metropolis as a vast emporium. The *Beggar's Opera*, Gay's 'Newgate pastoral' takes the capital's most famous prison as a metaphor and market-place for the haggling and huckstering of highwaymen and

politicians, prostitutes and peers. The word 'business' occurs fifteen times in this mock-opera which ironically mingles fashionable operatic airs and catchpenny street ballads as seductive musical commodities to disguise a political satire. Gay's mock-pastorals are not escapist evocations of bucolic bliss; they present Arcadia as a country of the mind, a fantasy all the more poignant for being one of the poetic vehicles hi-jacked by courtier-poets to flatter those in power. Gay returns pastorals to the people, not as a childish entertainment but as a symbol of political defiance and a celebration of the popular imagination. For Boswell, the *Beggar's Opera* was a hymn to London life. 'There is in it so much of real London life, so much brilliant wit, and such a variety of airs, which, from early association of ideas, engage, soothe and enliven the mind, that no performance which the theatre exhibits, delights me more.' Although often adopting the satiric pose of a rural swain, Gay's imagination was essentially urban. Like Johnson, he could truly claim that when a man was tired of London, he was tired of life.

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