

**THE NEW RAMBLER**



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THE NEW RAMBLER

Journal of The Johnson Society of London

Editor: David Parker, B Litt, MA  
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From the Editor

It is with regret that we have to record the death of one of our Vice-Presidents, Professor Frederick A. Pottle Ph D, Litt D, LLD, of Yale University. His principal work, of course, was in connection with James Boswell, whose private papers and journals he edited, and we were honoured when he accepted a Vice-Presidency of our Society.

You will notice that this issue is listed as D II not D XXVII as you would have expected from the serial number of the last issue. Not only, however, did the series D begin with that issue, but also a fresh numerical sequence. Will you please, therefore, amend your copy of the last issue to read D I?

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THE GENDERING OF FLOWERS AND OF HONEYBEES IN THE 18th CENTURY

Dr. Yvonne Noble - 18th October 1986

Chairman: Dr. Isobel Grundy

In introducing Dr. Noble, the Chairman outlined her various fields of activity. She had carried out research on 18th century subjects, specialising in Gay's The Beggars' Opera. Her doctorate was from Yale, and she had taught in the Universities of Pennsylvania and Illinois. A developing interest in women's studies had led to an area of botany, horticulture and garden history, from which area her topic for this meeting was drawn: her lecture was to be illustrated with slides.

At this point, however, the projector unfortunately broke down. Tea and its accompanying social period were brought forward while an attempt was made to rectify the difficulty, but it proved insuperable. Dr. Noble kindly offered to give the illustrated talk at a later date if it could be arranged. In the meantime she spoke without slides.

She spoke particularly on the gendering of bees and referred to the views held at different times on the sex of the various types of bees, often seen as slaves, or workers and soldiers led by a king, until finally recognised as a female Queen. She said that the period of her study had been roughly 1660 to 1825. She had been asked to review a book by Swift's friend Thomas Parnell and was interested by his poem on the Rise of Woman, which contained traces of Hesiod on the creation of Pandora, the first woman, the god's revenge on man for the theft of fire. Virgil had written extensively on bees in the Georgics, but for him they were male, with asexual reproductive functions. In 1673 bees were first observed through a lens by a Dutch scientist, and drones were seen as male. His findings were not published until they were edited by Boerhaaven, and not in English until the 1750s. By 1712 the leader of the bees was a Queen, rather than a king, an absolute monarch who did no labour and made no long flights. In the 18th century bees were known to pollinate, but knowledge of their mating flights did not come about until the late 19th century. At the time science arrived in the 17th century Latin for everyday use was falling away, apart from botany, and classical Latin, involving Virgil, became a class mark. Boys brought up on Virgil regarded bees as male, and Napoleon, who adopted the Bee as his symbol, shows three links with Virgil. The Military College included the Georgics in its curriculum, Napoleon on Elba wrote a treatise on Book II of the Aeneid and on the 1st birthday of his heir, the King of Rome, a lecture on the 4th Eclogue, seen as a prophecy of the coming of Napoleon, was given at the Sorbonne. In War and Peace, when Napoleon looked down on deserted Moscow, there was an echo of Virgil's references to the bee simile. Dr. Noble concluded her introduction by reading two poems by Sylvia Plath, daughter of a biologist beekeeper, - Swarm and Wintering, in which her bees were all women.

Dr. Grundy thanked Dr. Noble for her interesting introduction and said that members would look forward to the complete paper at a later date.

JOHNSON, WATTS AND WESLEY

Alan Shelston, Senior Lecturer in English Literature  
University of Manchester - 15th November 1986  
Chairman: David Parker

The chairman introduced Mr. Shelston, who had written a monograph on Biography, as being mainly concerned with the 19th century, but for the subject of this paper he had gone back to the 18th.

He began his talk by saying that it was a welcome break from his "professional" expertise as a Victorian specialist to indulge in a "private" enthusiasm for Johnson, and particularly in his interest in the neglected tradition of the English hymn, and to argue for the restoration of the hymn writers to their proper place in the canon of English poetry - though taking into account Johnson's views on the propriety of devotional poetry he would be investigating a disjunction rather than a connection.

Johnson said that Watts was included in the Lives of the Poets on his recommendation, and linked him with others now long forgotten. He seemed to have misgivings over his inclusion, and to endorse the view held by others of Watts' unimportance. But Watts was not only the author of a considerable range of poetry, profane and sacred, but a great dissenting minister, and author of a book on Logic used in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, as well as at Harvard and the Colleges of New England. Moreover it provided hundreds of examples for Johnson's Dictionary.

Johnson was attracted to Watts as an instructional writer of exemplary life, but recommended the reader to imitate his "in all but his non-conformity". But Johnson considered him one of the first who showed other dissenters "that elegance might consist with piety". He held that Watts' character and beliefs had much that Establishment might learn from. The speaker suggested that Watts must have admired Watts' industry, and have felt that the poem on the sluggard must have been personally directed. Johnson said that he had long held Watts in veneration, and would not have wanted to "tell of him only that he was born and died".

Turning to Watts' poetry, Mr. Shelston said that Johnson gave it only qualified enthusiasm. His classical scholarship and poetic facility led Watts, in common with many 18th century poets, to experiment in many forms, including translation, in a way disapproved of by Johnson, who was also unsympathetic to his devotional poetry, on the grounds that "the sanctity of the matter rejects the ornaments of figurative diction". The difference between them lay in Johnson's Anglican "reserve" in his approach to his Creator, and Watts' dissenting readiness to focus his poetry on the Godhead and to express his sentiments in verse for distribution to a worshipping congregation.

Mr. Shelston said that if Watts was valued now as a founding father of English hymnody, to previous generations he was a figure of both fear and fun, the inspiration of both Blake and Lewis Carroll. He dealt in some detail with some of the best known hymns and said that Watts' great qualities as a poet were simplicity and grandeur. He went on to consider Watts in the wider context of 18th century poetry generally, with which he seemed to be at odds. Johnson's resistance to devotional poetry was representative, deriving from Pope's declaration that the proper study of mankind was man. Poetry was assumed to be a matter of elegance of expression, and was becoming exclusive; among those most obviously excluded were the dissenting communities, including the Methodists, and their poets. Watts' dissent was not an insuperable barrier between him and Johnson; he, Johnson and Wesley were all distinguished classical scholars, who might have shared that common discourse, but Watts was excluded from the world of Johnson by his ministration to his dissenting community. He and the Wesleys, in devising a system of praise for those outside the Establishment achieved an alternative poetic deliberately opposed to the sophistication of the mainstream - as later Wordsworth was to set the "language of men" against "poetic diction". Watts was apologetic for his less educated audience but nevertheless retained the strength of his classical models while restricting his language to what all could understand.

The Wesleys - Charles mainly the poet, John the editor and advocate - had inherited language for which apology was no longer necessary and John expressly claimed that this was the true language of poetry. Nor did Wesley feel obliged to apologise for the shortcomings of his audience.

Despite Johnson's differences with Dissent, he was not altogether unsympathetic to it, for he felt a great need for spiritual discipline, and showed an "earnest and methodical approach to devout exercises". But, Mr. Shelston said, with his "great reluctance to go to church" and his aversion to musical performance, he was hardly likely to become a congregational hymn singer. But no man could have been more earnest about his personal religion.

At the conclusion of Mr Shelston's paper, Mr Wollen, who had to leave early, thanked him warmly on behalf of members for what he had said to give Watts and the Wesleys their proper place in literature. A short discussion then rounded off an afternoon much enjoyed by everyone.

#### RANDOM REFLECTIONS

The Revd. Dr E.F. Carpenter, KCVO  
President of The Johnson Society of London - 13th December 1986  
Chairman: J.R.G. Comyn

Mr Comyn said that Dr Carpenter needed no introduction. Although now retired from the Deanery of Westminster Abbey, the Society was delighted that he was to continue as its President and was glad to congratulate him on his KCVO. Dr Carpenter spoke of his pleasure and honour in being President of so

August a Society. Johnson was a character of moral, not only literary, virtue, and his talk would consist of somewhat random reflections on others who had stood out by reason of their personality.

Among those he mentioned was Thomas Tenison, the subject of his recent biography, who had no ambitions, but became Archbishop of Canterbury and a strong Whig. It was usual to write off the 18th century church in the great age of reason, but it was not just a bankrupt rationalistic period. Tenison put no goods in the shop window, but he stood up for the Church's views. He was a great educator and his wife had founded two schools. They went to the Court of Queen Anne, but he declined to preach at the Coronation. Reflecting on other Coronations, Dr Carpenter recalled that when the Queen was anointed she was symbolically stripped of all emblems of power. William IV, who had tried to abolish the Coronation, wore the uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet. Victoria had taken her Coronation seriously, especially as it meant freedom for her. It was a beautiful day, and thousands of people turned out, but everything went wrong. Lord Melbourne told her to take no notice of the Bishops, who didn't know what to do, a Lord fell down, the ring was too small, and the Archbishop turned over two pages. Carlyle observed "Poor little girl".

Commenting on various writers Dr Carpenter said that Rousseau was the father of modern psychology, though Johnson said he should be hanged. Dorothy Osborne's letters were beautiful, and painted a vivid picture of life in England. Augustine's Confessions was a great book. Shelley's greatest work was Adonis, though Keats was a better poet. He said he thought the difference between good and bad poetry lay in the nature of the statements. Good verse should not be set to music, but great poetry should be learned by heart, an auditory experience. Translation was difficult because it could not lift from the original the impact on the reader. He was not opposed to liturgical reform, but did not approve of the trivialising of language.

Thinking again of Johnson, his struggles, his defective vision, his neuroticism - he said he was the apostle of inspired common sense. His religion was realistic, he never had a complete breakdown. We liked to remember the many aspects of his personality.

Mr Comyn said how fortunate we were to have Dr Carpenter as President, and thanked him for his splendid reflections.

#### JOHNSON AND THE ANGLICAN TRADITION

Michael Tree - 17th January 1987

Chairman: Cecil Farthing, OBE, FSA

In introducing Michael Tree the Chairman said he had been Deputy General Manager of BBC Publications for 13 years, responsible for book publishing and The Listener. He retired through ill-health in 1985. Previously he had been head of the Design Council for 12 years. He was President of the Johnson Club

from 1984 to 1986. He had published three novels.

His paper is printed in full. It is particularly gratifying to have been able to arrange this as the weather on the day of this meeting was so atrocious that very few members were able to reach Lombard Street.

For reasons which are historical and understandable studies of Johnson have become an academic industry in America. While in no way decrying the loving scholarship and the careful regard with which American scholars serve Johnson one may have some regrets that for this reason most of the existing books on Johnson's religion are in fact by American authors. The Church of England, as recent events with the Bishop of London in Tulsa have highlighted, has been warily watched by the Episcopal church in America and of course Christians in America include larger numbers of Roman Catholics and groups upholding varieties of religious experience unknown even to William James, which might loosely be called extreme evangelical, fundamentalist or downright corybantic, dependent on music and singing.

It is therefore probably harder for American scholars to understand some aspects of the established Church of England than it is for many British people, whether Anglicans or not, who, until the end of the Second World War, had in their race memory pattern ringing phrases from the Book of Common Prayer learnt at school as well as in church, taught at home and sometimes recited with parents. When commentators point to the melancholy attitudes and the fears, which undoubtedly attended Johnson's religious nature, they perhaps forget that deeply set into the English language are phrases like 'we have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep....we have done those things which we ought not to have done and there is no health in us.' ....'turn from us all those evils that we most righteously have deserved'... 'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit' ....'and graciously hear us, that those evils, which the craft and subtlety of the devil or man worketh against, be brought to naught'....'Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of miseries.' Even without finding examples from the stern warning of the Communion service these Prayer Book phrases were as well known to the eighteenth century as to the twentieth until various modern versions were introduced. We could also instance the curious predilection and emphasis of the Church of England for the purple seasons of Advent and Lent and contrast it with the often less than joyful seasons of the Church's Anglican liturgical year which ought to be times of outright celebration. The Church of England turns Mardi Gras into Pancake Tuesday and reserves three hours to Good Friday and forty minutes to early service at Easter. In Voltaire's *Candide* Martin says of England:

'I only know that by and large the people we are going to visit have a most serious and gloomy temperament.' Before therefore we assume that there is anything especially peculiar about Johnson's religion it is as well to look back to the historical context of his age, the importance, as for many children, of his mother's teaching about



religion, the actual state of the Church of England then which is in some ways not remarkably different today, and to the events which had affected religion in England before he was born and of which his parents would have been fully aware. It will be part of my thesis to seek to make more normal what has seemed to some scholars abnormal and to show that Johnson was quintessentially Anglican not only in his fears and gloom but in his toleration of other forms of Christianity, although this too was at times strictly kept in check when he felt that rules had been broken: as in his words to Mrs. Knowles when Jenny Harry left the Church of Scotland to become a Quaker.

'Madam I hate the odious wench and desire you will not talk to me about her'

'Yet what is her crime Doctor?'

'Apostasy, madam, apostasy from the community in which she was educated.'

In passing we should note that the Church of Scotland prayed for the Stuart monarchy until 1788. The same sternness is also seen about Methodists, to whom he was sympathetic. When Boswell protested about the expulsion of six Methodist students from Oxford,

'Sir, that expulsion was extremely just and proper' and

'I believe they might be good beings, but they were not fit to be in the University of Oxford. A cow is a very good animal in the field; but we turn her out of a garden.'

The point here is that the Quaker lady and the Methodist students had offended his sense of order and propriety. That he could be quite tolerant is shown by a remark, which I do not doubt might be made today by some contemporary Anglicans, ruefully contemplating a trendy vicar, when he talked about ministering to convicts,

'Sir, one of our regular clergy will probably not impress their minds sufficiently, they should be attended by a Methodist preacher; or a Popish priest.'

- one aspect to which we will return.

We should not forget that Johnson was born in 1709 - only twenty years after the departure of James II and forty nine years after the Restoration. If modern Anglicans see themselves as Christians in the Catholic tradition but with a Protestant leaning how much more would Johnson's parents have been aware of this condition? To instance a secular example of memory patterns: most people born within ten years of the ending of the First World War were quickly made aware of its horror by their parents so that, although

they may never have known the perils of Flanders, it haunted them, confused them and often it seemed to them that they had in some way experienced that war.

Johnson's parents would in the same way have been aware of the whole problem caused by William and Mary replacing what all High Anglicans and of course all Roman Catholics regarded as the legitimate Stuart monarch of England. How could they forget when even the Book of Common Prayer until the reign of Queen Victoria contained a service on 30 January for King Charles the Martyr, and what is more it was a fast day? Johnson was always defending both Charles I and Charles II but he was well ahead of his time when he suggested that he would support the 30th January service for another century 'and then let it expire'. (It in fact was removed in Victorian times). How could anybody in any event forget the King over the water and in due course the rebellions and attempts to restore the Old monarchy?

This must lead us to the question of whether Stuart supporters were more tolerant towards Roman Catholics than to others. Some have claimed that Johnson was a secret papist. There is no real evidence for this at all but it is safe to say that from all we do know he was much more sympathetic to them than to many of other Christian contemporaries. But as in his attitude to Methodists there are contradictions. There is nothing strange about that for modern Anglicans are also enigmatic about Rome - not least High Anglicans. Some of Johnson's remarks may not have been made like the one attributed to him speaking to a nun:

'Madam, you are here not for the love of virtue, but the fear of vice.'

But there is more than a touch of Anglicanism in his belief in 'works' even in the case of religious orders.

'If convents should be allowed at all, they should only be retreats for persons unable to serve the public or who have served it. It is our first duty to serve society....'

No time for contemplation here as Milton might have said. Elsewhere however we may note his very strong defence of Roman Catholicism as the 'old religion' - a description in itself significant. Here are examples from Boswell:

'To the utter astonishment of all the passengers, but myself, who knew he could talk on any side of a question, he defended the Inquisition and maintained 'that false doctrine should be checked on its first appearance.'

'Nay Sir of the two (Presbyterians and Catholics) I prefer the Papists.'

'True Sir, all denominations of Christians have really little



difference in point of doctrine, though they may differ widely in external forms.'

He believed in purgatory. He thought there was no idolatry in the Roman Mass and whatever the renegade Benedictine Compton surmised about his desire to end his days a monk it is for certain that Johnson did say 'My curiosity would be more attracted by convents than by palaces' and also, 'I would be a Papist if I could. I have fear enough but an obstinate rationality prevents me.'

We also know that his attitude to fornication, to prostitution and to the infidelity of husbands was tinged with more Catholic forgiveness than Protestant condemnation. And to show that there is nothing new under the sun, or should we say, under heaven, Wake the Archbishop of Canterbury conducted for two whole years a correspondence with a Dr. du Pin at the Sorbonne about unity between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, originally with the blessing of the Archbishop of Paris but eventually this ceased because the Archbishop of Paris changed his mind.

We can see therefore that in the shadow of the Stuarts High Anglicans did not see the divisions of Christianity and especially the divisions between Canterbury and Rome in quite the same way as Cranmer and Latimer. Even James I referred to the Roman church as 'our mother church' in his first speech to Parliament.

To turn to the more Protestant side of the Church Johnson as has been said was not favourably disposed to Presbyterians but his attitude to Methodists, and after all Wesley was an almost exact contemporary (1703-1791), was somewhat contradictory. Johnson actually introduced Wesley to Boswell. He liked the 'plain and familiar' manner of their preaching. Charles E. Pierce in his book "The Religious Life of Dr. Johnson" makes the rather astonishing judgement that if Johnson had followed this strand of Anglicanism, as it was in the beginning, he "might have freed himself from much of the religious anxiety that later afflicted him." This seems to me to be speculation.

Although there are contradictions in Johnson's view of religion they are no more or less than those which we may suppose lurked in the minds of many Anglicans. However of one thing we can be more certain. Hawkins said of Johnson's religion that 'it had a tincture of enthusiasm, arising from the fervour of his imagination, and the perousal of St. Augustine' but Johnson was also affected both by what might be called the rationalist and deist attitudes of his age and at times this makes him try to equate moral conduct with what some Christians would call surrender to God. But of course such works as those of John Locke 'The Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures', the sermons of Tillotson of whom Hawkins says Johnson could just endure the smooth verbosity; statements by Dr. Clarke 'Moral Virtue is the foundation and the Summ, the Essence and the Life of all true religion' and 'that no article of the Christian faith is opposed

to right reason,' did influence him.

The effect of this can be seen in a quotation from Tillotson which will serve as one example and is certainly an early attempt to demystify Christianity, describing Jesus as follows: - 'In a word his Virtues were shining without Vanity, Heroical without anything of Transport and very extraordinary without being in the least extravagant'. The present Bishop of Durham could not have put it better but it does conjure up a vision of Jesus not recognisable to Teresa of Avila, Sir Thomas Browne or Richard Crashaw, John Donne or John Wesley.

The somewhat austere and arid life of the English church in the eighteenth century was a long way from the ritual of the Oxford Movement and the later images of the High Church. Thus it is quite obvious why Hawkins says of Johnson that 'he had a thorough conviction of the truth of the Christian religion, an adherence to the doctrine and discipline of our established church.' Although we may also note that Hawkins had a very low opinion of the established church.

'Having not then seen,' he says of Johnson, 'as we do now ecclesiastical benefices advertised for sale....nor beheld many of the beneficed clergy abandoning the duties of the clerical function to the lowest of their order, themselves becoming gentlemen at large, mixing in all public recreations and amusements....preaching the sermons of others and affecting in the particulars of their dress, the garb of the laity....I say not having been a witness of these late refinements in manners he (Johnson) not withstanding the ferocity of his temper, revered the clergy as a body of men....'.

It may well be true that Johnson, a warmhearted and kindly man, must have suffered both from the ascetic and the worldly sides of the Church of England in his age. It was not wholly bad - there were some bishops (a few) who did visit their dioceses - for example in 1764 Bishop Keppel confirmed more than forty thousand people and as is well known some old ladies in Bury St. Edmunds were confirmed several times on the grounds as has been said that one cannot have enough of a good thing.

But to the Anglo-Saxon mind a sense of guilt, arising from Sin, which after all every Christian who believes in the Atonement with an informed conscience ought to have, is somehow not part of religion but of psychology. Thus our public libraries always and irritatingly place 'Psychology' adjacent to Religion. Thus some commentators, more especially in America, are led into post-Freudian assumptions about an absolutely pre-Freudian man making guesses that Johnson's gladness in religion was a compensation for his passions and also singling out Johnson's guilt about his passions and his indolence and sluggishness about church going and work as something peculiar to him, whereas as any Frenchman will tell you it is every Englishman's fault.

However there were two influences on Johnson neither of which falls into the normal categories of Anglicanism, although Dr. Samuel Clarke was perhaps in the forefront of heterodoxy which has always lingered in some sections of the Anglican church. Bishop Gibson is said to have described Clarke to Queen Caroline as 'the most learned and honest man in her dominions, but with one defect - he was not a Christian.' Voltaire described him as 'a metaphysical clock', Anthony Collins wrote of him 'Nobody doubted the existence of God until Dr. Clarke strove to prove it.

Now although he was an important influence he is not quoted in the Dictionary and we may assume that Johnson's questing mind and possible his interest in the less orthodox Christianity - Methodism - may have stimulated his interest. There is an odd reference in Boswell 'I asked him why he pressed Dr. Clarke an Arian 'Because (said he) he is fullest on the propitiatory sacrifice.' But to me it is the influence of William Law which is more interesting. Law, a non-Jurer of the second generation, refused to sign the oath of allegiance to George I and therefore lost his Fellowship of Emmanuel College Cambridge and became, among other things, tutor to Edward Gibbon's father: and he eventually lived in a bizarre kind of a spiritual community accompanied by Hester Gibbon, the historian's aunt, and a Mrs. Hutchinson, where they pursued a life of strict religious discipline but also of considerable charity to the poor and needy, so much so that they were blamed for supporting the idle.

We may note that Johnson supported all kinds of people in his own home, Francis Barber and Mrs. Williams among them, and was always good to the poor. It is somewhat surprising that this aspect of his life is not often described by his commentators, as it ought to be, as part of his religion but somehow as part of his general kindness, a mistake not made by John Wain who wrote in his biography of Johnson in a passage about his Christianity 'The sheer number of people whom Johnson helped is astonishing, only less so than the unbelievable amount of trouble he would take on their behalf.'

But it is not only in this that Johnson's religious life reflected the writings of William Law, especially his 'A serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life', first published in 1728. As Boswell's Life shows Johnson expected to find 'this a dull book (as such books generally are) and perhaps to laugh at it. But I found Law quite an overmatch for me; and this was the first occasion of my thinking in earnest of religion.'

William Law belongs to that well-known tradition of slightly eccentric but very holy Anglican clergymen. If the eighteenth century itself lived in some kind of confusion between Deism, Rationalism, Stuart High Church Anglicanism, Roman Catholicism and Methodism, Law may be said to have been influenced by probably Jansen and certainly by Madame Guyon of Port Royal, by Fénelon, by St. Francis de Sales, whose 'Introduction to the Devout Life' bears some resemblance to a 'Serious Call' and after he had written this work by the writings of the German Protestant mystic Jacob Boehme, who was a

peasant shoemaker and whom some of Law's critics obviously think would have done better to have stuck to his last.

Of Law the historian Gibbon wrote (1796): 'His last compositions are darkly tintured by the incomprehensible The Visions of Jacob Behmen' and then having condemned Law's attitude to the iniquities of the stage and the theatre in general, he goes on: 'His argument on topics of less absurdity is specious and acute, his style forcible and clear and had not his mind been clouded by enthusiasm, he might be ranked with the most agreeable and ingenious writers of the time.'

Johnson, according to Boswell, had similar opinions: 'Law, (said he) fell latterly into the reveries of Jacob Behmen, whom Law alleged to be somewhat in the same state with St. Paul, and to have seen unutterable things. Was it even so, (said Johnson) Jacob would have resembled St. Paul still more, by not attempting to utter them.' In spite of this however Law was in many ways orthodox and Catholic as is seen by his retort to Bishop Hoadley, in what is known as the Bangorian controversy, for his latitudinarian attitude. But when we are puzzled first by Johnson's sometimes obsessive guilt and even more by his regular laments about failing to go to church, or by even the great care he took to be in a state of grace before he did attend Communion Sunday we would do well to read Law first. For example Johnson in March 1762 wrote:

God grant that I may from this day  
Return to my studies  
Labour diligently  
Rise early  
Live temperately  
Read the Bible  
Go to Church

Law wrote: 'The greatest enemy of the devout life is sloth' and 'I take it for granted that every Christian, that is in health, is up early in the morning; for it is much more reasonable to suppose a person up early because he is a Christian than because he is a labourer, or a tradesman, or a servant, or has business that waits him.....how more is he a Christian to be reproached that had rather be folded up in a bed.'

Johnson we know was a reluctant Church worshipper and told Boswell 'I hope in time to take pleasure in public worship.' Law wrote: 'Is it not therefore exceeding strange, that people should place so much piety in the attendance upon public worship, concerning which there is not one precept of our Lord's to be found and yet neglect those common duties of an ordinary life, which are commended on every page of the Gospel.'

Here of course one cannot doubt that Law was to some extent engaged in special pleading for as a non-juror he did not celebrate Holy Communion or

take a priestly part in any parish duties. Most non-jurors did not go to their parish churches: Law actually attended every service in his. But nobody can doubt that Johnson was a firm, sincere and believing Anglican. To quote from Hawkins:

Johnson had 'a thorough conviction of the truth of the Christian religion'.

To quote from the Gentleman's Magazine on Johnson's death:

'religion has lost her sincerest votary and her firmest friend.' And from Boswell: 'He was a steady Church of England man.' From Gordon Cragg, a recent historian of the 18th century church: 'Dr. Samuel Johnson, in some ways, the most representative figure of his age, was a man of sincere and unaffected piety, whose prayers have permanently enriched English devotional literature.'

And Charles E. Pierce:

'Johnson was a true Church of England man who accepted with relative ease the central articles of the Anglican faith.'

In conclusion I will return briefly to William Law who in my view provides the key to much that seems to puzzle some commentators about Johnson's religion. It was not Law's invention that men of Christian persuasion should and do remember their final judgement at their death. It was not anything peculiar to Johnson that he should worry whether he had been unkind to Tetty, it was not odd that he should pray with a degree of fear but asking always for forgiveness. 'Support me by the grace of the Holy Spirit in the days of weakness, and at the hour of death and receive me, at my death, to everlasting happiness' he prayed.

Gibbon wrote of Law 'If he finds a spark of piety in the reader's mind, he will soon kindle it into a flame; and a philosopher must allow that he exposes with equal severity and truth the strange contradiction between the faith and practice of the Christian world.' We know that Johnson did have more than a spark of piety and that he admitted to being influenced by a 'Serious Call'. So lastly from that book a paragraph on death:

.....'We are exhorted to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; because unless our heart and passions are eagerly bent upon this work of our salvation; unless holy fears animate our endeavours and keep our consciences strict and tender about every part of our duty, constantly examining how we live and how fit we are to die, we shall in all probability fall into a state of negligence and sit down in such a course of life as will never carry us to the rewards of Heaven.'

Johnson was not the only well-known eighteenth century person to have scruples. The Duke of Newcastle, whose library Boswell thought was not



properly acknowledged in 'The Lives of the Poets', was nervous of people and nervous about his spiritual condition. He was nicknamed 'Permis' because he would never enter a room without using this cautious French word. He was doubtful on all occasions whether to make his communion and used the bishops and clergy of whom he was patron to advise him. Johnson was also scrupulous and worried about legalistic issues for example he prayed for Tetty 'if it were lawful'. Fancy may therefore make us imagine the glorified Johnson at last arriving in heaven to enquire 'if it was lawful' to enter and the glorified and over pious Duke of Newcastle welcoming him with his first assured 'Permis'!

All kinds of claims have been made for Johnson's religion. Robert Shackleton considered that he might have become a Deist, Charles E. Pierce that he might have been happier as a Methodist; but the evidence would suggest that he was an Anglican with Popish leanings in an age when Bishop Butler said 'one might observe a wonderful frugality in everything which has respect to religion, and extravagance in everything else.'

We must therefore conclude that Johnson could have echoed the well-known dying words of the non-juror Bishop Ken:

'I die in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Faith, professed by the whole Church before the disunion of East and West. More particularly I die in the Communion of the Church of England as it stands distinguished from all Papal and Puritan Innovations and as it adheres to the doctrine of the Cross.'

#### THE JOHNSONIAN ERA COFFEE HOUSES

Ross Wilson, MA, Th.L.

Hon.Schol. Trinity College, Melbourne - 21st February 1987

Chairman: Miss Rosemary Radden, who was taking the place of her late father Lewis Radden

Mr. Wilson said that the birth of coffee and coffee houses preceded Johnson's by a good half century. The first was reputedly opened in Oxford but the real craze began in the city of London. the first coffee house was opened in St Michael's Alley in the early 1650s by Pasqua Rosee, the Ragusan servant of a Turkey merchant who had popularised the drink among his friends. Though extolled by Rosee, coffee had its opponents as an unhealthy drink, and coffee and coffee houses were not welcomed by the authorities at the Restoration as leading to sedition. A duty of 4d a gallon was imposed, and licences were required. Despite an attempt at closure coffee houses rapidly developed, many into political clubs. Following Rosee, Parr, an ex-barber, set up the Rainbow by Inner Temple Gate in Fleet Street, and alarmed and annoyed his neighbours with evil smells and fires in his chimneys and chambers. By 1708 there were said to be three thousand such nuisances in existence, and coffee said to be much drunk by the best of quality and physicians.

With coffee accepted as a socially approved drink, coffee houses tended to specialise, and at particular houses were to be found each profession, trade, class and political party. People with like interests gathered together and eventually guarded those interests by forming a club. Lawyers met at Nando's, the citizens, discussing finance, at Garraway's or Jonathan's, divines at Child's, soldiers at Old or Young Man's. The Whigs met at the Smyrna or the St. James's, and the Tories at the Cocoa Tree or Ozinda's, and neither would wish to be seen in the haunts of the others.

The alleys running between Cornhill and Lombard St produced a good crop of coffee houses - Garraway's in Change Alley, founded by Thomas Garway, coffee man and tobacconist, who first sold tea, where wine was auctioned 'by the candle'; Jonathan's, in Change Alley also, scene of Mrs Centlivre's play A Bold Stroke for a Wife; Tom's in Birchin Lane, closely associated with Garrick; Lloyd's, begun as a room near the Tower, where underwriters and ship insurers could meet, settled next at the corner of Lombard St and Abchurch St, under a Mr Baker, and later moved to Pope's Head Alley as New Lloyd's coffee house, and then to the Royal Exchange. Baker gave Walpole news of the taking of Portobello, and a descendant founded Baker's Coffee House, which later became a tavern and chophouse. Of the coffee houses near the Temple, Nando's had Boswellian associations, and Dick's was the occasion of a theatrical riot over a play called The Coffee House. Cowper was an habitue.

They also provided steaks and wine, and their habitues could engage in conversation, business, politics, gossip and gambling.

The writers and wits of the time had left lively and sometimes satirical accounts of the life of the coffee houses and much on the subject would be found in the pages of The Spectator (Nos 1,16,402,481,568,4030, The Tatler (Nos 1,25,38,78,147,246) and other publications.

Strangely, for a Tory, Johnson visited the Whig St James's at least once, being present on the famous occasion when Goldsmith became the subject of Garrick's epitaph ending 'Who wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll.' Johnson was more at home at the Tory Turk's Head in Gerrard St. There gatherings of artists led to the foundation of the Royal Academy, with Reynolds as its first President, and there Johnson's Club met. At the Turk's Head in the Strand (it was a favourite name for coffee houses in allusion to the Turkish origin of coffee) Johnson and Boswell liked to sup, and Garrick and Goldsmith as well as Johnson were to be found at Tom's in Russell St. Also in Russell St. was Will's, meeting place of Dryden and the wits, and Button's, patronised by Addison, and for a time by Pope, and not far off the Piazza, where later Sheridan quipped during the burning of Drury Lane Theatre 'A man may surely be allowed to take a glass of wine by his own fireside.'

This summary can only touch on the wealth of detail given by Mr.



Wilson about the 18th century coffee houses, and must conclude as he did with a reference to another and earlier literary figure, Francis Bacon, who first mentioned in England coffee and coffee houses 'like unto our taverns' which were to be found in Turkey.

After a short discussion Dr. Grundy thanked Mr. Wilson for his comprehensive and most interesting paper.

#### THE HARMFUL DRUDGE

Dr. Helen-Louise McGuffie

Professor Emeritus, Bethany College (West Virginia) - 21st March 1987

Chairman: Major Gen. M.H.P. Sayers OBE

In introducing the speaker, Major-General Sayers said that Dr Helen-Louise McGuffie was a graduate of Colombia University and a pupil of the late James Clifford. She was Professor of English and Chairman of Department at Bethany College, West Virginia, until she retired in 1982, but continued to teach. She was interested in Johnson's reputation in the 18th century, and in 1976 published Samuel Johnson in the British Press 1744 - 1784, a list of 3000 items still being added to. Dr McGuffie said that the topic she had originally proposed, criticism of Johnson as a lexicographer, seemed too narrow, and she would instead speak generally about Johnson's reputation, her work in progress.

She began by saying that the Johnson of contemporary critics was very different from the Johnson seen by Boswell and their circle: three dimensional, complex and rich in character, not always a flattering picture but painted from life by those who knew him. The Johnson of critics and newspapers was sometimes scarcely recognisable - an ignorant and arrogant monster of savage appearance and behaviour, whose writing was unintelligible - undependable scholar, prejudiced critic, malicious biographer, political turncoat - a black and white caricature.

By 1749 Johnson had been for over 10 years a professionally successful if anonymous writer, London had been popular and the Dictionary commissioned. But his name on the title page of Irene in 1749 brought two anonymous pamphlets, neither serious in itself, but foreshadowing the frequent attacks to be made during the next 30 years, and neither attacking the man, as later opponents were to do. In 1752 Bonnell Thornton wrote two imitations of the Rambler making fun of Johnson's long words and elaborate sentences, the forerunner of other unsympathetic analyses of Johnson's style by professional writers. A second line of criticism took the form of diatribes composed of pejorative adjectives and contemptuous phrases. In 1755 the Dictionary was generally well received, but John Maxwell, an Irish clergyman who had spent almost 10 years preparing a dictionary of his own, wrote a pamphlet giving the impression that Johnson was an ignorant slipshod amateur. This, the

first genuinely hostile criticism of Johnson was almost the only professional criticism of the Dictionary printed during Johnson's lifetime. The Dictionary established him as the undisputed leader of English letters, yet during the decade after Irene hostile allusions to Johnson gradually increased. Rasselas in 1759 attracted more condemnation than praise - his prose style was 'tumid', 'pompous', 'inflated', and 'swelling', according to Owen Ruffhead in the Monthly Review. He found fault also with the characterisation, sentiments, pessimism and unnatural dialogue. In general, later critics ignored Rasselas, but these first reviews of it were important landmarks because Johnson had now become not only well known but famous.

In 1762 Johnson, by investigating the Cock Lane Ghost, afforded Charles Churchill the opportunity to present, in his satirical poem The Ghost, a cruelly repulsive portrait of Johnson as 'Pomposo'. In the same year the pension awarded to Johnson gave John Wilkes the chance to paint Johnson as a traitor, hireling and slave, following his Dictionary definitions. From this malicious assumption that Johnson's definitions were the expression of his opinions stemmed later attacks on 'pensioner' Johnson.

Johnson's edition of Shakespeare in 1765 brought him an implacable and spiteful enemy in William Kenrick, but it did not rouse much serious antagonism. After 1765 however hostile allusions to Johnson increased, among them, in 1767, Archibald Campbell's Lexiphanes, the longest and most outrageous parody of Johnson's style, the first anti-Johnson book not provoked by a Johnson work. It contained the first explicit reference to Johnson's supposed prejudice against Scotland.

By the end of 1769, Johnson had become an eminent figure despite the twenty years' worth of abuse directed at every aspect of his career and personality, which nevertheless had kept his name before the public. But between 1770 and 1775 his four political pamphlets attracted fresh denunciations of venality, treason and stupidity, and accusations that he was an unprincipled advocate of despotism and a Jacobite. The most savagely attacked was the fourth, Taxation No Tyranny, and in the same year The Journey to the Western Islands brought many new enemies, chiefly from north of the Border, who found fresh material for abuse in Johnson's attitude towards 'second sight' and MacPherson's Ossian.

Through all these many years of abuse Johnson had had his supporters and his reputation was not seriously affected. He was therefore the obvious choice for the Prefaces to the Lives of the Poets. With this book anti-Johnsonism took a new turn, for unlike those of the past twenty years the critics judged not his name but his writing, and although always severe and often captious, the criticism was relevant, dignified and original. Nevertheless the hostility continued and in 1782 and 1783 two brutal books appeared by James Thomson Callendar, displaying hysterical and frenzied hatred of Johnson, its expression unrestrained. This intensity of rage however revealed the extent of Johnson's fame. To all his critics Johnson responded

with public silence and private amusement. He had always held that an author laid himself open to praise and blame and always refused to be drawn into controversy. Only a man whose mind was "expanded beyond the common limits of human nature" could have remained tranquil under such steady condemnation over so long a period. A study of Johnson's critics served only to increase one's respect for him and to confirm the truth of Rambler 10 - "It is no less a proof of eminence to have many enemies than many friends."

Dr. Grundy concluded a short discussion by thanking Dr. McGuffie for her wonderful talk on an extremely interesting aspect of Johnson studies.

#### SURVIVING AS A PROFESSIONAL AUTHOR: THE CASE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON

Professor O.M. Brack, Jr.

Department of English, Arizona State University - 11th April 1987

Chairman: Trevor Russell-Cobb BA, BSc Econ.

The Chairman introduced Professor Brack as a visiting Professor at Wolfson College Oxford, who was a member of the English Department of the University of Arizona, which would be celebrating its centenary in 1991. He was also a member of the Editorial Committee of the Yale Edition, and was the Editor of Studies in 18th Century Culture Vol.16, Madison: Wisconsin University Press, due out shortly. He was also collecting Johnson's shorter prose in three volumes. His paper was "Surviving as a Professional Author: The Case of Samuel Johnson."

Professor Brack said that little was known about Johnson's early years in London, but he had left home in 1737 with a recommendation from Gilbert Walmsley as a very good scholar and poet who hoped to "try his fate" with a tragedy and obtain work as a translator from Latin or French. Johnson's Irene was performed in 1749 through the support of Garrick, but although young men in the provinces imagined that tragedy was the way to fame and fortune, it was not the fashion in the contemporary London theatre. Johnson was more fortunate than Tobias Smollett, who in 1739 had also hoped to succeed with his tragedy The Regicide or James the First of Scotland. This was never performed before publication ten years later, and Smollett's decade of frustration gave a valuable insight into the lives of aspiring young writers. Roderick Random contained episodes, especially those describing the troubles of Melopoyne, a young poet, clearly based on the experiences of Smollett himself, and of other writers, perhaps including Johnson.

Neither Johnson nor Smollett was reduced, like Melopoyne, to writing sensational halfpenny ballads, but the possibility might well have been there. The would-be tragedy writer could fill in his time with poems, translations, essays and biographies, novels, and, in Johnson's case, journalism.

Johnson's early years had received little attention, until Isobel Grundy's Samuel Johnson and the Scale of Greatness (1986) and Thomas Kaminski's The Early Career of Samuel Johnson (1987). One could only speculate why he aligned himself with opposition politics against Walpole. The opposition held that in failing to stop Spain from preying on English shipping Walpole was undermining the trade and commercial interests of the nation, and Walpole finally declared war in 1739. Johnson was then working for the Gentleman's Magazine under Cave and it was evident that he took opposition politics seriously, expressing the opposition view of the quarrel with Spain in his account of the debates between the Lilliputians and the Iberians. He continued his attack on Walpole with his Marmor Norfolciense and maintained it in his lives of Admiral Blake and Sir Francis Drake.

Johnson's part in the war of the periodicals was a problem for some scholars. In 1731 Cave gave his new journal the title "magazine" because it was a storehouse of items culled from other journals, and other editors followed suit in competition. Johnson joined the fray in 1738, but this war was nearing its end and, possibly at Johnson's urging, more and more original material was included. Some critics found it hard to reconcile Johnson's early productions with the work of his great maturity and designated it Grub Street hackwork or journalism - but this latter pejorative term did not arise until the 19th century. But though Johnson wrote for money for most of his life, he upheld his integrity. He might sometimes have exerted the least amount of effort needed to earn his wage, but he often gave more. He would not have written anything against his principles. A journalist, he said, ought to consider himself "subject at least to the first law of history, the obligation to tell the truth."

Johnson was a born journalist. In 1734 he wrote to the editor of the Gentleman's Magazine telling him how it should be run. But after the publication of London in 1738 Cave was the major source of Johnson's income until 1745. Johnson received 10 guineas for London and 47 guineas for abortive work on an unpublished History of the Council of Trent. He was said to have been paid £100 a year for editing the Gentleman's Magazine, but this possibly included other translating and editorial projects which came to nothing. Since he had claimed that a man could live on £30 a year, Johnson was perhaps not as badly off as legend implied.

Johnson left the Magazine in 1745 and a year later signed the contract for the Dictionary. He was still far from recognition as a writer, but his apprenticeship on the Gentleman's Magazine gave him skills and ideas of lifelong value.

Concluding a short discussion Mr Farthing said that the Society was much indebted to Professor Brack for his interesting paper.

At an additional meeting on 16th May 1987 Dr. Noble was able to supplement the paper she gave on 18th October 1986 with the slides which she had had to omit on that occasion owing to the misbehaviour of the projector. She had now kindly returned to show the illustrations relative to THE GENDERING OF BEES IN THE 18th CENTURY.

The paper had been substantially given in October, but she now showed many striking and beautiful slides illustrating inter alia the theme of Virgil's interest in bees and subsequent references to it, particularly as adopted by Napoleon as a symbol. Among them were plates from the 4th book of the Georgics from Ogilby's edition of 1654, including the spontaneous generation of bees from bullocks.

The most historically interesting of the slides were those showing the earliest figures still extant drawn with the aid of a microscope and the earliest such subjects published in a plate from Federigo Cesi, Apiarium (Rome 1625) of observations of the bee by Francisco Stelluti through a compound microscope made in 1609 by Galileo. The bee was displayed front, back and side in about X 10 magnification in a design recalling the arms of the Barberini family, to which belonged the reigning Pope, Urban VIII, to whom the plate was dedicated.

In 1840 Napoleon's body was returned from St. Helena for burial in Les Invalides, in accordance with his wishes to be buried beside the Seine. One particularly interesting slide showed an engraving by Jazet after Horace Vernet showing Napoleon returning from the Underworld as Aeneas.

#### SOCIETY VISITS

A visit to Lichfield on 26 September 1987 was arranged by Frank Staff and attended by five members. They were made very welcome by Mrs. Wilmot, on behalf of The Johnson Society and by Dr. Nicholls, Curator of the Johnson Birthplace.

An account of the visit by Zandra O'Donnell is incorporated in the Society's records.

#### THE WREATH LAYING 1986

The wreath-laying ceremony took place in Westminster Abbey on 13th December and was conducted by the new Dean, The Very Revd. Michael Mayne.

The wreath was laid by David Parker who delivered the allocution given below.

The cloud of suffering under which Johnson passed his life was only slightly lifted as death approached; and it is about this suffering and about the compassion it engendered in him that I should like to speak briefly today. Not about Johnson the critic, Johnson the lexicographer, Johnson the



conversationalist, Johnson the essayist, Johnson the editor, Johnson the poet, the Latinist, Johnson the Great Cham of literature, but about just two characteristics of Johnson the man, about what one might call The Hidden Johnson, the Private Johnson.

But first it is appropriate to remind ourselves of the days leading up to the event we commemorate today. It is a moving thought that at this hour 202 years ago Johnson lay dying: it is not often that our Commemoration falls on his actual anniversary, so when it does so, it seems to bring us closer to him. The last three years had not been kind to him. The death and the estrangement of friends, ever-increasing illness, presentiments of mortality, the dropping away of social comforts had sadly reduced him, and by November 1784 he realised that he was dying. His prayer before receiving the Sacrament on 5th December began with the admission that "I am now, as to human eyes it seems, about to commemorate for the last time the death of Thy son". He had put his affairs in order. He had - curiously late, since she had been dead 30 years, - arranged for a stone to be erected on his wife's grave. He had experienced his "late conversion". He had refused further alleviant drugs lest "he meet God in a state of idiocy or with opium in his head". (One is reminded of Chesterton's hope to "see undrugged in evening light the decent inn of death".) But he was still troubled, and even the day before he died we have his defiant cry to the surgeon Cruickshank who was lancing his dropsical legs "Deeper, deeper, I want length of life - and you are afraid of giving me pain which I do not value." Soon after there was his desperate attempt to do what Cruickshank had failed to do. Then on the 13th, about 7 in the evening, he died. For his friends who were left "a light had gone out, a great deal of joy that could never be replaced" (these curiously apt words are Nancy Mitford's, at the end of The Pursuit of Love), His friend W.G. Hamilton said much the same thing, but at rather greater length. "He has made a chasm which nothing can fill up, but which nothing has a tendency to fill up. Johnson is dead. Let us go to the next best. There is nobody and no man can be said to put you in mind of Johnson."

Suffering had been with him all his life. We are accustomed to semi-jocular references to his robustness, his pugnacity, his physical strength which had once enabled him to hold off four footpads until the arrival of the watch and, on another occasion, to throw into a theatre pit not only a chair but the man sitting on it. We know of his powerful physique which could, he was advised, have secured him the job of a market porter. But his huge body was the seat of "whole nests" of physical ailments. Failing eyesight. Asthma. Nervous disorders. Scrofula. Rheumatism. Then there were the psychological disorders, the fear of death, the fear of madness, the black dog of melancholy. There were his religious struggles, which ended only with death. The subject matter, in short, of the Prayers and Meditations. And almost the most terrible of all there was the icy hand of poverty (you will excuse the appearance of Thomas Gray at such a moment)

which for so many years was always on his shoulder. We can have little idea of life at the bottom in early 18th century London. If you had no clothes, you froze; if you had no food you starved - if you had avoided all the other savage causes of death. Well may Chapman comment that "Johnson's persistent ill-health and frequent illnesses form a sombre background to his letters". And, indeed, the letters are full of references to ailments - and cures, in which he naturally had great interest. To glance at the index under Health and Spirits is revealing. "Weakness and Misery", "melancholy indisposition", "rheumatism", "lumbago", "a very poor creeper upon the earth", "arthritis and dropsy", "20 years of a life radically wretched". Now Johnson had devised means of keeping all this unhappiness under control and also of concealing it from others. He despised men who made a profession of indisposition. But his own suffering burst not infrequently through the outer fabric of his life. Suffering is, as Evelyn Waugh wrote in *Brideshead*, the spring of love. And suffering had marked Johnson indelibly. Want, poverty, neglect, had gone to produce a character tough in itself but also one conscious of the effect which similar suffering had on the lives of others. He was a man of deep compassion. Misery which renders some men callous had given him understanding of, and sympathy with, his fellow victims. He was, Mrs. Piozzi tells us, "uniformly not capriciously good", and his benevolence was practical and to the point. To see a fellow human being in need was, to him, to act in his relief. Whether the need was self-induced, whether the benevolence was used to purchase a little gilding on the pill of life was not relevant to him. It was enough that the recipients were poor. We know of the strays with whom he filled his house, to his own discomfort (he was even planning to take in, just before his death, the "lean, dark and preaching" widowed sister of John Wesley, Martha Hill). We have some idea of his numberless small benefactions to relieve almost unbelievable unseen poverty. We know of his kindness to destitute children, we know of his assistance to "everybody that has even the lowest pretensions to literature in distress" (in Mrs. Thrale's words). We know of his pensions and his practical help to a wide range of unfortunates (like the Benedictine monk Compton who converted to Protestantism after reading No. 110 of the *Rambler* (on Repentance)). Mrs. Piozzi says "he has more tenderness for poverty than any other man I ever knew. And "she adds" less for other calamities: the person who loses a Parent, Child or Friend he pities but little - these, says he, are the distresses of sentiment - which a man who is indeed to be pitied has no leisure to feel: the want of food and raiment is so common in London, adds Johnson, that one who lives there has no compassion to spare for the wounds given only to vanity and softness". Or for that matter to scrupulosity - you will recall the packthread incident. And Johnson was as humble spiritually as he was compassionate: he could write in his 70th year "Other good of myself I know not where to find except for a little charity". But we have found it, and we commemorate today a man of sorrows, a man of compassion. And let us express our gratitude to him, let us discharge "that prodigious debt of the present to the past, the duty of love and piety to the dead" (the words are those of Fr Rolfe in *Desire and Pursuit of the Whole*) and pray that the soul of Samuel Johnson be granted the



pardon he always desired and that he may, with all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

The Christmas Luncheon, arranged by Mrs. Dowdeswell, took place afterwards at the Vitello d'Oro Restaurant.

#### BOOK REVIEWS

Isobel Grundy: Samuel Johnson and the Scale of Greatness  
Leicester University Press 1986 pp.278 £27.00

In some ways this is a confused and confusing book; in others it is original and perceptive. Dr. Grundy has brought together a miscellaneous collection of essays on various themes in Johnson's work and has imposed on them a scheme to which her title gives the clue. "The Scale of Greatness" appears to represent the shift of focus from large to small or vice-versa, from telescopic to microscopic, which is so loose a context here that it can accommodate almost any pair of paradoxical concepts or positions the author chooses to discuss. Greatness and smallness, the general and the particular, the grand and the intimate, magnanimity and malignity, the need to strive after greatness and the dangers of competition - all these are examined as part of the scale, but what the argumentative purpose of this structure is in Dr. Grundy's book never becomes clear. Certainly Johnson wrote and thought antithetically; his subtle and complex mind frequently expressed itself in paradox; he himself seems to epitomize contraction - the nimble, swift intelligence in the heavy shambling body. But the image of the scale is too limited, too local to clarify his thought and seems to have been imposed almost arbitrarily here by an author unnecessarily in search of an argument.

Dr. Grundy is anxious to emphasize Johnson's debt to Swift, and it is his adoption of the Gulliverian pose in the "Debates in the Senate of Magna Lilliputia" that must have given her the idea of this theme in the first place. She is aware of being on dangerous ground; she says of her contention that Johnson absorbed Swift's influence consciously "To maintain this may seem to be flying the face of the evidence", as indeed it is. Only after three pages of this chapter does she produce the remark of Johnson's which springs to mind at once in any discussion of Swift and scale; "His famous disparagement, 'when once you have thought of big men and little men, it is very easy to do all the rest'...plays down the originality and indicates that, unlike most of the book's first readers, he found the germ of its story commonplace rather than new and strange: he speaks as if he had thought of big men and little men himself". This is ingenious, but takes no real account of Johnson's dismissal of scale as a familiar satirical device. She leaves out of account, too, the very wide-spread earlier Augustan use of this shift of focus technique, based on ridicule of the virtuosi or amateur scientists and their obsession with minutiae, a use that reaches its peak in Pope's insect imagery and in that poet's own brilliant and conscious use of shifts of scale and size.

Dr. Grundy is on surer ground when she forgets about the need for an overall strategy and concentrates on individual works or themes. The best parts of the book are the chapters on Competition, Malignity (this is especially perceptive), and on Greatness and Heroism. The material of these chapters is not itself original but the way in which Dr. Grundy approaches it is fresh and often very illuminating. The paradox of Johnson's approval of aspiration and disapproval of competition has not been fully examined before, nor his peculiar horror of malignity and unmotivated spite. This, though a recognizable aspect of his Christian view of human depravity, also illustrates the tenderness and sensitivity of Johnson's nature, and Dr. Grundy is especially good at demonstrating it. On the other hand, she posits too much rational objectivity in Johnson when she finds it difficult to discover a reason for his attributing such motiveless malignity to Lady Macclesfield in the 'Life of Savage'. It was, surely, his deep love for Savage that made Johnson credulous on this point as well as fiercely partisan.

The later chapters of Samuel Johnson and the Scale of Greatness examine the moral complexity of Johnson's nature with admirable thoroughness and perception. One of the merits of this book is the range and aptness of its many quotations: it can be read with almost the same sort of pleasure as good anthology. The 'Lives' especially provide a wonderful source for instances of Johnson's depth and subtlety and Dr. Grundy makes excellent use of them and of his poetry. To read her book is to be reminded of facets of Johnson's personality and his art which have not always been so sharply focussed as they are here. She underplays a little the importance of Johnson's Christian belief in colouring his attitudes, and this makes her ignore his genuine horror at Swift's despairing pessimism - inappropriate to the point of sinfulness in a Christian priest. But she emphasizes Johnson's unexpected fondness for the intimate and the domestic, his belief in the common reader's response to it, while at the same time asserting the uniqueness and peculiarity of his opinions. She shows his responsiveness to ideas of grandeur and yet concludes with a sympathetic reading of his celebration of the hero of humble life, the surgeon Robert Levet. That contradictions like these are more often a sign of depth than of superficiality is one of the many truths Johnson's life and art demonstrate; Isobel Grundy's book reminds us admirably of it.

Rachel Trickett  
St. Hugh's College  
Oxford

Donald Greene and John A. Vance, A Bibliography of Johnsonian Studies, 1970-1985, English Studies Monograph Series no.39, University of Victoria, B.C., Canada.

If my calculations (done on paper, not electronically) are correct, then during the fifteen years covered by this book scholars have produced almost exactly 67 printed items on Johnson annually, not counting reprints, reviews

trivia, newspaper items and the like. And the rate is increasing steeply: 1984 and 1985 each scored far higher than 67, and they may well have been outstripped by now. People have written not only on Johnson's major works but also on sales, exhibitons, pictures, relics, association items, fiction, parody, and jeux d'esprit. They have published their findings in the Republic of China (and Japan - many transliterated Japanese titles - Lebanon, India, Russia, and South Africa). I have found nothing published in Peru: not yet.

The question this book provokes in its - inevitably scholarly Johnsonian - readers is: "How do we sound?" Were we boring, repetitious, predictable, or did we emulate our subject in power to seize and hold the reader's attention? Alas, Donald Greene and John Vance cannot really answer this question, but can only point us towards their 974 items to research for ourselves. They follow the practice begun by James Clifford of awarding a star to pieces "we strongly feel that the student of Johnson should not neglect". It is sad to have to report that the Johnson Society of London has not netted any stars. If only the speeches from the bicentenary dinner at the House of Commons had been listed, Dr Carpenter would surely have achieved one for us! But we make no bad showing, and it is a pleasure to see that Ross Wilson's essay on Johnson, Henry Thrale and brewing (NR, 1972) is described as "Highly informative".

Greene and Vance have resisted the continuing temptation to use another symbol for "works that the student should avoid at all costs". They have confined themselves to noting that a particular item ignores an earlier one which is relevant to its subject, and to labelling the tone of hostile reviews: written "with reservations", "critically", "sarcastically", or "severely". (Even Walter Jackson Bate's life of Johnson, one notes with awe, had one severe review among the twenty listed. This was in a psycho-analytical journal; so it is perhaps not surprising that both listed reviews of E. Verbeek's psychoanalytical study of Johnson, 1971, were also severe.)

There are very few slips. At least one title "expected 1987" did not make it. The projected musical Johnson! is mentioned with no note that it never materialised, for which your reviewer feels guiltily responsible. Dr Heberden is spelt consistently and unfortunately wrong, and error has crept likewise into the title of Mary Hyde's The Impossible Friendship.

The classification scheme devised by James Clifford bids fair to continue in use indefinitely, expanding without limit. It is complex and on the whole marvellously workable. Yet a few quibbles may be entered. Why cannot exhibition catalogues (at All Souls College, 1972, the Arts Council, 1984, Lichfield Art Gallery, 1984) be grouped together, or at least cross-referenced? Why should Giles Barber's "Dr Johnson and Cookery" and Herman W. Liebert's Johnson and the Brute Creation come under "Johnson's Personal Traits and Habits"? The sub-section "Women and Marriage" (under "Johnson's

Views") swallows down Gae Annette Brack's valuable Ph.D. thesis on Johnson's dealings with Charlotte Lennox, Elizabeth Carter, Fanny Burney and Hannah More (next-door to a discussion of prostitution) and Martine Watson Brownley's equally valuable article on his literary relation with Hester Thrale: the absence of these works is a blemish on the section "Johnson's Personal Relationships", and only one is cross-referenced. (Cross-references, indeed, are another sore point: your reviewer noted a number of regrettable absences under "Style", including any reference to her own essay on Johnson's epistolary style, from its listing under "Letters".)

But, as Johnson so well knew, not even the most useful or admirable book can be perfect. Donald Greene and John Vance, having elicited admiration, will continue to be useful for years to come. Listeners to the scholarly conversation who wish to join it must from now on start with them. Furthermore, one of their entries has taught me a new word: "philurbanism". Would Johnson have accepted this, one wonders, as a label for his views on London? He would surely have enjoyed the continuing debate about himself, and approved this painstaking and reliable guide to it.

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Dr Johnson and the Seven Provinces: a paper by William Fletcher M.A.

i

Johnson's study of the Dutch language

Johnson first attempted to learn Dutch in 1773; in July (1) of that year he records that between Easter and Whitsuntide he attempted to learn the Low Dutch language. "My application", he writes, "was very slight, and my memory very fallacious, though whether more so than in my earlier years I am not very certain". In the Life (2) we find this note, "Between Easter and Whitsuntide, having always considered that time as propitious to study, I attempted to learn the Low Dutch language".

Boswell records an interesting discussion between Johnson and some friends including Burke about the similarity of High and Low Dutch (i.e. German and Dutch) to English in 1778 (3). The discussion proves that Johnson had at least a superficial acquaintance with both languages; he says - "English and High Dutch have no similarity to the eye, though radically the same", and goes on, "once when looking into Low Dutch, I found, in a whole page, only one word similar to English, stroem, like stream and it signified tide". Burke, who knew Dutch, added that he had seen the word "roesnopies" in a Dutch sonnet; who would imagine that this word resembles

the English word "rosebuds"? But, when we enquire, we find roes, rose, and nopie knob; so we have rosebuds. "Hill-Powell (4) in a note to this passage, comments that Burke probably confused "roesnopie" with "roseknopjes", the Dutch word for "rosebuds"; his point however is still valid.

In extreme old age Johnson returned to Low Dutch; characteristically, he feared that his mental powers were being impaired by old age and to reassure himself that his alertness was not failing he applied himself to the Dutch language; the relevant passage appears in the Life under the year 1780 Anno Aetatis 71 (5). "In the latter part of his life, in order to satisfy himself whether his mental faculties were impaired, he resolved that he would try to learn a new language, and fixed upon the Low Dutch for that purpose, and this he continued till he had read about one half of Thomas a Kempis; and finding that there appeared no abatement in his powers of acquisition, he then desisted, as thinking the experiment had been duly tried." Johnson's earlier study of the language had clearly been superficial, otherwise he could not have been said to be learning "a new language".

Johnson amplified his reasons for learning Dutch on his deathbed to Mr. Hoole (6); he feared he had no mind to give God, and learnt Dutch to satisfy himself that he had. "About two years since I feared that I had neglected God and that then I had not a mind to give him, on which I set about to read Thomas a Kempis in Low Dutch, which I accomplished and thence I judged that my mind was not impaired; Low Dutch having no affinity with any of the languages which I know". His concluding assertion is surprising as he clearly knew from the 1778 discussion that Dutch and his native English were "radically the same". Burke makes this very point.

We can follow his progress in a "memorandum book" for the year 1782 (7). Hill-Powell refers to this book as "Johnson's diary for 1782". There are entries recording Johnson's study e.g. under the entry for the 11th - 12th December he writes....."I did not wholly neglect Dutch...". Or on the 30th September..."a little Dutch...". Johnson studied Dutch at least twice during his life; in 1773 his study was clearly superficial, and his interest in the language may have been inspired by his lexicographic researches, in 1780 he turned to this language again, on this occasion for personal reasons, claiming that Dutch resembled no language that he knew. In a sense this was true, but as a test for his acquisitive powers we must agree with Burke that this language was not the most rigorous trial and that if he had attempted a language not related to English he might have been satisfied that his powers were not what they were.



Johnson's interest in Frisian, including a brief comparison of Frisian and English

Johnson saw Boswell off to Holland from Harwich, and in a long letter to Boswell a La Cour De L'Empereur in Utrecht he asked him for information on two topics: "It will be a favour if you can get me any books in the Frisick (sic) language and can enquire how the poor are maintained in the Seven Provinces". (London December 8 1763)(1).

Boswell could find no account in his minutes or his letters preserved by Johnson of how the poor were treated in Holland, but, as far as Frisian was concerned, he was more forthcoming: "of the old Frisick there are no remains except some ancient laws preserved by Shotanus in his 'Beschryfinge van de Herrlykheid van Friesland' and in his 'Historia Frisica'...; of the modern Frisick or what is spoken by the boors at this day I have procured a specimen. It is Gysbert Japix's Rymelerie and is the only book that they have;..."The Frisians had no books of devotion or even a translation of the bible.

Gysbert Japiks (died 1666) is Friesland's most famous poet and in 1966 appeared on a Dutch postage stamp marking the anniversary of his death; he was a popular poet who wrote in the language of the peasantry or the "boors" as Boswell calls them; Japiks was said to be "unrivalled in his mastery of a language that had degraded to the common parlance of the peasantry (2); "in the churches Dutch was employed and the Dutch Statenbibel read. There are two editions of the Rymelerie listed in the British Library Catalogue before Johnson's time: one published at Boalswert in 1668, and a second at Leuwarden in 1681 (3), either of which may be the edition of which Boswell speaks.

When Johnson wrote his Dictionary, he prefixed an account of the language's history, in the course of which he quotes Dr Hicke's genealogy of the "Gothick or Teutonic" languages (4). Gothic, according to this table, is the ancestor of all the Germanic languages, including English; Anglo-Saxon is an offshoot of Gothic, and English, Dutch and Frisick are bracketed together as the descendants of Anglo-Saxon. Frisian is the continental language most closely related to English; "good butter and good cheese, are good English and good Fries", runs the thyme. The lexical similarity between English and Frisian can be well illustrated from a table published in "The Frisian Language", a book issued jointly by the provincial administration of Friesland and the Fryske Akademy (5).

English	us	cheese	key	have been
Frisian	us	tsiis	kaei	he west
Dutch	ons	kaas	sleutel	ben gewest
German	uns	Kase	Schlüssel	bin gewesen

The author of this book concludes - a conclusion supported by these few examples - that Frisian resembles English both phonetically and in vocabulary. Syntactically, he says, Frisian is closer to Dutch, and Dutch speakers who move to Friesland have no difficulty mastering the local idiom.

Why was Johnson interested in Frisian? Most probably because of its importance in the history of English and its connection with Anglo Saxon. "Languages", he once said "are the pedigree of nations" (6) and that "there is no tracing the connection of ancient nations but by language...". A language so closely related to AngloSaxon, of which he gave specimens in the History prefixed to his Dictionary, could not but be of the greatest interest to him. We can also understand why he thought the extinction of an ancient language was such a disaster. Perhaps he feared the modern Frisian might suffer this fate and was therefore grateful to have a specimen of Frisian in Gysbert Japiks's Rymelerie.

iii

Johnson, Dutch Humanism and Dutch Science

In August 1763 Johnson raised Boswell's hopes that he would accompany him on a tour of the Netherlands (1). That Johnson was familiar with Holland's legal system is clear from a discussion about the legal use of torture in the Republic which he had with a young Dutch fellow traveller in Colchester in the course of the journey to Harwich. The Dutchman tried to flatter Johnson's English prejudices by "inveighing against the practice of putting suspected criminals to the torture in Holland". Johnson replied that this Dutch practice was seen as a favour to the accused; only those were put to the torture, against whom there was enough evidence to secure a conviction in England. In Holland the plaintiff had one more chance to prove his innocence (2).

The Dutch Republic was a fascinating political phenomenon in Europe at the time, a citizens' Republic which had shown her determination to establish and then defend her independence first against Spain and then against France under Louis XIV; one of the ways in which the fledgling Republic sought to confirm her international standing was by raising that of her premier university at Leyden; tempting offers from the Republic enticed Joseph Justus Scaliger, the leading Humanist of the day, to take up an appointment at Leyden in 1580 and a farsighted move this proved to be. Scaliger, who was familiar with Latin, Greek, Hebrew and other languages, sowed in fertile ground. Among his students were Daniel Heinsius, Thomas van Erpen, Golius and Hugo de Groot, usually known by the Latinised name Grotius. The University of Leyden's reputation was such that it attracted students from all over Europe until well into the eighteenth century; Henry Fielding, for instance, studied literature there in 1728-9.



For Johnson - and he was not out of step with his contemporaries in this choice - Holland's greatest son was Hugo Grotius. Grotius wrote Dutch poetry, it is true, but his most famous works were written in Latin; one particular book, an essay in Christian apologetics, *De Veritate Religionis Christi* (1627), was an influential book throughout the century and was translated into oriental languages such as Arabic. Johnson read this book when young, recommended Grotius among others to those tormented by doubts about their faith, and intended to read another work by Grotius, *De Satisfactione Christi*, which he recommended to Boswell. He also wrote Latin poetry and tragedies, legal works on international law and as official historiographer to the States General an account of the Netherlands' revolt against Spain called the *Annales et Historiae de Rebus Belgicis*. Johnson wrote the preface to a book by a certain Lauder in 1751 in which Lauder tried to prove that Milton had plagiarised certain Latin poets in *Paradise Lost* (3); one of these poets was Grotius, who wrote a tragedy called *Adamus Exul*. Johnson, in his unfailing charity, appealed to the Archbishop of Canterbury on behalf of a needy descendant of Grotius called Isaac de Groot (July 9th 1777) (4); "he is", writes Johnson, "by several descents the nephew of Hugo Grotius; of him, from whom perhaps every man of learning has learnt something. Let it not be said that in any lettered country a nephew of Grotius asked a charity and was refused".

Johnson was not just a Latin scholar, he loved science; he carried out chymical (sic) experiments in his attic all his life. Dutch scientists had done much to put science on a firmly empirical basis in the seventeenth century; Leyden was the first university to possess a scientific laboratory. Sir Kenneth Clark entitled his chapter on the Dutch "The light of Experience". Boerhaave, a leading Dutch physician, died in 1738, and in 1739 Johnson wrote an account of his life for the *Gentlemen's Magazine* (5). "Hij heeft", writes Huet, a Dutch historian, "aan de hele medische santemkraam voor hem de bons gegeven" (6) - he had no time for superstitious nonsense in the study of medicine. According to another Dutch historian, Gerlof Verwey (7), his concern was largely the practical training of the physician, this and his encyclopaedic knowledge, his organisational ability, and his freedom from preconception were more remarkable than any scientific discoveries he made. Boerhaave was a born teacher, and as such has a natural affinity with his biographer Johnson.

Johnson was as much at home with a Latin Humanist like Grotius as with the scientific mind of a Boerhaave. Universal encyclopaedic minds were a practical possibility in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as Johnson himself demonstrates. It is true that to the modern way of thinking the Latinist Johnson and the empiricist Johnson seem to jar somewhat; this is because Latin has degenerated into an academic discipline instead of remaining a natural medium of communication; as a matter of course in Holland and England scientific works were written in Latin, at least in the seventeenth century; one has only to think of such epochmaking works as Newton's *Principia* or the Dutchman Huygens's *Horologium Oscillatorium* (1673),

explaining the principles of the pendulum clock. Johnson had a many sided mind and it would seem perfectly natural to him that great works both in the arts and the sciences should be written in Latin.

iv

Johnson and the Dutch character

The deep impression which a century of commercial rivalry with the Dutch had left on the British perception of their character is demonstrated by the pejorative sayings about the Dutch in Brewer's "Dictionary of Phrase and Fable"; viz., Dutch brig, Dutch auction, Dutch reckoning, Dutch comfort, Dutch concert, Dutch feast. We still "go Dutch" when we leave a guest to pay his or her part of the bill. A Scottish friend heard an expression in China not listed in Brewer; "Dutch wife" meaning a pillow. When someone came out with stale news in the eighteenth century, people would shake their heads and say....."Ay, the Dutch have taken Holland".

In the absence of personal observation, Johnson had to rely partly on the memoirs of those who knew the country at first hand; one book we know was read and admired by him was Sir William Temple's "Observations Upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands", published in 1673; Temple had been British ambassador in the Seven Provinces, and knew the land from firsthand experience; on two occasions in the Life, Johnson quotes explicitly from this book; Johnson's style was even considered by some as modelled on that of Temple, and in a footnote Boswell cites passages from the Observations for comparison with Johnson's style (1). Johnson however was a voracious reader and at the same time allowed that he never read books through; so there is no saying where he accumulated his vast stores of information. But nothing can replace personal experience and observation. I am sure Johnson would agree. At least two of Johnson's friends knew the country at first hand, Goldsmith and Boswell, so he would learn much from the anecdotes of their experiences at the Club.

For Johnson's contemporaries, the Dutch were seen as passive and materialist. They were much addicted to the soporific effects of smoaking (sic). Burke writes "Tobacco is the delight of Dutchmen, as it diffuses a torpor and pleasing stupefaction" (2). Boswell adds that the Dutch were fond of the game of draughts, because of the tranquillising effect this game has on the mind, fixing the attention without straining it. The most commonly used soporific is of course alcohol; we all know of Dutch courage inspired by drink, a byword since the seventeenth century as the following quotation from Waller shows - "The Dutch their wine and all their brandy lose, disarmed of that by which their courage grows". Johnson recalled the following passage from Temple's book. "Sir William Temple mentions, that in his travels through the Netherlands he had two or three gentlemen with him; and when a bumper was necessary, he put it on them....." (3)

The Dutch were so homely that they had the good fortune to escape that most eighteenth century complaint known as "the spleen"; this ailment, more imaginary than real, is I think defined by Johnson in the Dictionary as "melancholy, hypochondriacal vapours", definition 5 of those listed by him for this word. He quotes Blackmore "The spleen with sullen vapours clouds the brain, and binds the spirit in its heavy chain. Howe'er the cause fantastick may appear, the effect is real and the pain sincere". This ailment did not trouble the Dutch; they were simply beneath it. Johnson was struck by this characteristic when he read the relevant passage in Temple and writes impatiently to the notoriously "splenetic" Boswell...(4) "Be (as Temple says of the Dutchmen) well when you are not ill, and pleased when you are not angry"; the Dutch, fully absorbed with their ledgers and bookkeeping, had no time for real or imaginary ailments of the spirit such as those that worry the idle with time to themselves.

The passage in Temple is worth citing in full (5). "The spleen", he writes "is a disease too refined for this country and people, who are well when they are not ill, and pleased when they are not troubled, are content because they think little of it, and seek their happiness in the common easements and commodities of life, or the increase of riches, not amusing themselves with the more speculative contrivances of passion or refinements of pleasure".

The familiar domestic scenes painted by Vermeer, Steen, Hals, De Hooch and Rembrandt are indelibly etched upon our minds; the stepped gables of the house fronts, the well scrubbed tiles of the courtyards, the soberly clad Dutch Huisvrouwen in the foreground. Goldsmith, a leading light at the Club, studied medicine at Leyden from 1754-55, and in his letters to his uncle Contarine wittily compares the appearance of Dutch and Scottish women (6), "A Dutch woman and a Scotch will bear an opposition; the one is pale and fat, the other lean and ruddy; the one walks as if she were straddling after a gogart, and the other takes too masculine a stride; I shall not endeavour to deprive either country of its share of beauty", claims Goldsmith, something of a connoisseur in such matters", but I must say that of all objects on this earth, an English farmer's daughter is most charming".

Goldsmith published his "Traveller" in 1764, but the poem had a long gestation (7). It crystallises Goldsmith's thoughts about Holland, though it is marred by being philosophic and lacking spontaneity; there are moments when poetry breaks through the ratiocination like sunshine suddenly piercing through clouds. Johnson admired the poem greatly - "the best poem since Pope" - and Johnson's admiration conveys a strong note of intellectual and political approval. Indeed, Johnson admitted that he personally contributed line 420 and the final ten lines, barring one couplet (8). There is a moment when the poem conjures up for us vividly the Dutch landscape, as we are familiar with it from Dutch painting; we can suddenly visualise the calm and tranquillity of the Dutch countryside.....

Dr. Grandy thanked Dr. Noble for her fascinating introduction and said that members would look forward to the complete paper at a later date.

"The slow canal, the yellow-blossomed vale,  
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,  
The crowded mart, the cultivated plain,  
A new creation rescued from his reign...." (9)

The Dutch landscape, however, as portrayed by Goldsmith's poem, might be a vision of peace and tranquillity, the Dutch themselves were longstanding commercial competitors and the Dutch East India Company suffered rivals not gladly; the tentacles of this monopolistic enterprise were world wide, evoking jealousy and hatred among the Republic's economic competitors. "In matters of commerce, the fault of the Dutch", quipped Pope, "is giving too little and asking too much". "If you think that of me, then I'm a Dutchman", we still say because to be a Dutchman was to be the lowest thing that one could be; Goldsmith reasoned that this love of gain, this avarice and acquisitiveness, was the source of all the faults of the Dutch....."Even liberty itself is bartered here".

A visitor to the country cannot help noticing on first entering the country how tightly packed the population is in the provinces of North and South Holland; over-population was a Dutch problem in Johnson's day too, as we can see from a conversation between Johnson and Fordyce in 1778 (10); Johnson: "Countries which are the most populous have the most destructive diseases.....", Fordyce: "Holland is very unhealthy, yet is exceedingly populous", Johnson: "I know not that Holland is unhealthy. But its populousness is owing to an influx of people from all other countries...". The preeminence of Amsterdam as a hub of world trade, and the religious toleration of the Dutch constitution meant that the country was inundated by immigrants from East and West for whom it could not provide work.

Such immigration and the stagnation of world trade in the eighteenth century caused terrible distress for the poor in Holland as Boswell notes in his journals. "A decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilization", Johnson said (11); he had asked Boswell to enquire how the poor were treated in his letter of 8th December 1763 to Boswell. "Pauperism", writes Gerlof Verwey (12), "increases by leaps and bounds in the eighteenth century; much is done by the churches, the municipal authorities, the patricians and the middling citizens to relieve the need... De republiek blijft een model van sociale hulp voor andere landen... The Republic's efforts are exemplary", he concludes, "but insufficient". In Amsterdam, for instance, in 1766 the Lutheran Poor Relief Board and the Charity Foundation were set up, in 1783 the Roman Catholic Mary House was founded, and in 1787 the Work House.

The Dutch were not extravagant, but sober and thrifty in their domestic economies. They eschewed luxuries. "They send abroad the best of their own butter", writes Temple (13), "and buy the cheapest out of Ireland or the north of England for their own use. In short, they furnish infinite luxury which they never practise and traffic in pleasures which they never taste".

For Johnson and his contemporaries, the Dutch were neither sociable and elegant like the French, nor proud and freedom-loving like the English. In his poem the "Traveller" - a poem which greatly appealed to the sensibilities of the time - Goldsmith places his analysis of the Dutch character between his account of France - "Gay sprightly land of mirth and social ease" - and England. The Dutch are patient and longsuffering - how much labour it cost them to raise their dykes and reclaim their land from the ocean. They are industrious, one of the leading trading nations of the world - "Of mighty industry and constant application to the ends they propose and pursue", (Temple) (14). But at the same time they are too content with material things, too passive and soporific - "Dull as their lakes that slumber in the storm" - Temple says the townsfolk are more mercurial, though not inventive, the "boors" on the other hand are "dull and slow of understanding - yielding to plain reason, if you gave them time to understand it" (14). If the Republic was tolerant, and contemporaries certainly thought so, one is tempted to apply to Holland then a criticism that a German has made of Britain more recently; it is true, he says that the country is tolerant but "ihre beruhmte Toleranz ist eigentlich nur Apathie". (Her famous tolerance is really just apathy).

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