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From the Editor

Last year we had a new Chairman; this year we have a new Honorary Secretary. Stella Pigrome earned the reward of many years service in that capacity and retired from the post at the end of the 1991/2 session. Her place has been taken by Zandra O'Donnell. To the one we extend the Society's grateful thanks; to the other a warm welcome. There has also been a change, during the year, in the posts of Honorary Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Tom Davis handed these over to David Quinlan. Unfortunately ill-health necessitated the latter's resignation at the end of the 1992/3 session, and the duties are being undertaken, on a temporary basis, by the Chairman, the Secretary and the ex-Secretary. A successor is sought.

There are two new Vice-Presidents: John Comyn and James Leicester. Both of them will be well-known to members for their many years of service, the one as Chairman, the other as Editor of The New Rambler and Treasurer.

We have, sadly, to record the deaths of five of our members. Mrs Norah Leicester had played a considerable part in the Society, and her assistance to her husband in the production of The New Rambler was well-known and much appreciated. Professor Clarence Tracy had been over from Nova Scotia to lecture to us, the most recent occasion was in October 1983 when he spoke on Richard Graves; the author of The Spiritual Quixote. The Deaths of W M Cooper, A R Porter and Captain R L F Ramsey have also been recorded.

Members will be pleased to know that Professor Donald Greene is preparing a response to Professor Nagashima's paper in last year's New Rambler (D VII, pp 43-47). This will, it is hoped, appear in the next issue (D IX).

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DR JAMES AND DR JOHNSON
 Professor T J Murray IC,MD,FRPCP,FACP,LLD,DSc
 Dean of Medicine, Dalhousie University Medical School - 17 October 1992
 Chairman: Ernest Heberden

Although Professor Murray appeared as sole presenter of this paper, it was in fact a joint production by himself and Dr James Gray, who had carried out much of the research. In fact Dr Gray had hoped to be with us as joint presenter, but had unfortunately been unable to do so.

Professor Murray began by pointing out that, although the eighteenth century regarded itself as the age of enlightenment, it was also an age of credulity and continuing belief in witchcraft, and that physicians still prescribed according to phases of the moon and settings of the planets. It was also a time when it was surprising to see someone from the medical profession joining forces with someone else, which is what we see in the teamwork between Dr Samuel Johnson and Dr Robert James. Doctor James was regarded as an expert in a wide range of disorders, from gout to cancer, but was best known for his Medical Dictionary, which he wrote in collaboration with Johnson; and for his Fever Powders, the popularity of which persisted for over a hundred and fifty years and which were still being sold all over the world, including Eastern Canada, at the turn of the century.

The Medical Dictionary was written some twelve years before Johnson wrote his famous Dictionary. Johnson and James were both born in Lichfield, attended the Grammar School and went to Oxford, but because of the six-year gap in their ages, did not become friends until their return to Lichfield, James to practice medicine, Johnson to teach. James blamed his own lack of success on the fact that too many physicians had been allowed to practice in Lichfield. He met Johnson at the home of Gilbert Walmsley with Garrick and other protégés of Walmsley. Johnson was interested in medicine and in learning French. James, a noted linguist, helped him in both areas.

Their association continued after both moved to London, where James became a wealthy and fashionable physician, while Johnson was still struggling to make a living as a writer. Johnson, James and Warren (the publisher) invested in a new cotton-spinning device. It was never patented and it failed, although in other hands it became the basis of modern cotton-spinning techniques.

James turned to Johnson for his literary skills in persuasive proposals in the writing of a medical dictionary. James claimed to be able to cure Rabies with mercury. Johnson's contributions can clearly be recognized from the way he writes, particularly where he says that every man is, to a degree, a practitioner upon himself, so ought to have a book to enable him to distinguish dangerous practices from the real thing. Unlike other medical works, which only included terminology, this would also include descriptions, diagnoses, cures and surgical procedures. Its merit, Johnson claimed, would be in enabling its readers to detect medical charlatans who often cost their patients their lives. Johnson gives his view on animal research in the work, showing that while he was not generally in favour of this, some illnesses, like Rabies, were so serious that its use was justified - which was how Mercury had been found to be infallible in its cure. He appealed to readers to add any knowledge they might have of incurable diseases.

For the past fifty years, scholars have been particularly interested in distinguishing which parts of the work were written by Johnson. The dedication to Richard Mead was clearly Johnson's, other chapters are adapted from biographies he wrote earlier for the Gentleman's Magazine, and chapters on ancient physicians are also his. The rest is speculation over which scholars

argue. James was a rather flat, pedantic writer, so the style often enables scholars to recognize one from the other.

Johnson's interest in medicine is well-known; many members of the Royal College of Physicians were his friends, most notably Oliver Goldsmith. He was particularly interested in the argument between the apothecaries and the physicians (which he felt to be unseemly) as to the whether physicians should be allowed to dispense medications or apothecaries to prescribe. When Boswell asked Johnson which passages had been written by him, Johnson said he had learned his knowledge of physics from Dr James, whom he helped to write the proposals and a little of the dictionary itself.

Professor Murray referred to the present sad problems of the miners and quoted Johnson's style in the introduction to the History of Chemistry, which was "formerly in the hands of miners and smelters of metal, ... men unacquainted with the liberal sciences, debarred from all commerce with the learned world, condemned to lead their lives in darkness underground, and to support their wretched being with coarse and hard fare. Consider these men, daily obnoxious to a thousand dangers, dreading what may happen, disturbed in mind and leading a very uneasy life. They tremble at frequent earthquakes, the rapid torrents from the mountains, ... and sulphurous exhalations, the resounding of caverns ... Under all this they have no wise and prudent person to consult who might remove their vain fears and restore light to their troubled minds."

Dr James' powders made him famous and very rich. In one of his dissertations, he quoted the case of Miss Eccles, very ill and delirious with a high fever, who after twenty-four hours of treatment with his powders recovered enough to be married and become the mother of nine children! Newberry, the publisher, fostered the powder and became its sole distributor. When it was criticized later, he wrote a vindication of it which was published after James' death. Professor Murray noted that it was a wonder that so many children survived James' treatment. He claimed that illness in children was due to a kind of slime or jelly in the stomach, therefore a treatment should purge the body of this. Treatments contained antimony, cream of tartar, camomile and large amounts of rhubarb and emetic tartar, giving the children a very difficult few days.

These powders were used in a wide range of fevers, including tropical fevers. They were so popular, they were used almost as a tonic. Part of their popularity was due to the fact that they were patented in 1747, when people began to have medicine chests in their homes, which included the powders. Newberry even promoted the powder in his book, Little Goody Two-Shoes, as her father died in a place where it was not available! It contained mostly antimony, which caused sweating, vomiting and diarrhoea, regarded as efficacious in cases of fever, as it evacuated evil.

James was frequently in court defending his powder, proving that his was different from other fever powders. Later, Oliver Goldsmith's premature death was blamed on his insistence on taking it in large amounts - ironic considering his previous scathing remarks on quack medicines! After that, physicians began to warn the public not to take large amounts of antimony for the treatment of minor illnesses. Even this negative publicity made Dr James' Powders more of a household name.

James kept the formula a secret, although Johnson knew it. In fact the powder, as such, never existed as it was variously made up by its distributors. Eventually James had to reveal the ingredients in court, which included phosphate of lime, antimonial calx, alvoro powder, insoluble antimonial calx, mixtures of other powders, waste and mercury.

Physicians were getting worried about its wide use by the public as it was expensive and they did not know what was in it. Eventually they marketed pulvis antimonialus, a cheaper version listed in the pharmacopeas of the day as a substitute for Dr James' Powder. James claimed that physicians used his powders for themselves and their patients, while publicly criticizing them.

Johnson was a supporter of James, but had his misgivings about the powders and other forms of treatment he used. In an account in the last year of his life about his ailments, especially asthma, he wrote to Dr Richard Brocklesby, and reported, while staying with Dr John Taylor, an abatement, due mainly to squills, saying, "I never thought well of Dr James' compounded medicines, his ingredients appeared to me sometimes inefficacious and trifling and sometimes heterogeneous and destructive to each other. This prescription exhibited a combination of about three hundred and thirty grains in which there are four grains of emetic tartar and six drops of tobai tincture. He that writes thus, surely writes for show. The basis of his medicine is the gum amina which Dr Lawrence used to give but of which I never saw any effect. We will, if you please, leave this medicine alone. The squills have every suffrage and in the squills we will rest for the present." Eight years earlier, however, Johnson stood loyally by James when, after his death, his powders were criticized by a chemist he once employed, who laid claim to the secret of the formula. Johnson gave a scathing attack on him in the London Gazette, defending James and his powders. Horace Walpole had so much faith in the powder that he wrote that he would take it even if his house were on fire! He added that it would cure most complaints other than death.

Dr Gray and Professor Murray decided to analyse some of the extant powder, but discovered that the formula was continually changing, so that each vial found, even when still sealed, was different! Christopher Smart credited the powders with three cures of his mental illness and wrote a hymn to their creator. His wife peddled them in Ireland. They were even used on George III during his mental illness. Fanny Burney treated her dogs with them. Queen Victoria also used them. They were advertised in Canadian newspapers after the turn of the century and were still then used by the Royal Navy for the treatment of tropical diseases. In 1772 William Jones, druggist and chemist of Little Russell Street noted in his order book the usual five hundred pounds of antimony for Dr James. In 1908 they were still selling for ten dollars a dozen in Canada.

Johnson was not only critical of the powders, he criticised James' drunkenness and womanizing in his later years. He did, however, recognize his professional accomplishments, his pioneering treatment of a range of disabilities in humans and animals. He and James admired each other as true polymaths, having knowledge of many arts and sciences, also acquaintance with many different subjects. Together they had knowledge and experiences which were complementary. Johnson credited James with teaching him most of what he knew of physics, which was a great deal. James was one of the foremost medical authorities of his day. Their collaboration in the medical dictionary was an important milestone in the history of modern medicine. It proved that a dedicated humanist and a versatile medical scientist worked very well as a team in the dissemination of knowledge of lasting benefit to their own generation and to posterity.

THE FINEST BIT OF BLUE: SAMUEL JOHNSON AND THE BLUESTOCKING ASSEMBLIES

Dr Sally N Hand - Professor of English, The William Paterson

College of New Jersey - 21 November 1992

Chairman: Mrs A G Dowdeswell

Whenever I say I am researching Samuel Johnson and the Bluestockings, invariably, someone asks: "Would you want to converse with Samuel Johnson?" The picture which comes to mind is the Macaulay Johnson talking for victory, the massive form rolling, the convulsive twitching, the heavy puffing as he shouted down his opponent, or hallooed him to a desperate last stand: "What then, Sir!" How now, Sir!" "You don't see your way through the question, Sir!" "I'll have no more of it." (1) Excluded from some for his roughness of manner and absence of rank, he was, nonetheless, the most important male figure in the Bluestocking Assemblies, 1760-84. "Few persons left his conversation", Maxwell records, "without perceiving themselves wiser and better." (2) The range of Johnson's mind was too wide to pigeonhole "Bluestocking," but he was perceived in the public eye as the male counterpart in intellect and virtue of Elizabeth Montagu, "Queen of the Blues". Their relationship was not easy. In the 'sixties they were rival Shakespearean critics for his edition of the Works and her ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS AND GENIUS OF SHAKESPEARE. In the eighties they were locked in a bitter personal battle, played out in Bluestocking Assemblies, over Johnson's biography of George, Lord Lyttelton, Mrs Montagu's friend and co-author of DIALOGUES OF THE DEAD.

My purpose today is to recreate from the distance of two hundred years Samuel Johnson in the Bluestocking Assemblies, a sense of place and a sense of person: the rooms where he conversed, eyewitness perceptions of him in print and in portraiture and, finally and most ephemeral, his conversation.

SLIDE I: "The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain" [NPG]

This group portrait, painted in 1779 by Richard Samuel, a little known member of the Royal Academy, celebrates nine English women for their accomplishments in classical languages, history, criticism, poetry, drama, art, and music.

In the centre Elizabeth Linley Sheridan, a well-known singer and frequenter of Bluestocking Assemblies, entertains two groups of women gathered before the statue of Apollo. Seated in the centre of the group on the left is Elizabeth Montagu, "Queen of the Blues," represented as Calliope for her ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS AND GENIUS OF SHAKESPEARE. Seated on either side are the republican historian, Catherine Macaulay, represented as Clio holding a scroll, and the novelist, Charlotte Lennox. Standing behind the seated women are Elizabeth Griffith, playwright, and an enraptured Hannah More, the Bard of the Blues, author of BAS BLEU and SENSIBILITY, holding Melpomene's cup for her tragedy PERCY. In the centre of the group to the right of the central figure Angelica Kauffmann, a celebrated painter and one of two female members of the Royal Academy, sits before her easel. Elizabeth Carter, a charter member of the coterie of Blues and translator of the Greek-Stoic philosopher Epictetus, stands behind her gesturing towards Mrs Sheridan as she talks to the author of ON FEMALE STUDIES, Anna Barbauld.

This portrait was painted at the height of the Bluestocking Assemblies in recognition of the importance of women as a group in contemporary cultural and artistic life. Each of the women in Samuel's portrait was involved with the Bluestockings, from Queen to occasional guest. Johnson knew them all and was friend and patron of Charlotte Lennox, friend and colleague on the GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE of Elizabeth Carter, and "gallant" and patron of Hannah More when she burst on the London scene.

The Bluestockings began as "a small party of friends" who met "for the sole purpose of conversation" in contradistinction to cards. In BAS BLEU Hannah More argues that intellectual conversation - heretofore withheld from women - is the "commerce of the mind," the necessary completion and outlet of knowledge and experience. Knowledge is made wisdom and intelligence sharpened when "ideas strike new light by strong collision." (3) It was the Bluestocking Assemblies, not the exclusive male clubs, which provided the forum for the finest display of Johnson's conversational talents.

The name originated when the grandson of the Bishop of Worcester, Benjamin Stillingfleet - a poor man who gave to poorer relatives - declined Mrs Vesey's invitation to her evening assembly at Bath for want of appropriate dress. "Phoo! Phoo!" she said; "Dress as you like. Come in your bluestockings!" He did and the name stuck and the Bluestockings grew to form a "powerful, compact phalanx in the midst of London." (4) There were many hostesses - Mrs Boscawen, Miss Monckton, Lady Lucan, Lady Rothes, Mrs Ord, Mrs Walsingham, and "the Old Wits," Mrs Delany and the Dowager Duchess of Portland, to mention a few - but most famous were Mrs Vesey and Mrs Montagu, and in a different way, Mrs Thrale whose Streatham dinners combined the intimacy of the country houseparty with the variety of London society. Streatham was far enough from London that guests often stayed overnight and conversation begun at dinner continued into breakfast. There were many male hosts - Sir Joshua Reynolds, Soame Jenyns, and several Bishops - but the most famous was Sir William Weller Pepys, Hannah More's "Laelius" and "High Priest of Conversation" in BAS BLEU.

The original Blue Assemblies began at the spas and were designed to facilitate conversation by reducing formality from ceremony to seating. They followed the London season, the only "good Blue," said Mrs Montagu, is in months with 'r'. They met after dinner - fashionably held at 6 pm - for tea, lemonade, orgeat and biscuits. Although no one could agree on the ideal seating arrangement, everyone agreed that "Where the Circle keeps its station/Each common phrase is an oration" (BAS BLEU). Mrs Vesey so feared the circle that she "pushed all the small sofas and chairs pell-mell about the apartments so as not to leave even a zig-zag path of communication free from impediment and her greatest delight was to place the seats back to back so that those who occupied them could no more perceive their nearest neighbour than if the parties had been sent into a different room." Stone deaf, she ran from group to group, eagerly holding her ear trumpet to the speaker's mouth "to catch sounds already past and gone." "I hope nobody has had any bad news to night?", she would inquire. "As soon as I come near anybody, nobody speaks!" (5)

Everyone loved Elizabeth Vesey, warm, intuitive, intelligent - if you could decode Vesey language - even Walpole blessed her "English heart." She had the art of making her guests feel good about themselves and about each other. According to Mrs Montagu, even Johnson was "rarely rude." He was a frequent guest at her assemblies, held at her London house in Clarges St. in a couple of rooms painted, appropriately, blue. After her husband was elected to Johnson's Club, the members completed their Tuesday meetings at Mrs Vesey's assemblies. My favourite story of Johnson in a Vesey Assembly occurred in the year 1778: Mrs Carter was confined to her bed attended by her brother-in-law, Dr Douglas, who sent frequent bulletins on the state of her health to her most intimate friends. One of these bulletins arrived during an Assembly. When Mrs Vesey saw the note was from Dr Douglas, "OH!" said she without opening it, "this contains an account of our dear Mrs Carter. We are interested in her health. Dr Johnson, pray read it out for the information of the company." There was profound silence; and the Doctor, with the utmost gravity, read aloud the physician's report of the happy effect which Mrs Carter's medicines has produced, with a full and complete account of the circumstance attending them." (6)

Elizabeth Montagu was the opposite of her friend Elizabeth Vesey. Her conversation was clear and eloquent. As a child Conyers Middleton, her step-grandfather, trained her to reason by allowing her to listen to the scholarly discussions of his Oxford friends. But this kind, intelligent, and accomplished woman lacked the ability to promote conversation, partially because she could not forgo ceremony in either her elegant Chinese Room at Hill Street or her palatial Great Room at Portland Square.

According to Fanny Burney, Sir William Weller Pepys was the ideal Bluestocking host with just enough ceremony to make his guests comfortable without inhibiting conversation:

The passion of Sir William for literature, and his admiration of talents, and zeal for genius, make him receive whoever could gratify his tastes with pleasure that seemed to carry him into higher regions. The parties at his house formed into little separate groups, less awful than at Mrs Montagu's and less awkward than at Mrs Vesey's; he glided adroitly from one to another, till, after making the round of politeness necessary for the master of the house, his hospitality felt acquitted of its devoirs, and he indulged in the ardent delight of fixing his standard for the evening in the circle most to his taste, leaving to his serenely acquiescent wife [Eliz Dowdeswell] the task equalising attention. To do more than was exacted by good breeding for the high, and by kindness for the insignificant, part of his guests, would have converted those parties, that were his pride and joy, into exercises of penitence. (7)

SLIDE GROUP II: MRS MONTAGU'S "CHINESE ROOM" [Robert Adams' 1766 designs for carpet, ceiling, and mirrors; The Sir John Soane Library]

Mrs Montagu held her first assemblies in her husband's fine old house on Hill St. On his first visit in 1762, Johnson "came early and staid late," wrote his hostess, "so I had much of his conversation ... I hear he expresses himself delighted with the evening he pass'd here, and some of my friends tell me that since Polyphemus was in love there has not been so glorious a conquest as I have made over Mr Johnson." (8) The glorious conquest was short lived. By the mid 'sixties Mrs Montagu and her Polyphemus were rival Shakespearean critics for his edition of the WORKS and for her ESSAY ON THE WRITINGS AND GENIUS OF SHAKESPEARE, 1765 and 1769, respectively. Furthermore, detesting Macpherson's forgery as he did, one wonders how "delighted" Johnson would have been with Mrs Montagu's famous "Feast of Shells," and "Ossian" ceremony in imitation of FINGAL, iii, in which guests drank toasts from a nautilus, begun in 1761 in her Bluestocking Assemblies and continued for years afterwards. (9)

In 1766 Mrs Montagu commissioned Robert Adam to create her "Chinese Room." Mr Adam, she wrote, "has made me a ceiling, and chimney piece and doors which are pretty enough to make me a thousand enemies." (10) And pretty enough they were to draw her friends' carriages over the unpaved Hill Street infested with footpads on their way home from Shepherd Market or the monthly hangings at Tyburn. These slides, made especially for this lecture, show the elegant and formal, yet intimate, decor - the delicate mirrors, the warm reds and yellows of the ceilings and carpet - of Adam's Chinese Room where she held her Assemblies. Sir John Macpherson, writer for the East India Company and later Governor-General of India, Credits these Assemblies with being a school for statesmen:

I sincerely hope the dark gloom of politicks which deaden'd ingenious and Elegant life in London in the years 69 and 70 has vanished before now. George the Third does not know how much he

is indebted to the cheerful and Classic Assemblies of your Chinese Room. You gave that sweetness and refinement to the thoughts of our Statesmen which could alone counteract the acid and gloom of their Dispositions. Even Lyttelton would have been more violent had he not been soothed in his visits with you.... Junius himself, or his supposed representative in the House, acquired with you that urbanity which sheathed the venom of his Shafts; indeed, Madam, we are all indebted to you; and that without your being sensible of it (15 October 1772). (11)

In 1776 the twenty-six year old Hannah More, not long out of Bristol, perceives Mrs Montagu as a female Maecenas, dispensing largess to the London literati. By this time, the Johnson/Montagu relationship had warmed considerably:

I just returned from spending one of the most agreeable days of my life, with the female Maecenas of Hill Street; she engaged me five or six days ago to dine with her and had assembled half the wits of the age. The only fault that charming woman has, is that she is fond of collecting too many of them together at one time. There were nineteen persons assembled at dinner, but after the repast, she has a method of dividing her guests, or rather letting them assort themselves into little groups of five or six each. I spent my time in going from one to the other of these little societies, as I happened more or less to like the subjects they were discussing, Mrs Scott, Mrs Montagu's sister, a very good writer, Mrs Carter, Mrs Barbauld, and a man of letters, whose name I have forgotten, made up one of these little parties. When we had canvassed two or three subjects, I stole off and joined in with the next group, which was composed of Mrs Montagu, Dr Johnson, the Provost of Dublin, and two other ingenious men. In this party there was a diversity of opinions, which produced a great deal of good argument and reasoning. There were several other groups less interesting to me, as they were more composed of rank than talent, and it was amusing to see how the people of sentiment singled out each other, and how the fine ladies and pretty gentleman naturally slid into each other's society. (12)

SLIDE III: MEDALLION OF MRS MONTAGU - "MINERVA CAST IN VIRTUE'S MOLD" [1776 Print by Joachim Smith made from a Wedgwood & Bentley medallion]

Johnson valued Mrs Montagu more as a wise and benevolent matron, "Minerva cast in virtue's mould," than as the female Maecenas, hostess to wits and statesman. In 1775 Mrs Montagu gave Anna Williams an annuity of 100 pounds, by a single act of benevolence doubling the income of Johnson's friend and pensioner. In his letter of 5 March 1770 he successfully solicited Mrs Montagu for five guineas for "Poor Davies," the bankrupt bookseller, to "repurchase his household stuff." (13) As a "sign of his love and admiration" Johnson writes Mrs Thrale to get him a copy of a recently published print of Mrs Montagu: "She will give it to nobody in whom it will excite more respectful sentiments. But I never could get anything from her but by pushing a face, and so, if you please, you may tell her" (15 October 1778). Mrs Thrale replies, Mrs Montagu "desired me to tell you that She has long known you had a Superior Genius, but that nothing could have proved it plainer than your making her at this Time of Day proud of her Face by desiring her Print which shall be sent you framed & glazed very soon" (16 October 1778). Six months later Johnson still does not have the print. He writes Mrs Thrale: "On Monday I came late to Mrs Vesey. Mrs Montagu was there; I called for the print, and got good words. The evening was not brilliant but I had thanks for my company" (18 March 1779). He probably did get it shortly thereafter and included it in the

"little room," he wrote Frances Reynolds (19 October 1779) he was "filling with prints." Johnson's work on *THE LIVES OF THE POETS* during the late 'seventies may have given him the idea of imitating on a modest scale the imposing Streatham Portrait Gallery.

THE SALE CATALOGUE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON'S LIBRARY mentions a collection of 146 prints including at least one of Mrs Montagu. Lot #662, bought by General Oglethorpe, lists "3 Framed and Glazed Prints of Mrs Montagu, & etc." (14) There were several prints of Mrs Montagu in the late 'seventies including prints of portraits by Sir Joshua (1775) and Frances (1778) Reynolds. If Johnson intended his poem "On Seeing a Portrait [emended from "Bust" in Hawkins' original] of Mrs Montagu" as an inscription in imitation of Mrs Thrale's poems for the Reynolds portraits in the Streatham Library, the most appropriate candidate would be a print made from either the cameo medallion modelled by James Tassie in 1775 which she distributed to her friends, including Madame de Boccage in Paris for whom she had it set (October 1776); or the medallion modelled by Joachim Smith for Wedgwood & Bentley in 1775 mentioned in Josiah Wedgwood's letters to his partner, Thomas Bentley, in London. These medallions may have been one and the same for Tassie often sent his models to Wedgwood to reproduce. Blunt's description of the Tassie medallion would equally describe the Smith Medallion depicted in this slide: "The face is in profile, the hair turned back over a cushion, and curls at the ears. The cameo was engraved by Holloway, but whether it is earlier than or identical with the one produced by Wedgwood I am not certain." (15) The classic medallion of Mrs Montagu as wise and virtuous Roman matron, patroness of the deserving Williams and Davies, may have suited Johnson more than the Reynolds' portraits of Mrs Montagu in all her frou-frou and finery. It is certainly appropriate to his poem "On Seeing a Portrait of Mrs Montagu":

Had this fair figure which this frame displays,
Adorn'd in Roman times the brightest days,
In every dome, in every sacred place,
Her statue would have breath'd an added grace,
And on its basis would have been enroll'd,
'This is Minerva, cast in Virtue's mould.' (16)

Although Johnson clearly admired Mrs Montagu, they were never intimates and he was always unsure of her friendship. He writes Hester Thrale a rambling letter at Bath which he says is like Shakespeare's works filled with noble disdain of regularity: "The pure voice of nature and of Friendship. Now of whom shall I proceed to speak: Of whom but Mrs Montagu, having mentioned Shakespeare and Nature does not the name of Montagu force itself upon me... I wish her name had connected itself with Friendship, but, ah Colin thy hopes are in vain" (11 April 1780).

The correspondence between Dr Johnson and Mrs Montagu during this halcyon period of the seventies was a mutual exchange of elaborate compliments. Fanny Burney records a witty exchange in March 1777 over who Mrs Montagu has flattered the most when engaging the Streatham party to dine: Dr Johnson as the "Head of Philosophers" or Mrs Thrale with "all the Muses in her Train!" (17) Johnson in turn saw Mrs Montagu as at "the top of the wits" and a formidable conversational opponent. Fanny Burney records in her Journal for September 1778 a Streatham conversation in which Johnson imagines the fun he would have had as a young dog on the way up downing Mrs Montagu and urges Fanny Burney to have a go:

MRS THRALE: "Tomorrow, Sir, Mrs Montagu dines here, and then you will have talk enough."
DR JOHNSON began to see-saw, with a countenance strongly expressive of inward fun, and after enjoying it some time in

silence, he suddenly, and with great animation, turned to me and cried,

"Down with her, Burney! - down with her! - spare her not! - attack her, fight her, and down with her at once! You are a rising wit, and she is at the top; and when I was beginning the world, and was nothing and nobody, the joy of my life was to fire at all the established wits! and then everybody loved to halloo me on. But there is no game now; everybody would be glad to see me conquered: but then, when I was new, to vanquish the great ones was all the delight of my poor little dear soul! So at her, Burney - at her, and down with her!" (18)

Johnson's letters in the Spring of 1780 to Mrs Thrale at Bath where Henry Thrale is recovering from a stroke, delight in the rivalry of Mrs Thrale and Mrs Montagu. He compares their conversational sparring in Bath Assembly to himself and Burke who talk all the talk while others sit and gape (23 May 1780). He tells Mrs Thrale that she is fortunate Mrs Montagu has been delayed in Bath, for "she is 'par pluribus,' conversing with her You may find variety in one" (1 May 1780). Johnson's final words to Boswell on Mrs Montagu shortly before his death compliment her conversation: "Sir Mrs Montagu does not make a trade of her wit; but Mrs Montague is a very extraordinary woman; she has a constant stream of conversation, and it is always impregnated; it has always meaning." Immediately Boswell mentions Burke, comparing Mrs Montagu with the one conversational opponent who Johnson felt had powers to match his own (LIFE, 15 May 1784).

SLIDE IV: UNFINISHED PORTRAIT OF DR JOHNSON AND MRS MONTAGU [By James Barry; National Portrait Gallery]

Johnson's respect for Mrs Montagu's intelligent conversation is registered in his face in Barry's unfinished painting in the National Portrait Gallery. This familiar painting - often reproduced without his companion - is a remarkable portrait of Johnson in the act of conversing. In the original Johnson converses with a shadowy but recognizable profile of Mrs Montagu - the set mouth and protruding chin, the Roman nose and high forehead just visible. Johnson is deep in concentration, his lips slightly parted, his brow furrowed, and his eyes askant fixed quizzically on his companion, obviously struck by something she has just said. Barry may have originally intended this picture as a detail in "The Distribution of Premiums" #5 of his series on THE PROGRESS OF CULTURE (painted between 1777 and the May 1783 Exhibition for the Great Room of the RSA), and abandoned it after the rupture between Dr Johnson and Mrs Montagu. Dr Johnson had Mrs Montagu tête-à-tête in conversation is emblematic of their relationship in the late 'seventies. After August 1780 this engrossed conversation would not have taken place.

Public appreciation of Johnson's conversational powers was at its peak in the Spring of 1780, his most popular and brilliant season in Bluestocking Assembly. His letters to Mrs Thrale are filled with invitations - Lady Lucan, Miss Monckton, and Sir W W Pepys - and with his pleasure over being totally under "petticoat government." In a letter to Boswell Langton describes a Vesey Assembly, 9 April 1780, which exhibited the "high importance" in which Johnson's Character was held, beyond any he "ever before was witness to." The Assembly consisted chiefly of ladies noted "both for their station and understanding - Dowager Duchess of Portland, Mrs Boscawen and her daughters, Lady Lucan, etc. - and select men - Sir Joshua Reynolds, Lord Lucan, Mr Wroxall, Mr Pepys and Dr Barnard: As soon as Dr Johnson was come in and had taken a Chair, the Company began to collect round him till they became not less than four, if not five deep; those behind standing, and listening over

the heads of those that were sitting near him. The conversation for some time was chiefly between Dr Johnson and the Provost of Eton while the others contributed occasionally their Remarks (LIFE, May 1780).

Like the Sage in RASSELAS: "He spoke and attention watched his lips; he reasoned and conviction closed his periods" (xviii). Johnson was pleased with his own performance. Two days later he writes to Mrs Thrale: "On Sunday I was at Mrs Vesey's ... There was Dr Barnard of Eaton, and we made a noise all evening, and there was Pepys, and Wraxal, till I drove HIM away" (11 April 1780).

This occasion marked the zenith of Johnson's performance in Bluestocking Assembly. By August 1780 he was reluctantly writing the biography of "Poor Lyttelton" which would embarrass the Bluestockings and separate him forever from Mrs Montagu except for a brief reconciliation at the death of Anna Williams in 1783. Boswell writes that Johnson's "expressing with a dignified freedom what he really thought of George, Lord Lyttelton, gave offence to some of the friends of that nobleman, and particularly produced a declaration of war against him from Mrs Montagu" (LIFE 1781). Johnson knew he would have trouble with the Lyttelton biography from the start. He wrote his publisher for previous biographies; when none were available, he wrote Lord Westcote, Lyttelton's brother, to designate a family member to write the biography. His letter angers Lord Westcote and in August he writes Mrs Thrale in desperation, "What shall I do about Lyttelton?" What he does is to write the life himself and shortly afterwards, according to Mrs Rose, daughter-in-law of his Chiswick friend, Johnson sent the manuscript to Mrs Montagu who was "much dissatisfied with it, and thought her friend in every way underrated; but the Dr made no alteration. When he subsequently made one of a party at Mrs Montagu's, he addressed his hostess two or three times after Dinner with a view to engage her in conversation; receiving only cold and brief answers, he said, in a low voice, to General Paoli, who sat next him "You see, Sir, I am no longer the man for Mrs Montagu." (19)

Johnson was, indeed, no longer the man for Mrs Montagu. Walpole writes Mason, 27 January 1781: "Mrs Montagu and all her Maenades intend to tear him limb from limb for despising their moppet Lord Lyttelton." (20) The Bluestocking Assemblies were the battlefield. Angry over Johnson's "Life of Gray," Walpole and Mason ferment the quarrel:

POOR LYTTTELTON were the words of offence. Mrs Vesey sounded the trumpet. It has not I believe produced any altercation, but at a blue-stocking meeting held by Lady Lucan, Mrs Montagu and Dr Johnson kept at different ends of the chamber and set up altar against altar there. There she told me as a mark of her high displeasure that she would never ask him to dinner again. I took her side and fomented the quarrel, and wished I could have made Dagon and Ashtagroth scold in Coptic" (3 March 1781).

The altercation does take place, however, three months later at Streatham. The dinner cloth had barely been removed when Johnson savagely attacks Sir William Weller Pepys, Mrs Montagu's "Prime Minister," with the full gale force of his anger.

Johnson's refusal to change the offensive passage in his biography of Lyttelton at Mrs Montagu's request, was basic to his own integrity and to what was one of his most valuable and instructive contributions to Bluestocking conversation: strict adherence to truth, especially in personal history and anecdote. Johnson's expressing "with a dignified freedom what he really thought of George, Lord Lyttelton," did give offense to Lyttelton's friends,

chief among them Mrs Montagu and Pepys. But whereas Johnson might have included a more flattering biography of Lyttelton written by a relative, he could never have written one himself. His strict adherence to truth provides an insight into why Johnson disliked Pepys and set upon him with the same passion he usually reserved for religion and politics. There were many reasons. Pepys talked from books and not from his own opinions. He was in Hester Thrale's words, "the most pedantic gallant and the most gallant pedant." Furthermore, his mannerisms irritated Johnson who admired Bacon's rule of conversation: slow deliberate speech to retain the memory and no violent movement of the body. Mrs Thrale records an incident when Johnson seizes Pepys' wrists to stop his gesturing while reading BRAGANZA aloud to the group. She writes that she is sorry Johnson "hates him so but 'tis no wonder his character is so very artificial. His manner at least that it disgusts a Man who has seen all sorts of Tricks and who can be pleased with nothing but Nature." She foresaw the Johnson/Montagu quarrel and the role Pepys would play. In her DIALOGUE projecting the attitude of friends and family upon the news of her death, written in August 1779, she positions Mrs Montagu and Dr Johnson at opposite ends of the Streatham drawing room with Pepys commuting between. At one point Pepys so irritates Johnson with his questions on death that Johnson sets upon him in this literary projection with the same vehemence he would display two years later in the Lyttelton affair. (21) The incident, however, which gives the most insight into Johnson's dislike of Pepys, is Mrs Thrale's entry in THRALIANA for 7 January 1780: "I have a notion I vexed Pepys today, but I could not help it - so I cried out first, not to detect him, God Knows, but to clear myself from suspicions of Ignorance." (22) Pepys' petty dishonesty would have infuriated Johnson. Johnson believed that personal stories were "specimens" of life, historical data, and should be reported accurately. Murphy writes: "A strict adherence to truth he considered as a sacred obligation, insomuch that, in relating the most minute anecdote, he would not allow himself the smallest addition to embellish his story. The late Mr Tyers, who knew Dr Johnson intimately, observed, 'that he always talked as if he was talking upon oath'." (23) Mrs (Thrale) Piozzi, writes that "His Veracity was indeed on all occasions strict even to severity; he scorned to embellish a Story with fictitious Circumstances which he used to say took off from its real Value; a Story should be a specimen of Life and Manners; but if the surrounding circumstances are false, as it is no longer any Representation of reality it is no longer worthy our Attention." (24)

Johnson's greatest contribution to Bluestocking Assembly, the "finest bit of blue," was his strict attention to truth in story. Boswell comments in the LIFE that Johnson "inculcated upon all who heard him the importance of perpetual vigilance against the slightest degree of falsehood; the effect of which, as Sir Joshua Reynolds observed to me, has been that all who were of his 'school' are distinguished for a love of truth and accuracy which they would not have possessed in the same degree, if they had not been acquainted with Johnson. "Mrs Piozzi also felt Johnson's influence. As an old lady she drew a line in her copy of the LIFE under the passage where Boswell quotes Johnson as saying, "You have so little anxiety about truth, that you never tax your memory with the exact thing'." (25) She wrote: "One reason why Mr Johnson's memory was so particularly exact, might be derived from his rigid attention to veracity; being always resolved to relate every fact as it stood he looked even on the smaller parts of life with minute attention, and remembers such passages as escape cursory and common observers." (26) Johnson continually taxed his memory with the "exact thing" so that accuracy became force of habit which he confirmed by his slow, deliberate speech in conversation. His "dignified freedom" in writing what he actually thought of Lyttelton's writings and character in his LIVES OF THE POETS is further evidence of his strict attention to truth in reportage.

Although he nearly came to blows with Pepys, Johnson never took on Mrs Montagu

face to face, prevented by Mrs Thrale and the timid 'little Burney.' There was a partial reconciliation at Anna Williams' death in the fall of 1783, but their relationship never recovered, for their quarrel touched the very core of Johnson's literary integrity.

SLIDE V: THE DISTRIBUTION OF PREMIUMS, #5 IN THE SERIES OF PAINTINGS ON "THE PROGRESS OF CULTURE" [By James Barry; The Great Room in the Royal Society of the Arts; on loan from RSA].

The final relationship of Dr Johnson and Mrs Montagu is depicted in the finished version of "The Distribution of Premiums," exhibited May 1783, where Barry links Johnson, "venerable sage," and Mrs Montagu, "most estimable lady," but from a respectful distance. Barry describes the scene: "Towards the centre of the picture is a distinguished example of female excellence, Mrs Montagu, earnestly recommending the ingenuity and industry of a young female, whose work she is producing ... Behind Mrs Montagu stand the two beautiful duchesses of Rutland and Devonshire. Between them I have placed that venerable sage, Dr Samuel Johnson, who is pointing out this example of Mrs Montagu, as matter well worthy their attention and imitation." (27) Barry skilfully substitutes the plump young face of the Duchess of Rutland for the aging Mrs Montagu. Johnson's expression is more sombre - almost saturnine - than in the unfinished portrait, and his face is no longer vis-à-vis but positioned behind the duchesses with his right hand pointing to Mrs Montagu in the distance.

Johnson and Mrs Montagu were members of the Royal Society for the Art of Useful Manufactures. The Duchesses were not. According to the Bluestockings, Georgiana Spencer, 1757-1806, wife of the fifth Duke of Devonshire, and Mary Isabella Somerset, 1756-1831, wife of the fourth Duke of Rutland, could have used instruction. The Streatham Circle said it best. One night after Johnson retires, Fanny Burney gossips with Mr Crutchley in the library:

Among other folks, we discussed the two rival duchesses, Rutland and Devonshire. The former, he said, "must, he fancied, be very weak and silly, as he knew that she endured being admired to her face and complimented perpetually, both upon her beauty and her dress" and I asked whether HE was one who joined in trying her":

BURNEY: "The duchess of Devonshire, I fancy, has better parts."

CRUTCHLEY: "Oh yes; and a fine, pleasant, open countenance. She came to my sister's once, in Lincolnshire, when I was there, in order to see hare hunting, which was then quite new to her And her horse was led, and she was frightened; and we told her THAT was the hare, and THAT was the dog; and the dog pointed at the hare, and the hare ran away from the dog; and then she took courage, and then she was timid: and, upon my word, she did it all very prettily! For my part, I liked it so well, that in half an hour I took to my own horse, and rode away." (26 June 1781; DIARIES, II, 3)

Mrs Montagu found the Duchess of Devonshire lacking in that favourite virtue of 18th century novels, prudence, for although she has "the greatest purity of heart and innocence of mind possible" she does not "keep so far aloft from the giddy and imprudent part of the world as one could wish, and that has made her the object of ill-grounded censure." (28) Johnson was already the Duchess' mentor according to Wraxall: "I have seen the Duchess of Devonshire then in the first bloom of youth, hanging on the sentence that fell from Johnson's lips and contending for the nearest place to his chair." (29) The Duchess was not so adoring in later life. She writes her mother, Countess Spencer, after Johnson visits Chatsworth for the day, 9 Sept. 1784, that although "he was wonderfull agreeable" strolling under the Lime trees with the Duke, "He does

not shine quite so much in eating as in conversing, for he eat much and hastily." Johnson was not courted by the rank, not only for his uncouth table manners but also for outspoken conversation. He told Boswell that "the rank did not like to have their mouths stopped." Mrs Thrale commented that to persons used to flattery, Johnson's conversation was "mustard in a child's mouth." The aristocracy, nevertheless, respected his genius and his virtue. In replying to her daughter, the Countess Spencer calls Johnson "one of the first Geniuses we have - possessed of great taste and extensive learning and has the strongest principles of Religion founded on the firmest conviction of the truths of Christianity." (30)

Johnson admired Barry's paintings for their quality of mind. After visiting the May 1783 exhibition, he tells Boswell, "Whatever the hand may have done, the mind has done its part. There is a grasp of mind there which you find no where else" (LIFE, 29 May 1783). Walpole was not so complimentary; but viewed the paintings as further opportunity to ferment the quarrel between Mrs Montagu and Johnson. He writes to Mason who is smarting over Johnson's recent criticism of the odes in his LIFE OF GRAY congratulating him on being included in full chorus with his "beatified friends, Dr Johnson, Soame Jenyns, Burke, and Mrs Montagu: "There are two gentlewomen too, who I believe will stare as much as you at the company in which they find themselves....In short, these two poor gentlewomen are the Duchesses of Devonshire and Rutland, who this new master of ceremonies to Queen Fame [Barry, the artist] has ordered that well-bred usher to the Graces, Dr Johnson, to present to Mrs Vicequeen Montagu, under whose tuition they are to be placed, who is recommended to them as a model to copy. [May 7, 1783] Two days earlier Walpole had commented on this scene: "What would one not give to see the scene realized!" (5 May 1783)

SLIDE VI: MONTAGU'S ANNUAL MAY DAY SATURNALIA FOR CHIMNEY SWEEPS [watercolour, British Museum Print Room]

This charming watercolour depicts one of Mrs Montagu public charities which might well have served as a model for the Duchesses to copy. Every May Day Mrs Montagu gave an annual breakfast in front of her Portman Square mansion of Roast Beef and Plum Pudding to all the London Chimney sweeps. She held comparable rural feasts for the Haymakers at her country estate, Sandleford, in Berkshire, where "the pleasure of seeing the labourers eat & drink and then of hearing their cheerful song" surpassed "all that fashion can give." A "measured quantity" of ale was given to each guest so that they acted "joyous but not riotous" (31) Mark Girouard, social historian, credits Mrs Montagu as a pioneer in reviving dinners for the poor. He writes: "At best entertaining lower orders expressed a genuine concern for the poor and a desire to improve the relations between the classes; at its worst it showed a rather odious condescension." Girouard credits the spectre of the French Revolution on the English upper classes as motivating this benevolence. (32) Johnson is more charitable. Still aglow over her generosity to Mrs Williams, Johnson exonerates her benevolence:

A literary lady of large fortune was mentioned [identified by Mrs Piozzi as "Mrs Montagu, I suppose"] as one who did good to many, but by no means "by stealth," and instead of 'blushing to find it fame,' acted evidently from vanity. JOHNSON "I have seen no beings who do as much good from benevolence, as she does from whatever motive. If there are such under the earth, or in the clouds, I wish they would come up, or come down. What Soame Jenyns says upon this subject is not to be minded; he is a wit. No, Sir; to act from pure benevolence is not possible for finite beings. Human benevolence is mingled with vanity, interest, or some other motive" (LIFE, 26 April 1776).

Mrs Montagu rationalized building her Portman Square mansion as an act of social benevolence. She answers Pepys' compliment that her Great House is a monument to her charity with "It is right that Virtue, Prudence and Temperance should sometimes keep open House" and provide a "place of protection to young persons entering the world" (M04027, 4 Aug. 1781; M04069, 14 Aug. 1781).

SLIDE GROUP VII: MRS MONTAGU'S GREAT HOUSE PORTMAN SQUARE: Bomomi's Drawing of the Great Room Submitted to the Royal Academy 1790 and his carpet design sent to the weavers [Royal Institute of British Architects]; 1894 photograph of Reception Room with Angelica Kauffmann ceiling; 1894 photograph of the "Feather Room" [National Monuments Records Office]

Mrs Montagu moved into her new house on Dec.15 1781. Hannah More describes her first impressions: "I believe we were the first to pay our compliments. I had no conception of anything so beautiful. To all the magnificence of a very superb London house is added the scenery of a country retirement. It is so seldom that any thing superb is pleasant, that I was extremely struck with it. I could not help looking with compassion on the amiable proprietor 'shivering at a breeze' and who can at the best enjoy it so very little a while. She has however my ardent wishes for her continuance in a world to which she is an ornament and a blessing." (33)

The frail little lady "shivering at a breeze" in her high new house symbolized the demise of the Bluestockings - many of them old and dying - and the transformation of post-revolutionary London Assemblies. The old conversational intimacy was impossible in the grand, almost regal proportions and decor of a house more appropriate for princes and courtiers than for philosophers and poets. Mrs Montagu, herself, felt her house represented old age and new fashions: "In building so large a House I had a view to the period of my life & the style & character of the times. My great room is entirely adapted to the modern folly of assembling great numbers together....rather popular & magnificent than dedicated to comfort & friendship & the best Household Deities" (M04069 Aug.14, 1781 to WW Pepys). Fanny Burney D'Arblay agreed. In the Great Room of her mansion at Portman Square, "the semi-circle that faced the fire retained during the whole evening its unbroken form, with a precision that made it seem described by a Brobdignagian compass. The lady of the castle commonly placed herself at the upper end of the room, near the commencement of the curve, so as to be courteously visible to all her guests; having the person of the highest rank, or consequence, properly, on one side, and the person the most eminent for talents, sagaciously, on the other; or as near to her chair, and her converse, as her favouring eye, and a complacent bow of the head, could invite him to that distinction." (34) "It needed courage," the venerable and sophisticated Mrs Delany observed, "to exchange more than a WHISPER with Mrs Boscawen, another with Lady Bute, and a WINK with the Duchess of Portland." (35)

Johnson visited the Portland Square mansion at least once but did not live to see the formal opening of the Great Room recorded by Walpole in a letter to the Misses Berry: "Mrs Montagu was more splendid yesterday morning, and breakfasted seven hundred persons on opening her great room, and the room with the hangings of feathers. The King and Queen had been with her last week. I should like to have heard the orations she had prepared on the occasion" (June 1791). The ST JAMES CHRONICLE, 11-14 June 1791, described the scene: "The room is hung with white figured damask; the curtains are of white satin fringed with gold; the chandeliers, and large looking glasses are superb; and the whole is an assemblage of art and magnificence such as we have never witnessed in a private room." They go on to describe the Feather Room, well underway before Johnson's death: "The walls are wholly covered with feathers, artfully sewed together and forming beautiful festoons of flowers and other fanciful decorations. The most brilliant colours, the produce of all climates, have

wonderful effects on a feather ground of a dazzling white. This room was designed by Bonomi, but executed by Mrs Montagu herself, assisted only by a few female attendants, instructed for that purpose." The joke going round was that Mrs Montagu has placed a feather tax on her friends' poultry yards. Mason, still smarting over Johnson's *LIFE OF GRAY*, mixes satire of the Blues with politics writes Walpole that he and his friend LEXIPHANES have "been employed in raising a loan to finish Madam Montagu's feather dressing-room" and have "paid the price of ostrich feathers for Goose Quills" (Sunday, 4 May 1783).

Mason and Walpole used Mrs Montagu's Great House to ferment the quarrel with Johnson. Mason writes Walpole that he proposes "to form a literary coalition with Dr Johnson ... [for] the complete administration of the Blue-Stocking club which we mean to govern in a truly constitutional way without any concurrence from Madam Montagu." Walpole is to be epigramatist general, but "Macpherson as forger of ossian is to be expelled the club. Mrs Montagu however is still so obstinate that she holds her feast of shells in her feather dressing-room. She will however certainly in due time be forced to submit to our terms (5 March 1783).

The fowls who furbished the fantastic Feather Room deserve the final word. In a letter to Hannah More in 1782, Mrs Montagu - understandably with feather on the brain - distinguishes between two types of genius: "There are certain desultory geniuses which like the bird of paradise, are destined to flutter in every region, and abide in none. They are pretty birds to be sure, but not so useful as the barn-door fowl, who get their food in the farm-yard, and leave an egg every day in return; the others only drop now and then a fine feather from their glittering wing, and plummy crest, which perhaps are picked by the sedulous collector, and adorn his fancy-works." (36) In *Bluestocking Assembly* Horace Walpole was the exotic Bird of Paradise dropping an occasional brilliant feather from his glittering wing and plummy crest, and Samuel Johnson was the homely barn-door fowl, uncouth and ill mannered. But everyday he left an egg.

NOTES

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3. *FLORIO: A TALE, FOR FINE GENTLEMEN AND FINE LADIES, and THE BAS BLUE, OR CONVERSATION*. Two Poems (London: Cadell, 1788).
4. Wraxall, *MEMOIRS*, (London, 1815), I, 140.
5. Fanny Burney, *MEMOIRS OF DR BURNEY*, by his daughter, Madame d'Arblay (London, 1832).
6. The Rev. Montagu Pennington, *MEMOIRS OF ELIZABETH CARTER* (London: P. C. & J. Rivington, 1817).
7. Quoted in Alice Gaussen, *A LATER PEPYS* (London: John Lane, 1904), II, 110.
8. Letter to Lord Bath quoted in *MRS MONTAGU "QUEEN OF THE BLUES"; HER LETTERS AND FRIENDSHIPS FROM 1762 to 1800*, ed. by Reginald Blunt from material left to him by her Great-Great Niece, Emily J. Climençon, (London: Constable, n.d.), II, 142.
9. Emily J. Climençon, *ELIZABETH MONTAGU, THE QUEEN OF THE BLUESTOCKINGS: Her Correspondence from 1720-1761* (London: John Murray, 1906), II, 268.
10. Gaussen, I, 84.
11. Blunt, I, 266.
12. *MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE OF MRS HANNAH MORE*, ed. William Roberts, 2nd ed. 4 vols. (London: R. B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1834), I, 62-63.

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14. Ed. J.D. Fleeman, 1975, p.64.
15. Wedgwood medallion: Blunt, II, 155; Tassie: Blunt, II, 129.
16. THE YALE EDITION OF THE WORKS OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, VOL.VI, POEMS, ed. by E.L. McAdam, Jr. with George Milne (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 136.
17. "To Daddy Crisp" March 1777, THE EARLY DIARY OF FRANCES BURNEY, 1768-1778, ed. Annie Raine Ellis, (1913), II, 223-29.
18. THE DIARY & LETTERS OF MADAME D'ARBLAY (1778-1840), ed. Charlotte Barrett with Preface and notes by Austin Dobson (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1904), Journal I, 115.
19. JOHNSONIAN MISCELLANIES, ed. GB Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), II, 421.
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21. M. Zamich, "Three Dialogues by Hester Lynch Thrale," BULLETIN OF THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY, 16(1932), 77-114.
22. THRALIANA: The Diary of Mrs Hester Lynch Thrale (later Mrs Piozzi), 1776-1807, ed. Katharine C. Balderston, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1951), I, 53.
23. JOHNSONIAN MISCELLANIES, I, 458.
24. THRALIANA I, 207.
25. THE LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D, with Marginal comments and markings from two copies annotated by Hester Lynch Thrale Piozzi. Prepared for publication with an Introduction by Edward G. Fletcher (London: The Limited Editions Club at the Curwen Press, 1938).
26. As quoted in JOHNSONIAN MISCELLANIES, II, 225.
27. Abridged from AN ACCOUNT OF A SERIES OF PICTURES IN THE GREAT ROOM OF THE SOCIETY OF ARTS, MANUFACTURES AND COMMERCE AT THE ADELPHI, by James Barry, RA, Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy (London 1783).
28. BLUNT, II, 57-58: EM to EV, Tunbridge Wells 23 October 1778.
29. Gaussen, I, 47.
30. See letters in NOTES AND QUERIES 28 October 1950; Sept. 16, 1784; See LIFE, letter to Richard Brocklesby and to Sir Joshua from SJ Sept 9 LIFE.
31. MONTAGU MSS in the Henry Huntington Library, San Marino, California: MO 3531 July 23, 1782 and MO 4076 July 18, 1782. Subsequent references will be cited by MO # in the text.
32. LIFE IN THE ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE; a Social and Architectural History. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1978) pp.241-42.
33. Roberts, I, 241.
34. MEMOIRS OF DR BURNEY, ii, 269-276.
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36. Blunt, I, 268-69

DR JOHNSON: THE PERFECT PROFESSIONAL FLEET STREET HACK
Philip Howard MA - 5 December 1992
Chairman: Richard Thrale

Mr Howard reminded us of Johnson's move to London, to make a living from writing, following his failure as a Schoolmaster at Edial Hall, where the total number of pupils never exceeded eight; the most notable of whom were the two Garrick boys and Lawrence Offley. The boys made fun of his convulsive mannerisms and used to listen at his bedroom door and peep through the keyhole, to ridicule his "tumultuous and awkward fondness to Mrs Johnson, whom

he used to name ... Tetty."

Johnson felt guilty that the school was draining Tetty's fortune away, so decided to go to London and make his living as a writer. It was a bad time for freelancers. The age of patrons was fading away and the purchasing power of vast middle-class readership had not yet grown. His play "Irene", featuring the Sultan Mohamet was not a success, with its grandiose baroque verse and Eastern setting. He found a way in as a poet, but he was maintained by hack work for journals and translating. He lived alone, scratching a living. Tetty was to join him when he made his name. He was ten years in Grub Street, little known. He wrote some essays for the Birmingham "Journal", but no copy of this paper during those months has survived. In his poem "London", he tried to do for Juvenal what Pope had done for Horace. He wrote for "The Gentleman's Magazine", "Debates in the Senate of Magna Lilliputia" and wrote leaders against the rampant commercialism of colonial exploitation.

Mr Howard was amazed at the speed at which Johnson worked, quoting John Nichols: "Three columns for the Magazine in an hour was no uncommon effort, which was faster than most persons could have transcribed that quantity." He compared this with his own experience as a cub reporter on the night that Sydney Silverman's Bill to abolish Capital Punishment got a second reading, when his editor demanded a thousand words on it in eighty minutes. When he demurred, suggesting they wait for the Home Affairs Correspondent to do it next day, the editor told him to get on with it and snapped, "It's what you're paid for!" With judicious use of cuttings, Britannica and Chambers he succeeded, but on a much lower level than Sam who, writing the "Life of Savage," in 1744 wrote 186 pages, forty of them quotations, in thirty-six hours.

Referring to Writer's Block, Mr Howard reminded us of Johnson's words: "A man MAY write at any time, if he set himself doggedly to do it." He also quoted from Johnson's advice given, when he was old and famous, to the young Robert Chambers, who could not get started with lectures on law: "I would advise every young man beginning to compose, to do it as fast as he can, to get a habit of having his mind to start promptly. It is so much more difficult to improve in speed than in accuracy. If a man is accustomed to compose slowly and with difficulty upon all occasions, there is danger that he may not compose at all, and we do not like to do that which is not done easily."

He also referred to Johnson's remarks to Boswell, "I would say to the young divine, 'Here is your text; let me see how soon you can make a sermon': then I'd say, 'Let me see how much better you can make it.' Thus I should see both his powers and his judgement." Mr Howard said that most journalists leave it to the last minute and then do it under desperation, but he gets his desperation in early. There are, however disadvantages of early copy, if it sits around, it begins to look boring; modern journalism has a short shelf-life.

Referring to Johnson's butterfly mind he referred to Mr Elphinstone who, talking of a new book that was much admired, asked Johnson if he had read it. Johnson replied, "I have looked into it." "What!" said Elphinstone, "Have you not read it through?" to which Johnson responded tartly, "No Sir; do YOU read books THROUGH?" He made similar remarks to Mrs Thrale: "Alas how few books are there of which one ever can possibly arrive at the last page," and to Williams Bowles "I have read few books through; they are generally so repulsive that I cannot." Mr Howard also commented on Johnson's Staffordshire pronunciation "Woonce" for once, "poonsh" for punch and "there" rhyming with "near". He also referred to his comment on Doctor John Campbell's wife: "The woman had a bottom of good sense," saying, when this was greeted by smiles, "Where's the merriment? I say the woman was fundamentally sensible." Mr Howard maintained

that the joke was conscious, (but this is not borne out by Boswell's account of the incident).

Discussing journalistic errors, Mr Howard referred to an incident when he was sent to report on a speech and decided to visit the speaker in his hotel, to obtain advance copy. This he did and duly submitted it, but in the event the speaker imbibed freely during the day and his actual speech was quite different, by which time it was too late to withdraw the copy, much to the embarrassment of Mr Howard! "Some mistakes are due to misunderstanding of the spoken word; for instance on dictating an article on the Dead Sea Scrolls, the copy-taker had printed it as Dead Sea Squirrels! On another occasion, hearing of a gang of pressmen, Sam Obu, more accustomed to slavers, gained quite the wrong impressions of the event described! Johnson, when questioned about his description of pastern as the knee of a horse said it was due to "ignorance, Madam, pure ignorance". His etymology of Helter-Skelter from the Old English word for the darkness of Hell, being a place of confusion, was described by young Samuel Whyte as very far-fetched. He had not noticed, when he made this remark, an odd-looking figure standing at the window, observing boats passing on the Thames. He claimed it came from hilariter celeriter, merrily and swiftly, but was hustled from the room by his host after some judicious animadversions of his temerity. Johnson was completely absorbed in his contemplations, so we do not know if Whyte avoided a rap over the knuckles or praise for his good sense.

Referring to journalese in the better papers, he quoted, "There is now less flogging in our great schools than formerly, but then less is learned there. So what the boys get at one end they lose at the other."

Johnson never liked to appear in public as a "mere journalist." He strongly attacked the policy of imperial and commercial expansion. He described the quarrel of the British and French in America as the "quarrel of two robbers," for the land had been stolen from the Indians. When Admiral John Byng was hounded by the press for failing to lift the French seige of Minorca, Johnson rightly pointed out that he was made a scapegoat for the Admiralty's incompetence, neither Press nor Court giving him a fair hearing. Johnson was independent and proud, the most famous demonstration of this being his letter to Chesterfield, "Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it, till I am solitary and cannot impart it, till I am known and do not want it." Johnson's independence was a milestone in the movement for the independence of the modern author, which still has to be fought for and may be resigned for. Johnson always spoke his mind.

Mr Howard told us that the first duty of the Press is to obtain the earliest and most correct intelligence of the events of the times, and instantly, by disclosing them, to make them the common property of the nation. The statesman collects his information secretly and by secret means; he keeps back even the current intelligence of the day with ludicrous precautions until diplomacy is beaten in the race with publicity. The Press lives by disclosures. It is daily and for ever appealing to the enlightened force of public opinion anticipating, if possible, the march of public events, standing in the breach between the present and the future, and extending its survey to the horizon of the world. The statesman's duty is precisely the reverse. He cautiously guards from the public eye the information by which his actions and opinions are regulated; he strictly confines himself, if he be wise, to the practical interests of his own country, or to those bearing immediately upon it; he hazards no rash surmises as to the future; and he concentrates in his own transactions all that power which the Press seeks to diffuse over the world.

The duty of the one is to speak; of the other to be silent. The one expends itself in discussion; the other tends to action. The one deals mainly with rights and interests; the other with opinions and sentiments. The former is necessarily reserved; the latter is essentially free.

We hold ourselves responsible, not to the Prime Minister or to Parliament, but to the people of England, for the accuracy and fitness of that which we think fit to publish. Whatever we conceive to be injurious to the public interest it is our duty to withhold, but we ourselves are quite as good judges on that point as the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Howard ended his talk with a tribute to Johnson: Sam Johnson, we'd be proud to have you on The Times. Best as a columnist, but marvellous as leader-writer or reporter. Not a mere journalist, but Top of the Profession.

THE DANGEROUS DISTINCTION OF AUTHORSHIP

Anthea Hopkins MA - 16 January 1993

Chairman: Stella Pigrome

Mrs Hopkins spoke to us of Elizabeth Hamilton, who lived principally in Scotland. The title of the paper appears in a biography of her, written by an intimate friend, who said: "I first became acquainted with Mrs Hamilton in 1804. A female literary character was even at that time a sort of phenomenon in Scotland; though most Scotswomen read, and were not inferior to their Southern neighbours in general information, and good taste, very few had ventured to incur 'the dangerous distinction of authorship.'"

No one who ever knew her could discover that Mrs Hamilton founded any pretensions on authorship, or that she valued her literary reputation on any other ground, but as a means of usefulness.

Mrs Hopkins quoted Johnson's definition of "authoress": "a female author, a female writer, this sense is only of modern usage". He then gives the example: "This woman was the authoress of scandalous books!"

Elizabeth Hamilton was both in Belfast, in 1758, but was brought up by her Aunt and Uncle, a farmer in Stirlingshire. Her Aunt had had "an education such as few Scottish ladies could at that time boast of" and Elizabeth benefitted from this and also from four years in a weekly boarding school from the age of eight until she was twelve. Her brother Charles, a great scholar five years her senior, who in 1772 left England to take up a cadetship in the East India Company, gave her an epistolary education and encouraged her to write. Mrs Hamilton was very interested in Education, which is a theme which occurs throughout her works. In the evenings the Aunt liked her niece to read to her, but when she found Elizabeth reading books surreptitiously she: "expressed neither praise nor blame, but quietly advised her to avoid any display of superior knowledge by which she might be subjected to the imputation of pedantry."

Johnson said that when he was a young man, a woman who could spell was considered extremely accomplished, but now "they vied with men in everything." Education of the middle-class woman had improved, but its advantages were questioned. In Dr Gregory's "Legacy to His Daughters," of 1774, he declared: "If you happen to have any learning, keep it a profound secret, especially from the men, who generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts and cultivated understanding. A man of real genius and candour is far superior to such meanness. But such a man will seldom fall your way."

Mrs Hopkins then referred to Margaret Bryon's comments on authorship in her "Compendium System of Astronomy" in 1798: "is female education going too far? If our women should be turned into men, who are to soothe the wrinkled brow of care and afford relaxation after the tedious hours of intense study?" This reminded Mrs Hopkins of Johnson's remark: "a man is in general better pleased when he has a good dinner upon his table, then when his wife talks Greek!"

Elizabeth Hamilton herself said in her "Letters of a Hindoo Raj" "You know how female writers are looked down upon. The women fear and hate; the men ridicule and despise them."

This was Mrs Hamilton's first full-length work, published in 1796. In the preface she gives a short sketch of Hindoostan...., necessary.... for the purpose of elucidation:, it may be censured as a presumptuous effort to wander out of that narrow and contracted path, which they have allotted to the female mind." She continues, writing in the third person, "From her earliest instructors, she imbibed the idea, that toward a strict performance of the several duties of life, ignorance was neither a necessary, nor a useful auxiliary, but on the contrary, that she ought to view every new idea as an acquisition, and to seize with avidity every proper opportunity for making the acquirement."

Any introduction had to provide sufficient excuse for publication - most likely moral zeal or poverty - so Elizabeth Hamilton is being really rather brave in asserting that knowledge for its own sake is valuable.

The book comprised the letters home of an Indian who is in England for the first time and he comments on the strange practices of the natives, particularly the religious customs, where Sunday was regarded as a holiday by the lower castes, some spending it walking with their families, others seeing it as an excuse for gluttony and intemperance, while the higher castes ignored it altogether. He also describes a minority from all castes who spent the morning in buildings, called churches, in which an elderly priest read from a small book, "the truths contained in which [seeming] equally indifferent to himself and his audience" until upon the conclusion of the service their faces brightened and "they congratulated one another on their being emancipated from the fatigue of this tiresome ceremony."

He contrasts this with a description of their serious devotion to card games in which the cards appeared to be worshipped like idols and every enjoyment of life or domestic duty was sacrificed to this devotion. He also describes their lack of hospitality, giving an example, from his own experience, when he sought shelter from people of high caste on a dark and rainy night and was "repulsed with the language of contempt," until he was given a "cordial welcome" at the "lowly hut of a peasant," leading him to the conclusion that "in this country, the spirit of hospitality is only to be found 'neath a roof of thatch."

In order to give effect to its humour, her second full-length work, "*Memoirs of Modern Philosophers*". was published anonymously in 1800. By the third edition, however, she openly asserted her title to the work, which was her "passport to fame and distinction." It was a burlesque of Mary Hay's "*Memoirs of Emma Courtney*." Emma Courtney is a girl "who finds in philosophy ... not a means of regulating her feelings, but a sanction to indulge them, under the specious colour of reason and candour." Mrs Hamilton goes into the attack with a tale in which farce and tragedy are interwoven as the new radical philosophy is put to the test and found wanting.

The preface to the book concludes with a quotation from Johnson: "Throughout the whole performance criticism may find much to censure, but it is hoped that

candour will find something to applaud and let those who are at least willing to admit extenuation or apology for the author's failure remember that 'to have attempted much is laudable, even when the enterprise is above the strength that undertakes it.'

Mrs Hopkins then read an extract in which a group of people are condemning a Miss Mordaunt for her appearance, dress sense and manners, only to greet her with affection and compliments upon her arrival in their midst, leading Julia to suppose that this Miss Mordaunt could not possibly be the same one they had just spoken so slightly of. The passage concludes: "Alas, poor Julia! how deplorably ignorant was she of the nature of those exaggerated descriptions, which constitute the Attic wit of modern conversation."

Elizabeth never married, but adopted the title "Mrs" in middle age. She received a pension from the Crown. Also like Johnson, she kept a secret journal for twenty-five years. Mrs Hopkins read us an extract which sounded very Johnsonian: "How weak!" how vain! and futile! are the best resolutions of the human mind! ... I began this book with a resolution to keep it faithfully, and recur to it frequently. But notwithstanding the sincerity of these resolves, a whole year has elapsed since I have made any progress in it ... With so much time at my disposal, how little have I appropriated to the duties of devotion? How far have I fallen short of that rule of life which in the hours of serious meditation I had prescribed myself?"

In the entry for her last birthday, she writes: "Again permitted to see a return of the day of my birth, let me offer to the Most High the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and renew the vows I have so often made ... so very near do I now approach to that eternal change, to which the few years spent on earth are but the prelude."

Mrs Hopkins compared this with an extract from Johnson's diary: Oh God, by whom all things are created and are sustained ... accept my imperfect thanks for the length of days which thou hast vouchsafed to grant me. Impress upon my mind such repentance of the time misspent in sinfulness and negligence that I may obtain forgiveness for all my offences and so calm my mind and strengthen my resolutions, that I may live the remaining part of my life in Thy fear and with Thy favour."

Mrs Hamilton's earlier essays are, said Mrs Hopkins, of particular interest to us. Her first published work was a contribution to a periodical, "The Lounger," in the form of a cautionary tale for the benefit of young ladies who might be misguided enough to think that mental accomplishments would attract the attentions of the other sex, who from their superior education, and more solid judgement would, one might presume, be the more guided by the dictates of good sense, than led by the blind caprices of fashion ... Such accomplishments will have as much influence as the harmonious compositions of Handel on the deaf pupils of Mr Broadwood."

Another essay "*The Breakfast Table*", no.2, more nearly concerns us, as Johnson is the subject of it, along with Addison:

[Johnson] conceived with ardour, and never failed to infuse his feelings into those whom he addressed. To excel was his passion; and, from the earliest period of his life, he was, on all occasions, determined "to do his best." Whatever was his subject — a taylor's thimble, or a butcher's block, he clothed it with dignity and importance; and he could detail the composition of a pudding with more force than another could picture the horrors of a battle. His reading was miscellaneous and extensive; his memory, in a high degree tenacious; and his efforts to improve incessant. If he read much, he reflected more; and his mind became a store of imagery, of language and of

observation ... Johnson's feelings were as peculiar and as elevated as his thoughts."

With this Mrs Hopkins concluded her talk.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, PICTURESQUE TOURIST

William Ruddick BA

Honorary Fellow of Manchester University - 20 February 1993

Chairman: J H Leicester

Mr Ruddick began by saying that he thought the word "picturesque" was slightly inaccurate, as it hardly describes the kind of tour that he and the Thrales were taking. It was to be used to focus our mind on the area of developing sensibility and literature to accompany it which was evolving in 1774.

Mr Ruddick explained that the genesis of his present talk lay in an article on "Johnson and Travel", which he and a colleague at Manchester, William Hutchins, contributed to the volume, "Re-viewing Samuel Johnson", edited by Professor Nalini Jain and published in India in 1991. Being interested in late eighteenth century travel writing, Mr Ruddick considered the way in which Johnson's manuscript notes on his tour to North Wales with Mr and Mrs Thrale and Queenie in 1774 mirror contemporary interest in antiquities and scenery, and also reflect Johnson's attempt to analyse his own responses to these in a manner analogous to his friend, Edmund Burke's celebrated treatise on the "Sublime and the Beautiful".

Mr Ruddick pointed out that the considerable improvement in the British road system, brought about by the Turn-pike Acts from the middle of the 1750s onwards was a very real factor in the development of intelligent middle-class tourism in the late eighteenth century. A tour could combine enjoyment with discovery. Also the tourist could quite seriously attempt to increase his or her knowledge, not just of places and scenery, but also of the range of emotional and aesthetic stimuli, which scenes of natural beauty or natural sublimity could stimulate in the tourist's own mind.

Gradually this new preoccupation with landscape and emotions did tend to replace the serious interest in economic conditions. In the end this would cause a sort of split in travel-writing. On the one hand you had the wealth of concern with social conditions, economic factors, public works and so on, on the other hand you had the more aesthetic kind of tour-writing, which was moving towards the area of "Belles Lettres".

Doctor Johnson profited from the greater mobility of these years to visit Scotland, North Wales and France. In this he was fortunate in that two of the friendships which he formed in the early 1760s were with people who were, or who became, keen to have him travel in their company; Boswell, who egged him on to visit Scotland and the Thrales who, becoming increasingly opulent, in due course took him on the Welsh tour and then to France.

Johnson had read numerous travel narratives but his attitude to the travel book genre was originally critical. He advanced the assertion that: "he who would travel for the entertainment of others, should remember that the great object of remark is human life."

Mr Ruddick said that in "Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland," we find that it is social and economic conditions and Johnson's interest in the way the human mind and spirit cope with every-present hardship, the way relationships develop and maintain themselves in those remote regions and the

way relationships between environment and the moral characteristics of humankind can be sought out, which make his book a pioneering and very important document in so many respects.

We see Johnson's mind working in ways that do bring him close to some of the definitions advanced nearly twenty years earlier, that were very much in the air at the time of his friend Edward Burke's celebrated *"Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful."*

Mr Ruddick followed the course of the 1774 journey in some detail, illustrating how it was arranged so that Johnson could show the sights (and the notable personalities) of Lichfield and Derbyshire to the Thrales at the beginning of their trip and those of Oxford and its neighbourhood on their return. They visited Matlock and Chatsworth House and its Garden, but both Johnson and the Thrales found it rather vulgar, like Timon's Villa. In between the Thrales took over, using the homes of friends and relatives as bases for local explorations in Cheshire and North Wales wherever possible.

The inns were by no means as much improved as the roads, so it was a good thing that you could alternate spells of exploration and inns with lengthy stays with members of your family, so that in the comfort of their homes you could repose yourself and then be taken off to places of interest, or meet people of interest in the neighbourhood. And, of course your hosts would have people to dinner who would give you invitations to go and see them. The itinerary was flexible.

Johnson's most expansive writing comes from this part of the tour, and Mr Ruddick used a number of set piece descriptions to show how contemporary Johnson's response was, catching the short interval when an interest in emotion and psychological responses to travel predominates over the same characteristic concern with pictorial conventions and the picturesque which returned with the publications of successive *"Observations,"* of William Gilpin whom, coincidentally, Johnson appears to have met at an early stage of his tour.

Johnson's imagination, said Mr Ruddick, was not pictorial in the way of a framed picture, he could not see pictures well enough to be a true picturesque tourist. Perhaps a romantic or proto-romantic tourist would be a more accurate term, certainly a tourist very much interested in the effects which scenery could have, not only on the emotion, but also on the imagination.

He visited the local churches, he interested himself in plans to improve them and also, very characteristically, as he had done on the Scots tour, in the language and the surviving printed books in the local language. He was determined to help promote schemes to re-publish the Welsh version of the Scriptures for use in churches, Welsh dictionaries and things of that kind.

Mr Ruddick said that another factor which, perhaps, needs consideration is that travel books of this period, which concern themselves with scenery, were virtually unpopulated. Writers were interested in their own responses, not in other people's, especially not in the lives and activities of the indigenous population, so the natives are not there, the landscape is empty. Essentially this kind of literature is middle class, the writers have spare cash, spare time to travel, and the time to write a book about it.

Mr Ruddick concluded by speculating on why Johnson failed to produce a second published book of travels to follow that in Scotland. Ultimately, he appears to have felt, rightly or wrongly, that *"Wales is so little different from England that it offers nothing to the speculation of the traveller,"* as he writes to James Boswell. Moving around with the Thrales, Johnson was not

coming close to real communities, as he had with Boswell in the Highlands. His hosts were Gentry. Language barriers in Welsh mattered more than a language barrier in Gaelic, because the social structure of Welsh-speakers was not noticeably all that different from the lower classes on the other side of the English/Welsh border, nothing like the startling changes in social order that he had witnessed in the Gaelic-speaking parts of the Highlands and remote parts of Scotland. There was less to be found out about Wales than there was about Scotland and the exploration of his own reactions to scenery was not central enough to his moral and religious concerns to hold his interest after a time. Nevertheless, the manuscript journal of the 1774 tour of Wales provides more ammunition for use against those students who persist in seeing Johnson as a blinkered, prejudiced stick-in-the-mud. Here you have Johnson not setting himself against current tastes in writing and aesthetics, but trying them out, experimenting with them in a way that is surprisingly professional, surprisingly up-to-date, in the language he uses and emotional attitudes he explores. In the concept of positioning oneself in relationship to impressive nature, he is very much in the van of contemporary aesthetic and literary practice, which is why Mr Ruddick finds the Welsh tour so peculiarly interesting.

WINCKELMANN AND THE ENGLISH
W L Fletcher MA - 20 March 1993
Chairman: David Parker

This paper is given in full from a text supplied by the speaker.

Like Oliver Goldsmith's poem "The Traveller", this talk had a long gestation. My gratitude to the patience and consideration of your lately-retired Hon Secretary Stella Pigrome is profound and shall be deservedly mentioned at the outset. She has read through several earlier drafts of the paper - a thankless task - and the outcome is as much the result of her encouragement and advice as my own work.

My original intention, to give the paper wholly over to an account of Winckelmann's life and ideas from a central, German standpoint, has been rejected; the Johnson Society of London is devoted to a famous Englishman, who knew little of German, or "High Dutch" as he called it; in his day, the Netherlands, which had enjoyed its apogée, its "guldene eeuw" in the seventeenth century, was of more interest to him; he studied "Low Dutch" in old age reading half of Thomas à Kempis in that language; he knew Temple's "Observations on the Seven Provinces" and even thought of touring the country with Boswell in the early years of their association. France cast a more influential shadow over literature in England in the eighteenth century, so that the tentative beginnings of a literature in High German were almost unnoticed until the last decades of the century. Johnson admired the victories of Frederick the Great, of course; "The King of Prussia, the only great King at present" he said. Frederick the Great, for all his military success, the first national hero of German history, was in his intellectual, literary and philosophic tastes to all intents and purposes a Frenchman. He associated with Voltaire and D'Alembert; Voltaire felt like a Frenchman in Potsdam; German he said "is only for soldiers-and for travelling" - he presumably meant for innkeepers and coachmen. Frederick even wrote a book in 1780 - one soon to be superseded by events when Goethe was already in mid-career - with the title "De la Littérature Allemande"; the King demonstrated conclusively that a national German literature was impossible.

Winckelmann's mind and tastes form an opposition to this French-orientated German culture; it was attacked by Lessing in the middle of the century, but Winckelmann went one step further - he left Germany altogether removing to the artistic capital of the world, Rome, the papal city where the grandiose art treasures of antiquity could still be viewed.

I shall not attempt to give an account of Winckelmann's life and influence from a German point of view; after a brief outline of his career and thought I shall focus on the few points where European learning, and English figures, crossed his path.

Winckelmann was born in Stendal, Prussia, on 9 December 1717, eight years after Samuel Johnson's birth in Lichfield. He had a poverty-stricken childhood and education, but he was driven by a thirst for knowledge and an iron will; despite years of privation as private tutor and school teacher at Seehausen he at length gained a post as librarian to Count Dunau who lived in a castle near Dresden and devoted himself to the study of medieval German history. The proximity of Dresden enabled Winckelmann to frequent the artistic circles of the city where he met sculptors such as Adam Fredrich Oeser; Winckelmann would have liked to become a painter, but in a strange way was too mystical and literary for that, and anyway had an immense enthusiasm for Greek literature which in Dresden combined with his love of art - this produced something new, a theory which linked excellence in art to Greek sculpture. There were very few art treasures in Dresden compared with Rome; the Italians in the city recognised Winckelmann's talents and in the end, in return for his conversion to the Roman Catholic Faith, secured for him a two-year grant to reside in Rome. His removal to Rome was the watershed of his life; from 1755 to 1768 he lived in Italy based in Rome, making only occasional visits to Florence and more frequent visits to Pompei, Herculaneum and Paestum in the south. The kernel of his thought had already been expressed in his first work, published in Dresden before his departure for Rome; "the only way for us to become great, nay inimitable, is by means of the study of the ancients". By the "ancients" he meant the ancient Greeks.

When Joseph Addison visited Rome in 1701, he was impressed by the art treasures of the City. "No part of the Antiquities of Rome pleased me so much as the ancient statues of which there is still an incredible variety". But Addison came to Italy as a classically educated man, comparing the landscapes and antiquities of Rome with the descriptions of them in the Roman poets; he came as the spokesman of an educated élite, he had already been introduced to the Chancellor of the Exchequer Montagu, even then he had political prospects; nor had he any intention of dallying in the Eternal City. Winckelmann was no such bird of passage, and how could he, the son of a cobbler, aspire to be the spokesman of an élite or aspire to anything but the most lowly academic post; assistant in the Vatican library, or something of the kind? But Addison utterly lacked the burning vision, the force of an idea far ahead of its time, which drove this convert to the Catholic Faith to the Capital of Western Christendom. By the 1750s, these qualities had achieved for Winckelmann, at least in Germany, a fame no less than that of Addison in Britain. The Duke of Dessau was among his patrons; "My dear," said the Duke to his wife on hearing of Winckelmann's death, "you and I have lost a friend who cannot be replaced".

"No part of the antiquities of Rome pleased me so much as the ancient statues" wrote Addison at the beginning of the century. Winckelmann as well as his devotion to his doctrine of the supremacy of Greek art - in literature and sculpture - was of an intensely inquisitive nature, curious to seek out the treasures of antiquity and to see them for himself. As a boy, he used to rummage among the sand-dunes with his school-fellows for old urns which he then preserved as something sacred. It is easy for past generations of Dulwich

College pupils to appreciate this quality in Winckelmann; there was just such a boy who grew up with us at school, one who tirelessly scoured the extensive playing fields around the school in search of fossils, or vainly sought the source of the Efra, or tirelessly lectured his yawning schoolmates on faience or ancient pottery - his nickname was Hog. Winckelmann was just such another, and if the eighteenth century, as Sir Kenneth Clark averred, was the paradise of the amateur, Rome was unquestionably the paradise, from the early years of the century to the opening up of Greece in the early nineteenth century, of the archaeologist. Nothing delighted Winckelmann more than to see the earth give up more and ever new and unexpected art treasures; and as soon as these treasures were revealed, his pen was ready to write pamphlet after pamphlet proclaiming the revelations to an incredulous Europe; Addison knew that countless treasures lay undiscovered in the ancient Roman soil; "though the statues that have been found among the ruins of old Rome are already very numerous, there is no question but Posterity will have the pleasure of seeing many noble pieces of sculpture which are still undiscovered, for doubtless there are greater treasures of this nature under ground than what are yet brought to light. They have often dug into lands that are described in old authors, as the places where such particular Statues or Obelisks stood, and have seldom failed of success in their pursuits". Thanks to the immense impulse given to archaeological exploration by the discovery of the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompei, even Addison's expectations were surpassed by the fifties and sixties; Winckelmann was the right man, in the right place, at the right time, with his pen ready to publish the wonder of these stupendous discoveries to an expectant Europe.

Winckelmann was blithely content in Rome and Italy from 1755 to 1768; there were no serious thoughts of returning north, apart from the possibility of an appointment in Frederick the Great's court which fell through because of the parsimony of that monarch. The impact of his works and his ideas in Germany was immense - he had many friends in the north - such as Adam Friedrich Oeser who longed to see him face to face again. In 1768, when an opportunity beckoned to visit Greece and Asia Minor with a young aristocrat and friend named Riedesel, Winckelmann gave way to German importunities and turned north. The sculptor Cavaceppi accompanied him. But when he found himself among the gloomy mountainous heights of the Tyrol, his heart forsook him; his hatred of northern obscurity and darkness was too much for his warm nature; after a brief audience in Vienna with Maria Theresia - the empress gave him a gift of medals - he returned to the south. He reached Trieste, and was negotiating for a ship to convey him to Ancona when he was murdered in his hotel room by an ex-convict and kitchen porter from Pistoia called Arcangeli. This tragic event took place in 8 June 1768 - a wave of horror and disbelief swept over Germany; young Goethe could remember, when writing his autobiography in late middle age in Weimar, the precise spot where he had been when he heard the news as a young student in Leipzig. This tragedy has haunted German culture ever since - as few others have ever done. Winckelmann, a man devoted to science and civilisation, to be stabbed to death for the sake of a few golden coins by a worthless convict.

Before his mind focused on Greek literature and sculpture, Winckelmann had a wide enthusiasm for all modern literatures; in French, Montesquieu, Buffon and Montaigne, in English, Addison and Shaftesbury; the Germans deeply resented the inferiority of their literary products to those of Britain and France and one of Winckelmann's aims was to produce a work - "the like of which had not appeared in German, to show foreigners what we are capable of doing" - the result was his magnum opus - "The History of the Art of Antiquity".

An English philosopher who influenced him and who showed a similar enthusiasm for Plato as he was Shaftesbury; Justi refers also to his liking for the French Humanist Montaigne - in both of these Winckelmann was impressed by the

"reappearance of ancient thoughts". It is fascinating to report that both these figures read and spoke, Montaigne, Latin, and Shaftesbury Greek, as if they were natives - both learnt the languages through speech. They read the classics as if reading their native tongue. Shaftesbury rhapsodises the harmony of the world; he was a genuine Platonist; the ideas of order and proportion are imprinted on the soul of the individual; he was convinced that the Greeks alone understood the art of living, that they had achieved an equilibrium between body and spirit.

Boswell visited Rome in 1765; he twice records meeting Winckelmann, one conversation he called "fine, classical taste"; on the second occasion he met Winckelmann at Cardinal Albani's - the garden attracted him "spread out like a new periwig" he commented. By the time Boswell arrived, Winckelmann was a celebrity who spent much time escorting young travellers around the antiquities of Rome; John Wilkes came to Rome on the 14th February 1765. In eight days Winckelmann had the opportunity to get to know him well; "methinks he must have liked me, for he laid aside all his republican pride and asked me earnestly to dine with him that day - an invitation which I refused however". On the 21st Wilkes travelled on to Naples; "this second Milton" wrote Winckelmann, is so overwhelmed by love that he has brought a beautiful person with him from Paris whom he calls Corradini (she is Venetian) and intends to live some time with her in Naples". Wilkes invited Winckelmann to accompany him and the Corradini to Naples; he gave Wilkes an alabaster urn on which Wilkes inscribed a Latin inscription in memory of his deceased friend Charles Churchill. While they were still in Rome it was said that the Corradini, helped by a young Scot named Boswell, had made off with all Wilkes' manuscripts in the direction of London. There are four letters extant from Winckelmann to Wilkes; published by C Schuddekopf, Zeitschrift fur Bildende Kunst, 1888, 23, pp.138-142.

One of the strangest Englishmen Winckelmann met in Rome was Charles Wortley Montagu, son of Lady Mary. He appeared in the summer of 1762 in Rome on his way to the East; he knew both sciences and oriental languages and spoke German; Winckelmann was tempted to travel with him to Egypt - they almost decided on an expedition to Greece and Asia Minor; Winckelmann learnt Arabic with him, and was going to grow a beard and wear a turban. Montagu had lived a life like a rogue hero of a Fielding novel or Gil Blas of Santillane. He ran away from Westminster School, masqueraded as a street boy and sweep, was sent by his family to the West Indies, was disinherited by his father; "My lot was that of a guinea, now in the fingers of a queen, now in the sack of a greasy Hebrew". A controversy had arisen over Warburton's reference to the inscriptions of Sinai - Montagu intended to travel thither and settle the quarrel - Winckelmann got to know him on his way east. He married in every country he visited and was a model husband until the day of his departure. He was always attracted to the East; in 1768 he travelled to Constantinople and returned to Venice as an orthodox Muslim; by then he was a complete Turk in dress and habits; he died in Padua on 30 April 1776.

Sir William Hamilton, British Ambassador to Naples, introduced Winckelmann to an art form hitherto neglected by him - vase painting. The Hamilton household was the social epicentre of fashionable Naples; Tischbein, an artist and associate of Goethe wrote of him, "the gift to be pleasant to everyone he possessed in the highest degree and his sincere directness drew all to him so that everyone believed himself to be his best friend". Hamilton divided his time between sport - fishing for hours - and science - his collection of ancient vases. Though he loved all sorts of antiquities, he loved vases most; Tischbein saw him coming from Court, carrying a basket full of things - a ragged urchin held one flap, and the Ambassador the other. "These vases are, like the smallest insects, which are the wonder in Nature, the wonderful in the art of Antiquity" wrote Winckelmann. "A collection of them is a treasury

of drawings".

DR JOHNSON'S DERBYSHIRE CONNECTIONS

Dr G M Ditchfield, University of Kent at Canterbury - 17 April 1993

Chairman: Madeline Huxtep

[This paper is printed in full from a text provided by the speaker]

Derbyshire might fairly be described as Dr Johnson's second country. Its western boundary lies adjacent to the shire of his birth and its 160 church livings formed part of his own diocese of Lichfield. His paternal links with Derbyshire were very strong: his father and grandfather originated in Cubley, as did his pugilistic uncle Andrew; his father had many book-purchasing customers in the county and it was presumably through his father that he accepted as a 'cousin' Mary Flint, wife of the clerk to his friend the Rev John Taylor. Indeed the welfare of Mrs Flint's two daughters by her previous marriage, Mary and Sophia Collier, remained a source of concern to Johnson: 'I beg you to do what you can for the poor Colliers', he urged Taylor on 3 August 1782. Johnson himself was married in St Werburgh's Church, Derby, on 9 July 1735; 49 years earlier, his father had been on the verge of marriage in the same town. The most plausible candidate for the role of that second wife whom Johnson resolved to seek a year after Tetty's death was a Derbyshire lady, the evangelical Hill Boothby. Derbyshire was the county of many of Johnson's earliest and most lasting friendships and because of those friendships, several Derbyshire people were projected into an otherwise inconceivable prominence, recognized by inclusion in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. It was a county in which he not only spent much time and participated in many notable conversations, but also from which he wrote some of his most characteristic letters. In Derbyshire, too, he exhibited a wide range of moods, from the engaging light-heartedness with which he and Boswell unblocked John Taylor's waterfall in September 1777 to the more sombre sense of intellectual isolation on his final visits to Ashbourne in the early 1780s. It can hardly be doubted that those latter experiences gave rise to the scorn which he expressed for rural habitation on 30 June 1784 in his very last talk with Boswell: 'they who are content to live in the country, are fit for the country'. So, although there is a chronological gap of almost thirty years - 1740 to the late 1760s - in his recorded visits to Derbyshire and although his travels in the county seem to have been confined mainly to its western fringes in the Peak District, rather than the eastern coal-producing areas bordering Nottinghamshire, the Derbyshire historian Henry Kirke was perhaps not exhibiting an excessive degree of local pride when he wrote 'we might claim Johnson as a Derbyshire man'.

If so, then perhaps we in turn might claim that Derbyshire, with the wide variety of human experience contained within its borders, contributed in no small measure to the 'extensive view' of mankind evident in all Johnson's writing. Few English counties so combined industry, agriculture and the type of mountainous scenery which was beginning to attract the eighteenth-century traveller. Derbyshire stands at the forefront of those technical and commercial developments sometimes termed the 'Industrial Revolution'. Lombe's water-powered silk mill at Derby, established early in the century, was the subject of admiration even in Defoe's time, well before Johnson's visits with the Thrales (1774) and Boswell (1777). Derby, too, was an important centre for the manufacture of porcelain; Johnson in 1777 thought it too expensive. Above all, water power meant that the mass production of textiles was becoming a major feature of the Derbyshire countryside by the 1770s; Sir Richard Arkwright's spinning factory, spectacularly commemorated with lights blazing

in the darkness in the famous canvas by Joseph Wright, opened at Cromford in 1771. The similarity of Arkwright's designs to those previously promoted by Johnson's friend Lewis Paul underlines Arkwright's acknowledgement of Johnson's understanding of mechanical processes.* Yarn-spinning, weaving and cloth-dressing spread rapidly in the county; by 1830 the parish of St Werburgh's alone, where Johnson was married, contained three mills for worsted spinning.* Derbyshire was also a county with a substantial coalfield and, in its north-western area, extensive lead-mining. The latter was one of Derbyshire's most celebrated industries, vividly described by Defoe" and it was probably the industry which Johnson had in mind when, staying with the Astle family at Needwood Forest, just outside Derbyshire, he dismissed stories about a monkey's ability to release itself from a chain with the remark 'You might as well tell me that the monkey can extract metal from the ore'."

Similarly, R W Ketton-Cremer surmises that it was from his visits to John Taylor at Ashbourne that Johnson derived 'the familiarity with country affairs of all kinds that is noticeable in *The Rambler* and *The Idler*'.* The Derbyshire uplands, where Taylor kept his bulls, sheep, dogs and deer, favoured cattle-rearing; the arable land in the south of the county encouraged the production of wheat, oats and root-crops. Johnson's practical knowledge of agriculture, acquired early in life, was formidable and infused not only his writing but his spoken aphorisms. He employed bovine imagery to particular effect in the illustration which Lord Elbank called 'uncommonly happy' when, declaring that 'a cow is a very good animal in the field; but we turn her out of a garden', he asserted that the six Calvinistic Methodists expelled from St Edmund Hall in 1768 were 'not fit to be in the University of Oxford.'* Derbyshire, too, provided some scope for Johnson as a travel-writer; his diary of the tour to Wales in 1774, a source unavailable to Boswell, begins with an account of Chatsworth, Matlock, Ashbourne, Derby and Dovedale." Although Dovedale did not 'answer his expectations', his observation 'he that has seen Dovedale has no need to visit the Highlands' (not vice-versa) does not suggest that the mountains and rivers of Derbyshire paled into insignificance beside the Scottish scenes which he had witnessed the previous year." Mrs Thrale, who had not seen the Highlands, was greatly impressed by Dovedale; her second husband, who had seen the Alps, was not."

Although Defoe believed that because of the wildness of the Peak District the local gentry chose to reside in Derby 'rather than upon their estates, as they do in other places'.* Derbyshire in Johnson's lifetime developed centres of fashion in the form of spa towns at Matlock and Buxton. The Matlock Bath was already sufficiently well-known for Johnson and the Thrales to encounter much polite company there in 1774," while Buxton under the Devonshire patronage drew fashionable society from all over the country. One of its devotees was Lord Chancellor Thurlow, whose generosity to Johnson over his proposed Italian visit in 1784 is lovingly described by Boswell." Probably Johnson was not being entirely satirical when he said of the Rev Thomas Seward, Vicar of Eyam, and later a canon of Lichfield and father of Anna Seward, 'His ambition is to be a fine talker; so he goes to Buxton, and such places, where he may find companies to listen to him'. In 1787, re-visiting the town, Mrs Thrale thought 'Buxton is become so fine I hardly knew it again'." It is not surprising that Derbyshire, like other counties, took an increasing interest in its own history, antiquities and attractions; William Bray's *Sketch of a Tour into Derbyshire* went into its second edition in 1783 and William Hutton's *History of Derby* was published eight years later. Boswell had good reason to observe 'Indeed the age in which we live is eminently distinguished by topographical excellence'." Topography was not the only area of such distinction. Derbyshire could boast literary associations involving two writers whom Johnson held in high regard. Its rivers were much favoured by Izaak Walton, while Samuel Richardson was christened in the parish church of Mackworth, near Derby, in 1689, during the temporary 'exile' of his tradesman father from London.

Derbyshire was also the county of the literary yeoman Leonard Wheatcroft, whose autobiography, courtship narrative and poetry seem recently to have acquired belated recognition. Wheatcroft lived at Ashover and died two years before Johnson's birth. Yet his career and that of the great Cham are not without certain parallels: as a craftsman-smallholder, Wheatcroft belonged to the social group with the fastest-rising level of literacy in late seventeenth-century England; like Johnson, he was arrested for debt; like Johnson he opened his own school." Wheatcroft's autobiographical writings have precisely the claim to authenticity set out by Johnson himself in *Idler* number 84: 'he that sits down calmly and voluntarily to review his life for the admiration of posterity, or to amuse himself, and leaves this account unpublished, may be commonly presumed to tell truth, since falsehood cannot appease his own mind, and fame will not be heard beneath the tomb'." There may, then, be some basis for Mrs Thrale's judgment of 1774: 'the triumphs of Art and of Nature are surely all exhibited in Derbyshire'."

Derbyshire was also an important county community in an age when the county as an institution - in terms of parliamentary constituency, local administration, and county meeting - possessed considerable political significance and was a focus of sentiment for aristocracy, gentry, clergy and freeholders." The Cavendish family, which had played a decisive part in engineering the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688-89, reaped its political reward, providing six lords lieutenant of Derbyshire during the eighteenth century and from their splendid base at Chatsworth dominating its parliamentary representation. The family, untainted by Walpole's excise scheme, gained one of the county seats in 1734 and retained it continuously until 1832; in the borough of Derby they controlled one seat and strongly influenced the elections to the other." For all their Whiggery, the Dukes of Devonshire won Johnson's respect for their personal qualities; he praised the fidelity of the third Duke (d.1755) who would 'send to Denmark' rather than break a promise to provide acorns to a friend." Johnson made three recorded visits to Chatsworth, on the last occasion, 6 September 1784, attending a public dinner given by the fifth Duke, only to be irritated when his presence there was reported in the London press." At John Taylor's request he composed a brief (and rather anodyne) address of thanks for Lord George Cavendish and Godfrey Bagnall Clarke on their unopposed return for the county in 1773." Of the other leading county families, Johnson does not appear to have known the Mannors, Dukes of Rutland, or visited Haddon Hall. But he was well acquainted with Kedleston, the mansion re-designed by Adam, and seat of the Curzon family, whose head, Nathaniel Curzon, was created Baron Scarsdale in 1761. Boswell informs us that Johnson was highly gratified to discover a copy of his *Dictionary* in Lord Scarsdale's dressing-room." He would also have found Scarsdale's political opinions to his taste. As Chairman of Committees in the House of Lords from 1775, Scarsdale was a loyal supporter of North's ministry. He shared Johnson's view of the American conflict, strongly opposing the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766.

Derbyshire politics included a distinctly popular element, evident in the royalist sentiment which survived the early-military success of the parliamentary forces in the Civil War and which showed itself in the festivities over Henry Sacheverell's trial in 1710. Sacheverell indeed preached the Assize Sermon at All Saints, Derby, on 15 August 1709 (his kinsman, George Sacheverell, was High Sheriff) - a curious detail in the light of the improbable story that the infant Johnson heard Sacheverell preach in Lichfield." And if high church mentality sometimes inclined towards Jacobitism, there is certainly evidence of Jacobite activity in Derbyshire in 1715 and 1745, although because of its treasonable and hence clandestine nature precise estimates of its support are impossible. The Stuart army passed through Ashbourne on its way to Derby in December 1745 and two years later Lord Gower - Johnson's famous 'renegade' - complained of the 'Jacobite spirit'

of the Ashbourne mob." There was a Jacobite drinking club at Bakewell in the 1720s and at least two Derbyshire gentry families - the Poles of Radbourne Hall and the Burdetts - sought to welcome Prince Charles Edward in 1745." It was in Derbyshire, according to Boswell, that Johnson pronounced the rebellion of 1745-6 a noble attempt' and where the loyally Hanoverian John Taylor stimulated him to utter his famous declamation as to the validity of the Stuarts' claim and his prediction that a fair poll would show a twenty to one majority for their restoration." This discussion, which no historian of English Jacobitism can ignore, only renders more tantalizing the question as to Johnson's whereabouts and activities in 1745.

Popular politics, together with the Whiggish allegiance of the Cavendishes, also meant that Derbyshire (unlike Johnson's Staffordshire) was one of the fifteen English counties which petitioned in favour of John Wilkes after the Middlesex elections in 1769 and raised 2,850 signatures for the recall of parliament. No Derbyshire clergyman or magistrate signed, hence Taylor's name was not among them." More would be known of attitudes in Derbyshire over this issue had the poll book for the contested county election of 1768 survived. However, there were public rejoicings in Derby over Wilkes's release from the King's Bench prison in April 1770 and the county petitioned for Economical Reform in 1780. There were also serious food riots in Derbyshire in 1763 and 1766, and, as we shall show, they might have strengthened Johnson's friendship with John Taylor, a magistrate in the country. By the 1760s Johnson displayed little sympathy with popular politics, although it is perhaps noteworthy that he spoke in a very emollient manner of Wilkes at Ashbourne in 1777."

Ashbourne indeed, with its neighbouring parishes of Bradley, Tissington, Thorpe and Penny Bentley, was crucial to Johnson's social life in Derbyshire. Underpinning that social life was religion, in its clerical, charitable and paternalistic aspects. Although there were few non-juring clergymen in Derbyshire, Ashbourne itself had possessed a non-juring tradition, embodied in Thomas Bedford's conventicle." But that tradition gradually faded away and the centre of religious life in the town was St Oswald's Church, described by Boswell as 'One of the largest and most luminous that I have seen in any town of the same size.' John Taylor, whose Ashbourne circle meant so much to Johnson, was a Derbyshire man by birth, though hardly a Derbyshire clergyman: all his profitable ecclesiastical livings lay outside the county and the nearest he came to a spiritual assignment in Derbyshire itself was his chaplaincy to the Dukes of Devonshire. What he had in common with many Derbyshire clergy, however, was non-residence and pluralism; M R Austin's survey indicates that in 1772, 48% of Derbyshire livings lacked a resident, beneficed clergyman and that 39.5% of Derbyshire clergy were pluralists. In their defence it should be noted that their pluralism hardly reached the extent of Taylor's; that pluralism was the consequence of low ecclesiastical remuneration; and that many of the more extreme allegations levelled at the late Georgian Church turn out, on inspection, to have been considerably exaggerated."

The clergy were much involved in both of the two periods when Johnson visited Ashbourne frequently: the 1730s, and especially 1739-40, and the years when he was famous, from the late 1760s. It will be worthwhile to examine each period in turn.

One such clergyman was the Rev Richard Graves, whose 'Comic Romance' *The Spiritual Quixote, or the Summer's Ramble of Mr Geoffrey Wildgoose* (1772) is sometimes - rather dubiously - regarded as a valuable primary source for gentry life in Derbyshire in mid-century. Graves was curate at Tissington for three years and became closely associated with the Fitzherbert family of Tissington Hall. Through Taylor, Johnson, too, was drawn to that family, mindful, perhaps, that Tissington Hall had been a royalist headquarters in the

Civil War." Of William Fitzherbert he always spoke with affection, and that affection was not diminished when Fitzherbert, as MP for Derby and a member of the Board of Trade, repudiated his early support for Wilkes, voted against him in the famous Middlesex election of March 1768 and subsequently backed the installation of Luttrell in his place." His marriage into the Meynell family of nearby Bradley had long term consequences for Johnson's life as well as for his own. With his hunting prowess and well-publicized contempt for foreigners, the head of the family, Littleton Poyntz Meynell, is easily dismissed as a Squire Western; but his deeply religious wife and brilliant daughter Mary soon attracted Johnson's admiration. In 1744 Mary Meynell married William Fitzherbert and on her death early in 1753 her domestic duties were nobly undertaken by her close friend, the unmarried Hill Boothby. Miss Boothby's action rendered remote the possibility that she might become Johnson's second wife and that possibility vanished when she died on 16 January 1756."

Johnson seems to have become acquainted with Hill Boothby in the late 1730s, via the Meynells and Fitzherberts." The Boothby family, having acquired a baronetcy and the splendid Ashbourne Hall in the late seventeenth century, had a solidly Tory background and Brooke Boothby, Miss Boothby's brother, had voted for the two Tories, Sir Nathaniel Curzon and Henry Harpur - and against the Cavendish candidate - in the Derbyshire county election of 1734." There even seems to have been a family connection with Johnson; her kinsman Thomas Boothby had married Hester Skrymsher, whom A L Reade in *Johnsonian Gleanings* suggests was Johnson's cousin." The Boothbys were also involved in the governorship of Ashbourne Grammar School, where Johnson had unsuccessfully applied for the post of usher in 1732. Although in 1756 Johnson declared 'I never did exchange letters regularly but with dear Miss Boothby', their correspondence only survives for the later years and there are only six letters (and a reference to a seventh) from him to Hill Boothby in R W Chapman's edition of the *Correspondence*. Some of Hill Boothby's own letters to Johnson were published by Richard Wright of Lichfield in 1805." On this evidence there can be no doubt of Johnson's deep affection for her, and she was an admirable example of his advice to those contemplating matrimony 'to look out for a religious wife'. Baret's comment to Mrs Thrale that Johnson's concern at her death 'lasted but a week' is contradicted by his own recollection that his friend 'was almost distracted with his grief'. But if Hill Boothby's relationship with Johnson remains in the realm of 'what might have been', much more is known about her nephew, Sir Brooke Boothby, the sixth baronet, who abandoned his family's traditions for a whiggery which comprehended a friendship with Rousseau (who was not unacquainted with Dovedale) and a reply to Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*. He was the author of a plaintive lapidary verse to his aunt and an even more plaintive one to his infant daughter Penelope, which adorn the Boothby family monuments in St Oswald's Church, Ashbourne."

Nor, in this earlier period, should we forget Johnson's familiarity with the medical family of Chauncy; Dr Charles Chauncy settled at Ashbourne in 1682 and for a time lived in the very house where John Taylor subsequently played host. His son Dr William Chauncy (d.1736) and his grand-daughter Frances, who married Johnson's friend Dr Thomas Lawrence, were both known to Johnson, and the name of Chauncy deserves to be ranked among those other distinguished medical practitioners - Lawrence himself, Heberden, Brocklesby - among Johnson's friends."

Johnson's later Ashbourne connections, thanks mainly to Boswell and Mrs Thrale, are much more fully documented. Boswell even describes the Inn from which he took his departure in 1777. The 'Green Man', with its 'mighty civil' Mistress Killingley, soon afterwards merged with the 'Black's Head', whose former landlord, James Davenport, belonged to John Taylor's social circle."

Sadly, bankruptcy has reduced the present day 'Green Man and Black's Head Royal Hotel' to a 'boarded-up hulk' under threat, ominously, of 're-development' as a shopping mall and block of flats." But during its long existence it served many valuable purposes, not the least of which was to provide the venue for the local Johnson Club to hear Dr E A Sadler's paper 'Dr Johnson's Ashbourne Friends' on 17 June 1939."

Mrs Thrale in 1774 described John Taylor's circle of Ashbourne friends as 'very poor creatures both women and men'. But Boswell found 'good civil gentlemen, who seemed to understand Dr Johnson very well', and a common thread between them was Ashbourne Grammar School." This Elizabethan foundation was the centre of several local charities and it is a measure of Taylor's influence as the 'uncrowned King of Ashbourne' that most of the governors, assistants and masters of the school were in some way linked to him." Among them was the headmaster, the Rev William Langley, who also served as Rector of Penny Bentley; he acted as guide to Johnson and the Thrales at Dovedale, but his quarrelsome disposition and constant disputes with the governors meant that his forty-three year tenure of office was never smooth, and as a historical source he is lacking in reliability." Of Taylor's other friends, listed by Boswell, by far the most repulsive was John Alsop, JP, who, according to Taylor, maliciously encouraged Johnson on his final visit to Ashbourne to an over-indulgence in venison which brought him close to death." If true, this story perhaps helps to explain what might otherwise seem (in James Gray's words) 'a degree of callousness that is almost incredible' in Taylor's letter to Johnson in October 1784 when he advised his dying friend to avoid heavy meals." At the other extreme, the most attractive of this circle was Robert Hodgson, whose house stood adjacent to the Grammar School. The former keeper of the admirable (and, happily, surviving) Old Hall Hotel, Buxton, where he 'acquired a large Fortune', Hodgson died the day before Johnson and at the same age." His daughter's marriage to Beilby Porteus in 1765 brought the Bishop of Chester to the fringe of the Ashbourne circle; Johnson told Mrs Thrale in 1781 that the Bishop was staying with his father-in-law in the town and that 'I intend to visit him'." Though Bishop Porteus was black-balled by the Club in London and incurred Johnson's displeasure by attending routs, Dr Sadler is unjust in describing him as 'a worldly type of clergyman, as little fitted to be a divine as Taylor himself.' In fact, as is shown by his diaries at Lambeth Palace Library, he took his ecclesiastical duties very seriously indeed, promoting sabbath observance, Sunday schools and opposition to the slave trade." He was shrewd enough, moreover, to sense the identity of the real author of Taylor's published sermons." Finally, one might confess to a certain liking for Walter John Fieldhouse, who kept Taylor's horses and whom Johnson rebuked for swearing on 22 January 1777; but had he and his companions not 'entertained themselves and the company with a great number of tunes on the fiddle', we would be unaware of Johnson's preference for 'Let ambition fire thy mind'."

Central to all these Ashbourne connections was of course the Rev John Taylor himself. The bad press which he personally has suffered has not been moderated by recent scholarship which has revised the more extreme depictions of the eighteenth-century clergy as excessively materialistic and obsessed with private gain." The most contemptuous verdict of all was delivered by R W Chapman:

At the bottom of the scale comes John Taylor. If Johnson's letters to him are sometimes didactic to the point of dullness, that is as it should be; for Taylor was a slow-witted man, dull in himself and the cause of dullness in others."

Nor does Taylor emerge from the detailed studies of Professor Gray as much more than a prototype squarson with very limited intellect." He was the

classic 'Whig in a parson's gown'; his collection of church offices is proof of careerism and he would probably have obtained the deanery or even the bishopric which he coveted had not the Dukes of Devonshire been excluded from political favour under George III: the fourth Duke was dismissed from the Privy Council in November 1762 and the fifth Duke was a supporter of the Rockingham and Foxite parliamentary opposition. Taylor's devotion to farming led Johnson to declare 'his habits are by no means sufficiently clerical; this he knows that I see; and no man likes to live under the eye of perpetual disapprobation'. Much local gossip suggests that as a tithe-owner (in Market Bosworth), as a neighbour, as a litigant and as a most reluctant payer of debt, Taylor was distinctly unpopular. Some of this local evidence is admittedly flawed; one of his fiercest critics, Daniel Astle, for instance, was Taylor's opponent in a lawsuit and thus hardly an impartial observer. yet the only biography of Taylor, even though written by a distant kinsman, the Rev Thomas Taylor, is very defensive in tone and, while seeking to clear his forebear's reputation, is obliged to acknowledge many of his personal deficiencies.

However, Taylor's importance as a source for Johnsonian biographers and critics is undeniable. Hawkins drew on him; Boswell on 6 May 1785 elicited from him a set of 'Johnsoniana' and Mrs Thrale pursued him - with limited success - for Johnson's letters, finding him 'kinder than I counted on'. R W Chapman records 96 letters from Johnson to Taylor (not all of which survive); others were supplied by Mary Hyde in her essay 'Not in Chapman' and Bruce Redford, who is very critical of Chapman's editorial methods, substitutes a full version of Johnson's letter to Taylor of 9 December 1779 for a brief extract from an auction catalogue. With such material in his possession, it is not surprising that Taylor considered publishing an edition of Johnson's letters to him. Such a publication would have demonstrated Johnson's confidence in one of his oldest friends; indeed he told Mrs Thrale that Taylor was 'better acquainted with my heart than any man or woman now alive'. He was the repository, not only of juvenilia and Oxford anecdotes, but of the famous confession as to religious doubts in childhood.

This apparent paradox - intellectual limitations on the one hand, confidential association with Johnson on the other - leads one to search for reasons why Johnson sought, retained and so highly valued his friendship. Boswell's implication of an interested motive is rightly discounted by James Gray as nothing more than malicious gossip and Boswell himself states that it was not for his table alone that Johnson visited Taylor at his spacious mansion, with its handsome estate, in Church Street, near the Grammar School.

One problem is that we hardly ever hear Taylor's own voice; at Ashbourne Boswell accords him only one witty remark and several times notes that he and Johnson talked learnedly in Taylor's absence. Even the sermons, edited by the Rev Samuel Hayes and dedicated to the Duke of Devonshire, which Taylor 'left for publication' and which appeared in 1788-89, are now - almost without exception - attributed to Johnson. It is interesting in this context to note that in his book *Johnson's Sermons*, (1972), James Gray cautiously accepts Sermon 21 ('The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works') as Johnson's work, but in the Yale edition of the *Sermons*, edited by Gray and J H Hagstrum it is unceremoniously ejected from the canon, partly on the ground of its 'fashionable optimism and ... belief in natural goodness'. Taylor's *Letter to Samuel Johnson, LL.D., on the Subject of a Future State* (1787) is regarded by modern scholars as the result of co-operation between him and Johnson, not exclusively his own.

James Gray believes that Taylor was Johnson's closest friend and suggests that the former's serene confidence in the immortality of the soul and unquestioning belief in the divine purpose, which helped to ease some of

Johnson's own doubts and served as 'a refreshing antidote to the corrosive poison of fear', was the principal reason for this apparently curious phenomenon." To this, as a second reason, we may add Johnson's well-known loyalty to his old school contemporaries, and his evidently sincere tributes to Taylor's 'strong mind'; we may assume that, as one interested in practical matters he admired Taylor as a practical man. Mrs Thrale in 1774, moreover, drew a pen-portrait of Taylor which is both more perceptive and more sympathetic than many other accounts:

The Doctor appears to a cursory spectator one of the happiest of the human race, with knowledge enough to employ some solitude, and money enough to enjoy society - money indeed to purchase all the conveniences and even luxuries of life: Pictures, Musick, books and Friends, besides a power over his neighbours, and an influence extended, as I understand, to no inconsiderable distance. This makes the great men near him look up, not down, to him, and forces a respect which he is willing enough to receive. Between ambition and indolence, however, this man is preserved from being an object of envy; to secure his power he is obliged to gratify his dependants sometimes to the peyorating his fortune by suffering tenants to live at low rents, and sometimes chusing his companions according to the caprices and prejudices of a few who can command votes on the day of a general election. On the whole he is a man whom one would wish to please, and a man whom one would expect to be more pleasing when removed from his own circle to a wider range of company and conversation."

Thirdly, it is important to remember that Taylor as a clergyman and magistrate represented not only the paternalistic tradition which lay at the heart of the Tory view of society, embodied in the network of charities at Ashbourne, but was also symbolic of authority. In Johnson's later life, the order of which Taylor was the agent seemed to be challenged by American rebels abroad and by Wilkites and radical Dissenters at home. Taylor was no radical; in January 1783, in a letter which expressed fear of a civil war, Johnson told Taylor 'I am glad that your friends are not among the promoters of equal representation'. Hence there was no incongruity in Johnson's composition for Taylor of a sermon for 30 January, on the anniversary of the execution of Charles I. While avoiding the kind of glorification of the martyred king which might have offended a Whig, Johnson took full advantage of the opportunity to stress the virtues of obedience and the evils of rebellion: 'such evils surely we have too much reason to fear again', he wrote. As a magistrate, Taylor had been thanked by the Cheesemongers of London for his part in saving their property from the mob during the famous Derbyshire cheese riots of 1766. Boswell tells us that one of Taylor's circle at Ashbourne, Robert Longdon, was a cheesefactor and in 1777 Johnson wrote to Mrs Thrale 'Mr Langdon [sic.] bought at Nottingham fair fifteen tun of cheese, which at an ounce apiece will suffice after dinner for 480,000 men'. In preserving order, in declining a gift from the grateful Cheesemongers, in suggesting that it be devoted instead to the poor of Ashbourne and in urging mitigation of some of the severe sentences passed on the rioters, Taylor behaved in a manner highly acceptable to the author of the *Rambler*. It was not at all unusual in the age of the American Revolution for Old Tories and Old Whigs to find a common interest in political stability. Johnson and Taylor seem to have done precisely that.

Although Taylor had a house in London, and his duties as prebend of Westminster obliged him to spend part of the year in the capital, he neither belonged to the Club nor associated with those who did. Indeed, Johnson's London and Ashbourne circles were almost like two separate worlds. He had hardly any Derbyshire contacts in London; one exception, the physician Dr William Butter, whom he described as 'a very rational man', was in fact a Scot

who had practised for some years in Derbyshire." Similarly, in Derbyshire itself, hardly any of Johnson's companions belonged to the Derby Philosophical Society, founded in 1783, although Johnson had a slight acquaintance with its leading figure, Erasmus Darwin." However, there were intellectual connections in the county which illuminate a familiar theme, namely Johnson's lifelong practice of giving assistance to lesser literary lights. One such as the Rev John Kennedy, Rector of All Saints, Bradley, for whose *Complete System of Astronomical Chronology unfolding the Scriptures* Johnson wrote a dedication to George III." Sir Brooke Boothby recalled how Johnson 'described the eccentricities' of Kennedy and his wife 'with a nicety of discrimination, and a force of language, equal to the best of his periodical essays'." Another was Daniel Astle, the former army captain who took holy orders and resided at Ashbourne; Johnson obligingly provided him with a reading list (it included Walton's *Complete Angler*)" He subsequently transcribed some of Johnson's sermons for Taylor and supplied Boswell with Johnsonian anecdotes."

Finally, two rather more indirect Derbyshire connections seem to illustrate a fundamental truth about Johnson's career, namely that although he cannot be described as a popular writer, he was certainly an accessible writer. Firstly, a study of the *Derby Mercury* would pay dividends to the Johnson scholar. From its commencement in 1732, this was among the most sophisticated provincial newspapers. It claimed to have agents as far afield as Sheffield, Rotherham, Loughborough, Mansfield - and several locations in London. Unusually for newspapers of the period, it carried items of news, and not advertisements, on its front page. By 1784 it appeared weekly and cost three pence. It is true that its proprietor in the late eighteenth century, John Drewry, of the Irongate, Derby, inclined politically towards the Dissenters, giving friendly coverage, for instance, to the Unitarian petition to Parliament in 1792." But the *Derby Mercury* is a mine of information about, and sympathetic treatment of, Johnson. On his death it published his will, and a detailed 'Sketch' of his life and writings. It also printed the 'Winter Ode' (beginning 'No more the Morn with tepid Rays/Unfolds the Flower of various Hue') which, in common with many critics, it then attributed to Johnson. It commemorated his achievements with William Woty's epitaph, which begins:

Ye Vain, licentious Wits! Your Distance keep,
And, if you never wept, now learn to weep,
Learning hath lost her Prop in Johnson's End,
Virtue her Boast, and Piety her Friend."

In later years it printed many Johnsonian anecdotes and brought many of his aphorisms to a wider public. The *Derby Mercury* could well be used to supplement Helen Louise McGuffie's valuable *Samuel Johnson in the British Press, 1749-1784*."

The second example concerns Bakewell. It is not clear whether or not Johnson ever visited the town, although its proximity both to Chatsworth and to Edensor, well known to Johnsonians for its 'bad Inn', makes it highly probable that he did. In some ways, Bakewell might have appealed to him. According to the commonplace book of the geologist White Watson, a resident from 1774, 'On Sundays all went to Church, no dissenting voice in the Town, all prayed to one God and Lord Jesus Christ, and drank in social parties success to the Church and King'." The Vicar of All Saints' Church, Bakewell, from 1769 to 1816 was the Rev Richard Chapman. There is no evidence that he and Johnson ever met. But his memorial in the Church states 'His goodness of heart, his free deportment, liberality of sentiment and cheerful flow of mind, endeared him to his friends, and left them, with truth, to say, His death contracted the circle and diminished their stock of social pleasure'." The close and obvious derivation of this inscription from Johnson's lament for David Garrick - 'I am disappointed by that stroke of death, which has eclipsed the gaiety

of nations and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure' - meant that many readers of Chapman's memorial read something closely approximating to the words of Johnson without knowing it. Admittedly, this is not an uncommon experience for English speakers. But in All Saints' Church, Bakewell, there was more than one opportunity for it to occur. When Chapman's parish clerk and chorister, Philip Roe, died in 1815 his gravestone included the couplet:

Sleep undisturb'd within thy peaceful shrine
Till angels wake thee with such notes as thine."

One wonders how familiar an epitaph for musicians this was becoming by the turn of the century. For on 15 March 1792 the *Derby Mercury* reported:

On Tuesday the 6th instant died at Bakewell Isaac Motteram, aged 65. He had been a singer at the parish church above 50 years. The following lines, which are intended to be inscribed on his gravestone, were sung at his interment on Sunday evening:

O thou whose notes could oft remove
The pangs of Woe, or hapless love
Rest here, distress by cares no more
And taste such calms thou gav'st before:
Sleep undisturb'd within thy peaceful shrine
Till angels wake thee with such notes as thine."

We know that the Motteram family had long been resident in Bakewell, while hearth tax returns and poll books show that it possessed considerable property there." But Isaac Motteram's connection with Johnson is cemented by this adaption, already becoming familiar, of the famous epitaph for Claudy Phillips, a poem which by 1780 had been set to music as a glee." We may quite legitimately include Richard Chapman, Philip Roe and Isaac Motteram among Dr Johnson's Derbyshire connections, and in All Saints' Church, Bakewell, as in so many other places, there is good cause to quote the words attributed to the son of Sir Christopher Wren - 'Si monumentum requiris, circumspice' - 'If you seek his monument, look around you'.

FOOTNOTES

Note: Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.

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18. Broadley, *Doctor Johnson and Mrs Thrale*, pp.166-7.
19. *Life*, IV, 348-50.
20. *Ibid.*, III, 151-2.
21. *Thraliana*, II, 690.
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43. William Fitzherbert committed suicide in 1772.
44. Clifford, *Young Samuel Johnson*, Chapter XII.

45. Poll Book for the county of Derbyshire, 1734 (Consulted at the Institute of Historical Research).
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62. *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, II, 447.
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100. *Derby Mercury*, 15 March 1792.
101. Watson, 'Observations on Bakewell', p. 166; *Poll Book for the County of Derbyshire, 1734; Derbyshire Hearth Tax Assessments 1662-70*, ed. David G Edwards (Derbyshire Record Society, Vol. VII, 1982), pp. 77, 86. 'I am very grateful to the Rev Edmund Urquhart, Vicar of Bakewell with Over Haddon, for information about the Motteram family inscriptions in All Saints' Church.'
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A BACKDROP OF 'PIPERS'

Dr R G Fricker MSc, LDS, RCSJ, LRCP, SI, DA - 15 May 1993
Chairman: Anthea Hopkins

Dr Fricker explained that he did not wish to attempt a learned monograph on some aspect or another of the minutiae of Dr Johnson's life, but would rather try to present an 'entertainment in music' covering the wide range of development in music over the period of Johnson's years from 1709 to 1784, which span the High Baroque, with its emphasis on imitative counterpoint in form - Fugue, Chaconne, Canon, and Passacaglia - to the Pre-Classical and Classical era of Joseph Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and a multitude of other symphony and concerto composers in variegated 'Sonata-forms.'

Dr Fricker said that his title, 'A Backdrop of Pipers,' came from Johnson's comment to Dr Burney, who had been playing duets with one of his daughters, while Johnson had been reading the 'Encyclopaedia.' On being thrown a question about Bach's latest concert, he enquired scornfully, 'And pray, Sir, who is this Bach? Is he a piper?' When Burney said that the love of modulated sounds must be a passion implanted in human nature, Johnson replied, 'Sir, this assertion I believe may be right... and all animated nature loves music, except myself.' Dr Fricker pointed out that this may have been largely due to Johnson's impaired hearing.

Dr Fricker said that it had given him enjoyment over the years to make concordances with Johnson's life and it had been a great delight to see that from 1709-1784, the progress of musical creation and form in Europe was quite

extraordinary. To have a concordance between this span of musical development in the cultural life of Europe and Johnson's life as a background is something that is really delightful. He said that he was going to try to persuade us to follow that concordance, by looking at the so-called 'pipers' in Europe. He would start with the Baroque Era, and introduced us to the terms he would be using. Musicologists usually define the history of music in several agreed periods, albeit that we are aware of the dangers of 'periodization' in history or the creative arts.

The periods of music to be talked about this afternoon would begin with the Baroque, which started about 1600. These titles are quite arbitrary, of course, because the periods overlap and become meaningless. The Baroque lasted to 1750, with the death of Bach and then came the preclassical, for a short period, leading straight into the classical, by which we refer to the period when Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and finally Schubert reigned supreme. After that in 1828, when Schubert died, the period of Romanticism takes over, but that is far beyond Dr Fricker's remit this afternoon. So he would be starting with the High Baroque around 1700, near Johnson's birth-time, and carrying on to Johnson's death in 1784, at which time the pre-classical and classical era was well under way.

He said he wanted to talk about the musical characteristics of these eras and bring them into some sort of living symbolism for us. The period of the Baroque has been defined in many different ways and there are as many dissenters to those opinions and definitions as there are protagonists supporting them, but generally speaking the high baroque is regarded as the period of what is called imitative counterpoint. Counterpoint is the running of musical lines simultaneously one against the other and it takes its origin from the Latin word, *punctus* which designated a note in the mediaeval manuscripts and point against point was the point of a melody which ran horizontally along the manuscript page as paralleling another one usually the fourth or the fifth lines above or the fourth or the fifth below and making the preludes and the fugues and the chaconnes and the passacaglias that we are so familiar with throughout this era. So first of all, Dr Fricker said he would do a very simplistic thing and define what counterpoint is by playing an example from an organ fugue by Bach, a piano transcription by Busoni, a musician at the turn of the century, played here by Damienco, showing 'voice' layout 'ab initio' in the exposition of a typical fugue.

He asked us to listen to the actual statement of the fugue and the way when the second voice came in and the third voice and finally another voice, we would see how the lines overlapped each other and made a good compact texture.

He said that we realized that fugues and other textures were heavily employed by Bach and Handel, but if that was all, it is very doubtful whether we would call the High Baroque a period of imitative counterpoint: and the reason for calling this period the period of imitative counterpoint is that there were dozens and dozens of contrapuntal composers of immaculate style and ability who were composing fugues and other contrapuntal compositions at this time whom we never hear about. They are there and they are in musical manuscript and if we go to an enterprising organ recital we will hear them; the list is almost infinite, they are there and their music is very fine indeed. Dr Fricker then said that he would play us an organ fugue in G minor by Adam Reinken (1623-1722). He chose this fugue primarily because the music is excellent. It is misunderstood by some people, because it employs the repetition of notes, but anyone trying composition or to play an instrument realizes that to write a composition around a repeated note is not easy and this is why this fugue by Reinken is particularly wonderful. The other reason he put it in was that Reinken was quite a character; he lived to the ripe old age of ninety-nine and was composing right up to the end, and there is a

wonderful anecdote of Bach, who crossed Germany especially to meet the old man. At this meeting, no doubt in an organ loft, Reinken invited Bach to sit down and improvise, which Bach did; and at the end Reinken said to him, "I thought this heart was long since dead, but you are keeping it alive!"

Other factors as well as Counterpoint were important in the music of this era; possibly the most important of these was the chorale. Bach did not compose all the wonderful chorales we hear in passions, masses and the two hundred extant cantatas that there are, but he did harmonize them and he was a brilliant person in this field of harmonization. Dr Fricker then played us the Chorale from the St John Passion, "Wer hat dich so geschlagen?" German hymn tunes, the staple of everyday religious life, harmonized by Bach and here in the context of a large work.

Dr Fricker pointed out that all this music we were listening to this afternoon was being written and performed at the time when Johnson was a small boy up in Lichfield, probably playing somewhere with other small boys; and four or five hundred miles to the East, this wonderful music was being written down and performed in German churches. The point that Dr Fricker was making about this part of the High Baroque in Germany is that there are indeed two constituents to the complex compositions that were being made there. One was a contrapuntal one, the other was the chorale. It seems a wonderful thought when one listens to a set of Brandenburg Concertos by Bach or the Handel Oratorios, to notice that these were the two constituents of the compositional technique, as such they were, and through the complexity it brought about some wonderful pieces of music. People do tend to think of the music as being straightforwardly one or the other, but of course this is not the case.

Dr Fricker then tried a really difficult thing, to pick up a part of a piece of music which shows the homophonic character of German keyboard music, where so much of it, of course, is contrapuntal. We then heard a section from the 6th Biblical Sonata in E flat by Johann Kuhnau, an eminent man of letters, translator of classic texts from Latin, Greek, Hebrew to vernacular German; a linguist of no mean repute, Doctor of Law, Doctor of Music, Mathematics and Theology, Bach's predecessor as Cantor in Leipzig, who died in 1722. His music shows fine homophonic writing, i.e. the Baroque was not all fugues and imitative counterpoint: we can hear the blend of homophony that is the musical texture that arose from the vertical bars of the chorale with the imitative counterpoint that is the undulating lines. This is quite unusual in this way and Kuhnau is not listened to very much. It was a wonderful blend, we could hear the lines of music trying to run away from the solid bars of the homophony, which is the name given to the vertical chordal lines we heard in the chorale earlier.

This afternoon Dr Fricker wanted to look briefly at each of the chief musical countries, starting with Germany. We have not mentioned Handel; Bach and Handel were completely different men, both geniuses, the extraordinary thing is that they were both born in the same year, 1685, Bach died in 1750, Handel going on another nine years and being buried in Westminster Abbey. Having been born in the same year and representing the same ethos, so to speak, it is amazing how different they were: Handel, the public man, going from city to city, going principally to learn his trade from Padre Martini and ending up in London, a public man of acclaim with his long series of operas and his magnificent oratorios and Bach, a private individual, who stayed a Cantor in a smaller city in the middle of Germany, a devout man, writing his own type of music, experimenting, humble enough to take other people's models and enlarge upon them, and vary them, and these two men represent the High Baroque in Germany and seemed so different from the other countries, when thinking of a concordance with Johnson's life.

If we look at France, if we read books on the French Baroque, having been immersed in the German baroque, which was so noble and very wide-spread and complex, we would probably be rather surprised to find that the French writers of this particular time would not understand what we were talking about - deliberately - they would refuse to understand because they would say that there was no such thing as a French Baroque. There was an association of music with dramatic action, or the dance, and that was all, and if it was associated with the dance or dramatic action, they would probably call it a symphony and absolute music did not exist outside that. We would not get them paying attention to fugues and theoretical musical forms, it had to be connected with the theatre or the ballet and this possibly was because the total orientation of French music was bound up in the bureaucracy that had been started in 1661, when Louis Quatorze aged twenty-three took power into his own hands, building up with his minister Colbert a series of Academies controlling the intellectual and cultural life of France.

Dr Fricker said that there is a rather interesting story of the court composer of the time, Louis Marchand (his music is rather banal, but quite good in its way). He had an upset with his wife and intended to separate from her, and this came to the King's ears and one Sunday, coming out of chapel he came up to him and Louis said "Monsieur Marchand, I hear that you are going to separate from your wife?"

He said, "Yes, I'm afraid so, your Majesty, we can't get on."

Louis Quatorze said to the musician, "Well, I'm afraid in that case, if you split up, I shall only be able to pay you half of your fees because of the scandal."

Monsieur Marchand replied, "Well, your Majesty, if that's so, I'm afraid I shall only be able to provide you with half your compositions."

This in fact had repercussions on English music, because at that time there were many people who were in exile from the recent civil wars: and one of those was Charles II with his retinue which included a young man called John Bannister, who heard this story and passed it on to his son, another John Bannister; and later on the same situation arose in England. But the second John Bannister was not so lucky, because he was kicked out of Charles' court; it redounded, however, to our benefit, because he then set up the first public concerts in England, at this end of Vauxhall Bridge.

Dr Fricker then played us a piece of French Baroque, which they would not accept as Baroque, quite a well-known piece, "La Poule," by Rameau, from "Six pièces de clavecin en concerts." This French Baroque was representational, i.e. to dramatic action or aspects of the dance; associative, not "pure".

Dr Fricker said that the authority on French Baroque, Professor James Anthony of the University of Arizona writes: "Although we must not claim for this music the depth of feeling that characterizes the best German Baroque music from Schutz to Bach, nor the almost visceral passion of the best Italian Baroque music from Monteverdi to Vivaldi, French music of the same time has its own quite different life-force....It speaks of the dance in all its guises as does no other music...."French Baroque Music. 1974 Batsford.

Jean Jaques Rousseau's comment on German Baroque is: "Baroque music is that in which the harmony is confused, and filled with modulating and dissonance; the melody is harsh and unnatural, the intonation difficult and the tempo forced." (Dict.de Musique. 1768).

Hardly a kindly word to be said for German Baroque, but in fact Professor

James Anthony's statement about French Baroque is quite true, it has a character all of its own. It is quite charming and graceful and has wonderful depths; we have only to listen to operas by the same Rameau to be plunged into a fairy world of music. This music is visual enough and never fails to sound wonderful and gracious. Now the other factor of the High Baroque is characterized by what we have just been listening to, that is the emergence of the orchestra. Of course, to make this point fully, one would have to go back and talk about the origins of plain-chant, its development into the high polyphony of the Renaissance, the emergence of solo instrumental music and the formation of the two types of music, the Sonata Da Chiesa and the Sonata Da Camera, the music with liturgical background and the music with social background: and the background to Johnson's life, as a person living all through this.

The formation of the small orchestra was one of the features of this Baroque period, the period spanned by Johnson's life, and Dr Fricker then played us a tiny piece of music by Corelli (1653-1713), the opening movement from Concerto no.6 of the "12 Concerti Grossi."

At the same time as French music was making its balletic wonders felt and obeying the edicts of the opera and at the same time as the contrapuntal wonders of Bach and Handel and their contemporaries were being played, the Italians were busy doing something that was going to be vital for the development of European music. And that was, they were perfecting the manufacture of the instruments on which was played that music; and of course, this influence in making instruments and the distribution of instruments for orchestras, spread over the Alps into Central Europe and led to the formation of excellent orchestras in cities like Mannheim, led by the composer Stamitz, which really set the pre-classical era on its way. The list of Italian composers at the time was almost as extensive as the list of North German important composers and, of these, Corelli here was possibly the leading light in bringing this particular type of orchestral music across the Alps. There is a very interesting quotation from Sir John Hawkins, who writes: "There lived at that time, opposite Southampton Street, in the Strand, Mr Prevost, a bookseller, who dealt largely with Holland. It happened that one day he had received a large consignment of books from Amsterdam, and among them the Concertos of Corelli, which had just then been published; upon looking at them, he thought of Mr Needler (a distinguished violinist) and immediately went with them to his house. Mr Needler was transported with the sight of such a treasure; the books were immediately laid out and he and the rest of the performers played the whole twelve concertos through, without rising from their seats..." ("General History of the Science and Practice of Music" Sir John Hawkins: The arrival of Corelli's Op.6 in England.

Dr Fricker said that this was probably a slight exaggeration, but the charm of that music of Corelli shows us what its impact was on Europe: and it was in fact extensive throughout the whole of Europe. He then played us a Chaconne by George Muffat (1653-1713), who is not particularly known; but we could see how the influence of Corelli's orchestra spread throughout Europe. We heard the 5th movement, Chaconne, from Concerto Grosso "Propitia Sidera" with homophonic techniques to contrapuntal form.

Dr Fricker pointed out that the word "symphony" (in France during the Grande Siècle) infers all compositions written for instruments; all instruments used independently or with voice. A generic title, there had to be a link with dramatic action, or with the dance. Independently conceived instrumental music was anathema, unacceptable, the least important aspect of the entire composition.

Introducing the next piece of music, by Haydn, Dr Fricker quoted Bukofzer on

Haydn and Bach. "Haydn always bent on success, passed through the international centres of music; Bach unconcerned about worldly success began and ended his career within the narrowness of central Germany. Both composers are universal in their appeal. The worldly grand manner of Haydn and the spiritual attitude of Bach represent the two essential and at the same time complementary aspects of Baroque music which cause the curious paradox that Bach and Haydn are equals only where they are incomparable." He then played us a piece by Joseph Haydn, (Symphony Number 22 "The Philosopher" first movement), in which the Composer looked over his shoulder at what had been done before; and the opening of this very symphonic piece of music was, in fact, a chorale with four horns, answered by another chorale passage with cor anglais. It was quite an astonishing texture, when we listened to it Dr Fricker said that we would be surprised by its chorale nature.

There was of course very much more going on during Johnson's life-time. He had not mentioned that in 1756 Mozart was born, he was brought to London by his father and sat on the knee of John Christian Bach and learned composition and was turning out symphonies and other compositions - quite a remarkable phenomenon; but that is not really part of our story, although the knee that he sat on in London, is a part of our story, being that of John Christian Bach, who was Bach's eleventh son, (he had two wives and twenty children). The final piece of music we heard was one of the most remarkable movements from the whole of this particular era, which is something to say of John Christian Bach, as he was, after all, a minor composer. This is one of six symphonies, the Adante from Symphony number 3, Opus 18.

Dr Fricker said that he hoped, with this last piece of music, to show us how the shape of melody and the texture of melodic presentation had changed, the strict rules of the Contrapuntalists and High Baroque at the turn of the century had given way to this romantic music of the early classical period of John Christian Bach who died just two years before Johnson did, in London: and unfortunately, like Mozart, he was buried in an unmarked grave, somewhere, we have no records of that. The wheel had come full circle with that romanticism in a classical guise.

THE WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY

The annual wreath-laying ceremony took place at midday on 5 December 1992.

The allocution was delivered by Mr Philip Howard. He referred to Johnson as 'The Great Cham of Literature', who introduced the systematic method of lexicography still followed today. He said that Johnson was the Master of the high classic style, the greatest Hercules of Literature. He reminded us that Johnson was a great moralist and not everyone found his work favourable. Some regarded him as the Caliban of Literature. Charles Churchill referred to him as Pomposo:

"..... insolent and loud
Vain idol of a scribbling crowd."

He was, however, a dangerous person to disagree with. Eliot referred to him as the Patron Saint of England as far as literature was concerned.

Mr Howard pointed out that we cannot be in Johnson's company long, without becoming aware that what draws us to him so closely is that he combined a disillusioned estimate of human nature sufficient to launch twenty little cynics, with a craving for love and sympathy urgent enough to turn a weaker nature into a benign sentimentalist. He said to Fanny Burney: "You must not mind me, Madam; I say strange things, but I mean no harm."

Johnson, said Mr Howard, could be very funny, but he was also a most professional Fleet Street Journalist, who exhibited to an extreme degree the characteristic virtues and vices of the trade. The Legend of the Great Man was formed by Boswell, who met Johnson when he was fifty and famous. We forget the struggling hack who, for more than ten years, struggled to make a living from journalism, staff and free-lance writing, enduring great poverty and discouragement.

Mr Howard remarked on the speed and facility of Johnson's writing, producing three columns in an hour for The Gentleman's Magazine. He suffered from writer's block, which all journalists get, and put off the terrible plunge on to a sheet a white paper till the last minute. Johnson put it off until the printer sent a messenger to collect copy.

Mr Howard also referred to Johnson's "Butterfly mind", which was strange for a man who knew more books than any man alive; but he never read them through, and there was a bit of bluff to his knowledge.

Mr Howard said that he made some mistakes, which was inevitable in such rapid journalism, but although ferocious to defend his pride, he was ready to admit to the inevitable errors and ignorance of the inky trade.

He had a great love of language, though he could stray into pomposity and into the style known as "Times Ponderoso;" which writer hasn't?

He showed great independence of thought. He established the idea that a writer is free of patrons, proprietors and politics.

He was concerned not to be thought of as "a mere journalist." He knew everything, having a most retentive memory; but he was a super journalist. He was an example for poor hacks, faced with impossible deadlines, screaming editors, unresearched subjects, word block, insecurity, the black dog of depression. Journalists could identify with this; Sam was here before, if he could do it, they can do it - but not so well."

The ceremony then closed with prayers led by Canon Paul Bates, the Canon in Residence.

The Committee then entertained the speaker and other guests at the Annual Luncheon at the Vitello d'Oro restaurant, organised as in other years by Mrs Dowdeswell.

BOOK REVIEWS

Pat Rogers, Johnson, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. Eithne Henson, The Fictions of Romantick Chivalry; Samuel Johnson and Romance, London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992.

Books on Johnson range from the general to the specialised, from those which Johnson Society members are most likely to press into the hands of non-Johnsonians, to those which we are most likely to smuggle onto our own Christmas present lists. Here we have one excellent example from each end of the spectrum.

Pat Rogers has done that immensely difficult thing: a trapping and compression of Johnson in 111 pages which nevertheless does him some kind of justice. He works rather too hard at selling his subject to readers. The introduction uses the word "great" seven times in as many pages (not of Johnson only: Newton,

Shakespeare, even Boswell are all admitted to this constellation of greatness). And this is just background. When Professor Rogers reaches the topic of Johnson's writings, in chapter 2, they evoke nine "greats" or "greatests" in three pages.

But the book is more discriminating than this suggests, providing more specific and more compelling reasons than the superstition of "greatness" for reading Johnson. It anchors him firmly in his common and his uncommon humanity, and it gives an account both of his writings and of the circumstances of their production which is well-designed to send readers off on further exploration. Had Johnson been writing ten years earlier, professor Rogers acutely remarks, he would probably have been pilloried by Pope in The Dunciad with other authors of his modern, commercial stamp. Chapter 3 concludes, "Johnson wrote great books, but he also took part in the great instauration of modern literature."

It is impossible to epitomise Johnson without entering into controversy. Rogers accepts the equation of that notorious "M" in Johnson's diaries with bowel movements; he very oddly uses the word "apostasy" of the "late conversion"; he disregards the early political essays; he maintains that Johnson was xenophobic, that he believed "in the native virtues of the British nation" (a new, composite phenomenon in which Johnson does not appear to have believed at all), and that "Boswell understood the tone and drift of Johnson's humour as well as anyone who ever lived".

A reader of this book who is versed in Johnson will find arguments constantly springing to mind. But admiration springs as readily. The Rambler, Rasselas, The Vanity of Human Wishes and other works are given considered, sensitive yet clarifying analysis. Rogers is particularly acute on Johnson's sense of history, his self-involving compassion for human frailty, his pursuit of heroism, and his commitment to truth. And, opening his book with Johnson's indignant denial that his friends had "travelled over" his mind, he activates and keeps open our sense of Johnson as retaining an element of the mysterious and unknowable.

Teachers have for years been feeling the lack of a reputable introduction to Johnson, of something sound yet thought-provoking. With this book, and a new introductory life by Robert DeMaria (and with even Maynard Mack's monumental biography now available in paperback) the approach to Johnson becomes more inviting.

Eithne Henson offers her readers a unique blend of scholarly instruction with romantic or escapist pleasure. Her frontispiece is the frontispiece from book 2 of Melchior Ortega's Felixmarte de Yrcania, which was printed at Valladolid in 1556. The page bears the heading ("Libro Segundo") and the opening of this section of the story: also an illustration (armoured knight, prancing steed, two retainers) and an ornamental capital letter E of almost Celtic appearance. From the printed text (which fixes the pictorial elements into a bold and flowing design), Dr Henson translates these words: "one day early in the morning, they set out from the city, and went along a highway, without intending to go to any particular place, but wherever chance should guide them."

The beginning of Felixmarte book 2 is, it seems, the ending of Rasselas. There Imlac and the astronomer are content "to be driven along the stream of life without directing their course to any particular port." That Rasselas begins like a romance is a familiar idea; that it ends like a romance is an unfamiliar and challenging one. Johnson, it seems, would have agreed with T S Eliot that old men ought to be explorers.

Dr Henson's book fully deserves the place she modestly claims for it "within the context of the great body of distinguished Johnsonian studies, past and present." Tracing a clear and delightful path through the mazes of fiction, it places an indelible new gloss on the Johnson we think we know. She bends her serious attention on an aspect of his thinking which we have perhaps not been ready to investigate until now, when scholars are re-drawing the boundaries of respectable fiction to include romance as well as the socially realistic novel.

This broader shift of interest reveals a lurking, unchallenged assumption about Johnson. His style is no longer read as lacking in imagery, nor his thought as lacking in imagination, yet it is still easy to assume that he lacked any critical appreciation of anything other than naturalism in fiction. Of course we know what Bishop Percy said about his addiction to reading romances, but surely this was a foible comparable to his addiction to tea?

Not so, if Rasselas remembers the romance in its end as well as in its beginning. (And in detail after detail of its centre: Pekuah's refusal to enter a fearful subterranean space with her mistress turns out to be a replay of scenes between Amadis de Gaule and his dwarf.) This re-reading of Johnson is coherent and enlightening: a consistent and important element which has been obscured is now revealed. I differ from Dr Henson on only one significant point. She convinces me that the type of the solitary adventurer as depicted by Johnson would seem to exclude women; but surely in practice he avoids such exclusion. Floretta of "The Fountains", Nekayah, Pekuah, and Zosima of Rambler 12, are all females on a quest, albeit not all solitary. Johnson's quest hero is essentially the Self confronting the World, and therefore may be of either gender.

This book is strong enough to weather a few disagreements. It has much to offer, first of all the romances themselves: The Seven Champions of Christendom, Palmerin of England, Belianis of Greece and Guy of Warwick, besides Adamis, and better-remembered works by Spenser, Tasso, Ariosto. Their various motifs appear here not as tired items from stock, but as powerful and suggestive symbols: "adventures, giants, dragons and enchantments" (as Johnson summarised them in the preface to Shakespeare) along with caves, castles, dungeons, forests, battles and storms. Dr Henson reviews the evidence for Johnson's knowledge and usage of this material in his themes, inventions, imagery, and literary criticism. She makes special studies of the Quixote motif and of the function of romance in Johnson's Scottish journey and reporting.

The important general achievement here is the sympathetic anatomizing of layers upon layers of literary response. The romances put on their successive incarnations as medieval and Renaissance poems, as abridgements, chapbooks, and standard texts for children; finally they enter a submerged, allusive life in Johnson's otherwise very different writings. His "romance-conditioned consciousness" mediates his apprehension of the actual world and of later literary texts. "Boswell's reading provides a further textual layer, interwoven with, and dependent on, Johnson's responses and itself richly, if elliptically, intertextual."

Our own apprehension, in turn, would be impoverished by unwillingness to look again at romance readings of human life as a quest, and at Johnson's deep and tangled involvement with them. This book brings the literary imaginations of previous centuries alive for us, with all the extra meaning bestowed on them by Johnson's attention and that of other intermediate readers. It is not every

day that an almost untrodden pathway in Johnson's mind is opened to us.

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A NOTE ON JOHNSON'S CHARLES, SHAKESPEARE'S CAESAR

Has it occurred to any readers that as he dismisses Charles XII of Sweden in The Vanity of Human Wishes, Johnson was deliberately recalling Hamlet in the graveyard scene? The echo is haunting rather than distinct; but it seems to me likely that Johnson hoped (vainly?) to leave his tale of a hero obscurely killed in dubious circumstances with a reminder of that most poignant meditation on death. His closing words on Charles XII are these:

He left the Name, at which the World grew pale,
To point a Moral, or adorn a Tale. (221-2)

Hamlet's closing words on the fate of Caesar, after he has been questioning the gravedigger and moralising on Yorick's skull, are these:

O, that that earth which kept the world in awe
Should patch a wall t'expel the winter's flaw! (V.i.17-18)

In these two couplets the degraded name parallels the degraded body; pointing a moral echoes patching a wall. In the background to the couplets there are also parallels. Johnson remarks an absence of portents which corresponds to the absence of obsequies, the "maimed rites" for Ophelia which Hamlet is about to protest; Johnson's dubious "Hand" echoes Hamlet's "Her death was doubtful."

The couplets themselves, both sententious and exclamatory, contrast present degradation with former reverence. Both enact the same effect: violent diminishment of an imperious military genius. The two first lines have a similar cadence, the two second lines an identically emphatic closure. Hamlet is brusquely interrupted by the entrance of a corpse; Johnson turns away to Xerxes, to "purple Billows and a floating Host."

So, an allusion, or an irrelevance? Is not Shakespeare's Caesar in play here, as well as Juvenal's Hannibal?

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